

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
**COMMUNICATION
THEORY**



Stephen W. Littlejohn ◦ Karen A. Foss

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THEORY

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Reader's Guide

The Reader's Guide is provided to assist readers in locating articles on related topics. It classifies entries into 17 general topical categories:

- Applications and Contexts
- Critical Orientations
- Cultural Orientations
- Cybernetic and Systems Orientations
- Feminist Orientations
- Group and Organizational Concepts
- Information, Media, and Communication Technology
- International and Global Concepts
- Interpersonal Concepts
- Non-Western Orientations
- Paradigms, Traditions, and Schools
- Philosophical Orientations
- Psycho-Cognitive Orientations
- Rhetorical Orientations
- Semiotic, Linguistic, and Discursive Orientations
- Social-Interactional Orientations
- Theory, Metatheory, Methodology, and Inquiry

Entries may be listed under more than one topic.

Applications and Contexts

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Argumentation Theories
Broadcasting Theories
Campaign Communication Theories
Communication Across the Life Span
Communication in Later Life
Communication Skills Theories
Community
Competence Theories
Computer-Mediated Communication
Conflict Communication Theories
Corporate Campaign Theories
Cultivation Theory
Cultural Theories of Health Communication
Deliberative Democratic Theories
Entertainment–Education

Environmental Communication Theories
Ethics Theories
Family and Marital Schemas and Types
Family Communication Theories
Film Theories
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Theories
Globalization Theories
Group Communication Theories
Groupthink
Health Communication Theories
Humorous Communication Theory
Informatization
Intercultural Communication Theories
International Communication Theories
International Development Theories
Journalism and Theories of the Press
Learning and Communication

Legal Communication Theories
 Media and Mass Communication Theories
 Medium Theory
 Negotiation Theory
 Ordinary Democracy
 Organizational Communication Theories
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 Critical Discourse Analysis
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Accommodation Theory
 Action Assembly Theory
 Activation Theory of Information Exposure
 Activity Theory

- Affect-Dependent Theory of Stimulus Arrangements
 Agency
 Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory
 Argumentativeness, Assertiveness, and Verbal Aggressiveness Theory
 Attachment Theory
 Attitude Theory
 Attribution Theory
 Audience Theories
 Chronemics
 Cognitive Dissonance Theory
 Cognitive Theories
 Communibiology
 Communication Across the Life Span
 Communication and Language Acquisition and Development
 Communication in Later Life
 Competence Theories
 Compliance Gaining Strategies
 Constructivism
 Co-Orientation Theory
 Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory
 Cultivation Theory
 Diffusion of Innovations
 Dual-Level Connectionist Models of Group Cognition and Social Influence
 Dyadic Power Theory
 Elaboration Likelihood Theory
 Emotion and Communication
 Empathy
 Expectancy Violations Theory
 Face Negotiation Theory
 Family and Marital Schemas and Types
 Field Theory of Conflict
 Gender and Biology
 Gender Schema Theory
 General Semantics
 Heuristic-Systematic Model
 Humorous Communication Theory
 Immediacy
 Impression Formation
 Inoculation Theory
 Interaction Adaptation Theory
 Interaction Involvement
 Interaction Process Analysis
 Intercultural Communication Competence
 Interpersonal Deception Theory
 Intrapersonal Communication Theories
 Leadership Theories
 Learning and Communication
 Linguistic Relativity
 Meaning Theories
 Media Effects Theories
 Motivated Information Management Theory
 Negotiation Theory
 Nonverbal Communication Theories
 Persuasion and Social Influence Theories
 Politeness Theory
 Power, Interpersonal
 Privacy Management Theory
 Problematic Integration Theory
 Public Opinion Theories
 Reasoned Action Theory
 Religious Communication Theories
 Rhetorical Sensitivity
 Self-Categorization Theory
 Self-Disclosure
 Sense-Making
 Social and Communicative Anxiety
 Social Exchange Theory
 Social Information Processing Theory
 Social Judgment Theory
 Social Penetration Theory
 Spiral of Silence
 Style, Communicator
 Trait Theory
 Uncertainty Management Theories
 Uncertainty Reduction Theory
 Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency
 Values Studies: History and Concepts
- Rhetorical Orientations**
 Agency
 Argumentation Theories
 Classical Rhetorical Theory
 Critical Rhetoric
 Dramatism and Dramatistic Pentad
 Genre Theory
 Hermeneutics
 Identification
 Ideological Rhetoric
 Invitational Rhetoric

Metaphor
 Myth and Mythic Criticism
 Narrative and Narratology
 Organizational Control Theory
 Political Communication Theories
 Religious Communication Theories
 Rhetorical Sensitivity
 Symbolic Convergence Theory
 Visual Communication Theories

Semiotic, Linguistic, and Discursive Orientations

Accounts and Account Giving
 Action-Implicative Discourse Analysis
 Activity Theory
 Actor–Network Theory
 Archeology and Genealogy
 Argumentation Theories
 Autoethnography
 Chronemics
 Classical Rhetorical Theory
 Constitutive View of Communication
 Conversational Constraints Theory
 Conversation Analysis
 Critical Discourse Analysis
 Cultural Studies
 Deconstruction
 Ethnomethodology
 Feminist Rhetorical Criticism
 Genderlect Theory
 General Semantics
 Genre Theory
 Hermeneutics
 Identification
 Ideological Rhetoric
 Interpretive Theory
 Intrapersonal Communication Theories
 Kinesics
 Language and Communication
 Linguistic Relativity
 Materiality of Discourse
 Meaning Theories
 Metacommunication
 Metaphor
 Narrative and Narratology
 Neocolonialism

Nonverbal Communication Theories
 Paralanguage
 Politeness Theory
 Popular Culture Theories
 Positioning Theory
 Poststructuralism
 Proxemics
 Semiotics and Semiology
 Silence, Silences, and Silencing
 Speech Act Theory
 Speech Codes Theory
 Stories and Storytelling
 Symbolic Convergence Theory
 Symbolic Interactionism
 Visual Communication Theories

Social-Interactional Orientations

Accounts and Account Giving
 Action-Implicative Discourse Analysis
 Activity Theory
 Actor–Network Theory
 Agency
 Agenda-Setting Theory
 Audience Theories
 Autoethnography
 Bona Fide Group Theory
 Communication and Language Acquisition and
 Development
 Communication Theory of Identity
 Community
 Community of Practice
 Consequentiality of Communication
 Constitutive View of Communication
 Conversational Constraints Theory
 Conversation Analysis
 Coordinated Management of Meaning
 Co-Orientation Theory
 Cultural Performance Theory
 Dialogue Theories
 Diffusion of Innovations
 Discourse Theory and Analysis
 Dramatism and Dramatistic Pentad
 Ethnomethodology
 Facework Theories
 Framing Theory
 Functional Group Communication Theory

- Gender Role Theory
 Grounded Theory
 Hawaiian *Ho'oponopono* Theory
 I and Thou
 Identification
 Identity Theories
 Immediacy
 Impression Management
 Interpersonal Deception Theory
 Interpretive Communities Theory
 Intrapersonal Communication Theories
 Invitational Rhetoric
 Leadership Theories
 Meaning Theories
 Membership Categorization
 Analysis (MCA)
 Negotiation Theory
 Nonverbal Communication Theories
 Organizational Control Theory
 Organizational Co-Orientation Theory
 Organizational Culture
 Organizing, Process of
 Palo Alto Group
 Performance Theories
 Politeness Theory
 Positioning Theory
 Postmodern Theory
 Poststructuralism
 Privacy Management Theory
 Privilege
 Proxemics
 Relational Control Theory
 Relational Development Theories
 Relational Dialectics
 Relational Maintenance
 Rogerian Dialogue Theory
 Rules Theories
 Social Action Media Studies
 Social Construction of Reality
 Social Identity Theory
 Social Interaction Theories
 Social Penetration Theory
 Speech Act Theory
 Spiral of Silence
 Stories and Storytelling
- Structuration Theory
 Symbolic Convergence Theory
 Symbolic Interactionism
 Symbolic-Interpretive Perspective on Groups
 Values Studies: History and Concepts
 Values Theory: Sociocultural Dimensions and Frameworks
- Theory, Metatheory,
 Methodology, and Inquiry**
- Autoethnography
 Conversation Analysis
 Critical Discourse Analysis
 Critical Ethnography
 Definitions of Communication
 Discourse Theory and Analysis
 Epistemology
 Ethics Theories
 Ethnography of Communication
 Ethnomethodology
 Evaluating Communication Theory
 Feminist Rhetorical Criticism
 Genre Theory
 Grounded Theory
 Hermeneutics
 Humanistic Perspective
 Inquiry Processes
 Interpretive Theory
 Metatheory
 Modernism in Communication Theory
 Myth and Mythic Criticism
 Ontology
 Performative Writing
 Phenomenology
 Philosophy of Communication
 Postpositivism
 Practical Theory
 Realism and the Received View
 Scientific Approach
 Stories and Storytelling
 Theory
 Traditions of Communication Theory
 Validity and Reliability
 Variable Analytic Tradition

Theorists

<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Aakhus, Mark	Practical Theory	Anderson, James	Social Action Media Studies
Abelson, Robert	Cognitive Theories	Angell, Norman	International Communication Theories
Abhinavagupta	Indian <i>Rasa</i> Theory	Anzaldúa, Gloria	Chicana Feminism Latino Perspectives
Adorno, Theodor	Broadcasting Theories Critical Theory Frankfurt School Modernism in Communication Theory Popular Culture Theories Power and Power Relations	Appadurai, Arjun	Diaspora Globalization Theories
Affifi, Walid	Motivated Information Management Theory Uncertainty Management Theories	Ardener, Shirley	Muted Group Theory
Ajzen, Icek	Campaign Communication Theories Persuasion and Social Influence Theories Reasoned Action Theory	Arendt, Hannah	Power and Power Relations Public Sphere
Allport, Gordon	Public Opinion Theories Values Studies: History and Concepts	Argyle, Michael	Communication Skills Theories
Althusser, Louis	Critical Discourse Analysis Critical Theory Cultural Studies Gender and Media Ideology Poststructuralism	Aristotle	Classical Rhetorical Theory Community Epistemology Ethics Theories Legal Communication Theories Media Ethics Theories Narrative and Narratology Ontology Persuasion and Social Influence Theories Rhetorical Theory Traditions of Communication Theory Values Studies: History and Concepts
Altman, Irwin	Interpersonal Communication Theories Relational Communication Theory Relational Development Self-Disclosure	Arnheim, Rudolph	Film Theories
Andersen, Peter A.	Immediacy	Arundale, Robert	Facework Theories
		Asante, Molefi Kete	Afrocentricity Interracial Communication

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<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Ashby, Ross	Cybernetics	Barthes, Roland	Meaning Theories Popular Culture Theories Poststructuralism Semiotics and Semiology Visual Communication Theories
Aune, Kelly	Deception Detection	Bateson, Gregory	Constructivism Cybernetics Palo Alto Group Pragmatics Relational Communication Theory Relational Control Theory Social Interaction Theories System Theory Traditions of Communication Theory
Austin, John	Ethnomethodology Language and Communication Performance Ethnography Performance Theories Pragmatics Rules Theories Speech Act Theory	Baudrillard, Jean	Media Ethics Theories Popular Culture Theories Postmodern Theory Poststructuralism Simulation and Media
Babrow, Austin S.	Motivated Information Management Theory Problematic Integration Theory Uncertainty Management Theories	Baudry, Jean-Louis	Spectatorship
Baier, Annette	Ethics Theories	Bauman, Zygmunt	Ethics Theories
Bakardjieva, Maria	Critical Constructivism	Baxter, Leslie A.	Family Communication Theories Interpersonal Communication Theories Relational Communication Theory Relational Dialectics Relational Uncertainty
Bakhtin, Mikhail	Cultural Performance Theory Dialogue Theories Narrative and Narratology Performance Ethnography Performance Theories Relational Communication Theory Relational Dialectics Stories and Storytelling	Baym, Nancy	Computer-Mediated Communication
Bales, Robert	Group Communication Theories Interaction Process Analysis Symbolic Convergence Theory	Bazin, André	Film Theories
Ball-Rokeach, Sandra	Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency	Beatty, Michael J.	Communibiology Trait Theories
Bandura, Albert	Campaign Communication Theories Communication Skills Theories Entertainment–Education Learning and Communication Media and Mass Communication Theories	Beck, Ulrich	Globalization Theories
Barker, Valerie	Communication in Later Life	Bell, Derrick	Critical Race Theory
Barry, Ann Marie	Visual Communication Theories	Bell, Elizabeth	Feminist Communication Theories
		Bem, Daryl	Attitude Theory Attribution Theory Compliance Gaining Strategies Persuasion and Social Influence Theories

<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Bem, Sandra	Gender Schema Theory Power, Interpersonal Rules Theories	Birdwhistell, Ray	Kinesics Rules Theories Social Interaction Theories
Benjamin, Walter	Critical Theory Frankfurt School	Bitzer, Lloyd	Rhetorical Theory
Bennett, Lance	Legal Communication Theories	Blake, Robert	Conflict Communication Theories
Bentham, Jeremy	Ethics Theories	Blumer, Herbert	Grounded Theory Interpersonal Communication Theories Learning and Communication Symbolic Interactionism
Berger, Charles	Cognitive Theories Communication Goal Theories Intercultural Communication Theories Interpersonal Communication Theories Relational Uncertainty Uncertainty Management Theories Uncertainty Reduction Theory	Blumler, Jay	Audience Theories Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency
Berger, Peter	Ethnomethodology Language and Communication Institutional Theories of Organizational Communication Social Construction of Reality	Bohm, David	Dialogue Theories
Berlo, David	Empathy Process of Communication	Borel, Marie-Jeanne	Constructivism
Bernstein, Basil	Elaborated and Restricted Codes	Bormann, Ernest G.	Group Communication Theories Symbolic Convergence Theory
Bertalanffy, Ludwig	System Theory	Bosmajian, Haig	Legal Communication Theories
Bhabha, Homi K.	Hybridity Postcolonial Theory	Boulding, Elise	Peace Theories
Bharata	Indian <i>Rasa</i> Theory	Boulding, Kenneth	Peace Theories
Bhartrhari	Asian Communication Theory Hindu Communication Theory	Bourdieu, Pierre	Learning and Communication Popular Culture Theories
Billig, Michael	Discourse Theory and Analysis	Bowlby, John	Attachment Theory
Biocca, Frank	Presence Theory	Boyd-Barrett, Oliver	Flow and Contra-Flow
Birdsell, David	Interpersonal Communication Theories Legal Communication Theories Nonverbal Communication Theories	Brashers, Dale	Motivated Information Management Theory Uncertainty Management Theories
		Brown, Penelope	Accounts and Account Giving Compliance-Gaining Strategies Facework Theories Impression Management Interpersonal Communication Theories Politeness Theory

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<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Browning, Larry	Organizational List Theory	Butler, Judith	Feminist Communication Theories Queer Theory Performance Ethnography Performance Theories
Buber, Martin	Dialogue Theories Ethics Theories I and Thou Rogerian Dialogue Theory Stories and Storytelling Traditions of Communication Theory	Cacioppo, John	Advertising Theories Elaboration Likelihood Theory Persuasion and Social Influence Theories Political Communication Theories
Buddha	Asian Communication Theory Buddhist Communication Theory Hindu Communication Theory Values Studies: History and Concepts	Calafell, Bernadette	Feminist Communication Theories Chicana Feminism
Buller, David	Deception Detection Interpersonal Deception Theory	Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs	Feminist Communication Theories Feminist Rhetorical Criticism Genre Theory
Burgoon, Judee K.	Cross-Cultural Communication Deception Detection Expectancy Violations Theory Interaction Adaptation Theory Interpersonal Communication Theories Interpersonal Deception Theory Nonverbal Communication Theories Persuasion and Social Influence Theories	Campos, Milton	Critical Constructivism
Burke, Kenneth	Agency Chronemics Critical Organizational Communication Critical Rhetoric Dramatism and Dramatistic Pentad Empathy Humorous Communication Theory Identification Metaphor Performance Theories Religious Communication Theories Symbolic Interactionism	Canary, Daniel	Conflict Communication Theories Relational Maintenance Theories
Burks, Don	Rhetorical Sensitivity	Cannon, Kenneth L.	Dyadic Power Theory
Burns, James McGregor	Leadership Theories	Caputo, Joseph	Ethics Theories
		Carey, James	New Media Theory Power and Power Relations Social Construction of Reality
		Cassirer, Ernst	Linguistic Relativity
		Castells, Manuel	Globalization Theories International Communication Theories Network Society
		Cegala, Donald	Interaction Involvement
		Chaiken, Shelly	Heuristic-Systematic Model Persuasion and Social Influence Theories
		Chambers, Robert	International Development Theories
		Chen, Guo-Ming	Asian Communication Theory Chinese Harmony Theory Intercultural Communication Competence

<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Cheney, George	Critical Organizational Communication Organizational Control Theory Organizational Culture Organizational Identity Theory	Cooley, Charles	Interpretive Theory Learning and Communication Symbolic Interactionism Traditions of Communication Theory
Chomsky, Noam	Communication and Language Acquisition and Development Consequentiality of Communication Critical Discourse Analysis Language and Communication Propaganda Theory Rules Theories	Cooren, François	Actor–Network Theory Constitutive View of Communication Organizational Communication Theories
Christians, Clifford	Media Ethics Theories	Craig, Robert T.	Constitutive View of Communication Practical Theory
Cialdini, Robert	Compliance Gaining Strategies	Crenshaw, Kimberlé	Critical Race Theory Intersectionality
Cicero	Classical Rhetorical Theory Legal Communication Theories Metaphor Rhetorical Theory	Cronen, Vernon	Coordinated Management of Meaning Interpersonal Communication Theories Practical Theory Rules Theories
Cixous, Hélène	Feminist Communication Theories French Feminism	Crystal, David	Paralanguage
Cloud, Dana L.	Ideology Materiality of Discourse	Cua, Antonio	Asian Communication Theory
Cohen, Bernard	Media Effects Theories	Cupach, William	Communication Skills Theories Competence Theories Identity Theories
Collier, Mary Jane	Cultural Identity Theory Culture and Communication Identity Theories	Daft, Richard	Media Richness Theory
Collins, Patricia Hill	Black Feminist Epistemology Womanism	Dance, Frank E. X.	Communication and Language Acquisition and Development
Condit, Celeste	Feminist Communication Theories	Darwin, Charles	Cultural Types Theories Nonverbal Communication Theories Realism and the Received View System Theory
Coney, Russell	Advertising Theories	Deetz, Stanley A.	Corporate Colonization Theory Critical Organizational Communication Organizational Communication Theories
Confucius	Confucian Communication Theory Ethics Theories Taoist Communication Theory Values Studies: History and Concepts	DeFleur, Marvin	Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency
Conquergood, Dwight	Critical Ethnography Cultural Performance Theory Performance Ethnography Performance Theories	De la Garza, Sarah Amira	Chicana Feminism Latino Perspectives
		Deleuze, Gilles	Film Theories

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<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Delia, Jesse G.	Communication and Language Acquisition and Development Constructivism Interpersonal Communication Theories	Donohue, William	Conflict Communication Theories
Denzin, Norman	Neocolonialism Performance Ethnography	Dow, Bonnie	Feminist Communication Theories
Derrida, Jacques	Deconstruction Performance Theories Poststructuralism	Duck, Steve	Relational Development
Dervin, Brenda	Sense-Making	Dunbar, Norah E.	Dyadic Power Theory
Descartes, René	Agency Epistemology Modernism in Communication Theory Rhetorical Theory	Duncan, Hugh	Dramatism and Dramatistic Pentad Power and Power Relations
Dewey, John	Community Functional Group Communication Theory Group Communication Theories Interpretive Theory Learning and Communication Public Opinion Theories	Duncan, Starky	Silence, Silences, and Silencing
DiClemente, Carlo	Campaign Communication Theories	Dutta, Mohan J.	Cultural Theories of Health Communication
Dillard, James Price	Cognitive Theories Compliance Gaining Strategies Communication Goal Theories	Eagly, Alice	Gender Role Theory
Dilthey, Wilhelm	Hermeneutics Interpretive Theory	Edelman, Murray	Political Communication Theories
DiMaggio, Paul	Institutional Theories of Organizational Communication	Edwards, Derek	Discourse Theory and Analysis
Dissanayake, Wimal	Asian Communication Theory	Ekman, Paul	Emotion and Communication Kinesics Nonverbal Communication Theories
Doane, Mary Ann	Spectatorship	Elkins, James	Visual Communication Theories
Donohew, Lewis	Activation Theory of Information Exposure	Ellul, Jacques	Media Ethics Theories
Donohue, George	Public Opinion Theories	Engels, Frederick	Marxist Theory
		Fairclough, Norman	Critical Discourse Analysis Practical Theory
		Fanon, Frantz	Postcolonial Theory
		Farrell, Thomas	Rules Theories
		Fassett, Deanna	Critical Communication Pedagogy
		Fazio, Russell	Cognitive Theories
		Feenberg, Andrew	Critical Constructivism
		Festinger, Leon	Attitude Theory Cognitive Dissonance Theory Persuasion and Social Influence Theories Traditions of Communication Theory
		Fiedler, Fred	Leadership Theories
		Fish, Stanley	Interpretive Communities Theory

<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Fishbein, Martin	Persuasion and Social Influence Theories Reasoned Action Theory Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency	Frentz, Thomas	Myth and Mythic Criticism Rules Theories
Fisher, Roger	Negotiation Theory	Freud, Sigmund	Agency Critical Theory Humorous Communication Theory Spectatorship
Fisher, Walter	Narrative and Narratology	Friesen, Wallace	Kinesics Nonverbal Communication Theories
Fiske, John	Popular Culture Theories	Gadamer, Hans Georg.	Dialogue Theories Ethnomethodology Hermeneutics Interpretive Theory Modernism Stories and Storytelling Traditions of Communication Theory
Fitzpatrick, Mary Anne	Conflict Communication Theories Family and Marital Schemas and Types Family Communication Theories Relational Communication Theory	Galtung, Johan	Peace Theories
Foerster, Heinz von	Cybernetics System Theory	Gardner, Howard	Learning and Communication
Foss, Sonja K.	Feminist Communication Theories	Garfinkel, Herbert	Conversation Analysis Ethnomethodology Rules Theories
Foss, Sonja	Feminist Communication Theories Invitational Rhetoric	Gearhart, Sally Miller	Feminist Communication Theories Invitational Rhetoric
Foucault, Michel	Archeology and Genealogy Critical Constructivism Critical Discourse Analysis Critical Rhetoric Critical Theory Discourse Theory and Analysis Ethics Theories Ideology Materiality of Discourse Neocolonialism Popular Culture Theories Postmodern Theory Poststructuralism Practical Theory Queer Theory Rhetorical Theory	Geertz, Clifford	Dramatism and Dramatistic Pentad Intercultural Communication Theories Interpretive Theory Organizational Culture Stories and Storytelling
Freire, Paulo	Critical Communication Pedagogy Dialogue Theories Learning and Communication	Gerbner, George	Broadcasting Theories Cultivation Theory Cultural Indicators Gender and Media Media Effects Theories Violence and Nonviolence in Media Studies
French, John R. P.	Compliance Gaining Strategies Dyadic Power Theory Power, Interpersonal	Ghandi, Mohandas	Violence and Nonviolence in Media Studies

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<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Giddens, Anthony	Globalization Theories Group and Organizational Structuration Theory Group Communication Theories Organizational Communication Theories Power and Power Relations Practical Theory Rules Theories Structuration Theory	Gottman, John	Conflict Communication Theories Family and Marital Schemas and Types
Gilbert, Nigel	Discourse Theory and Analysis	Gouran, Dennis	Functional Group Communication Theory Group Communication Theories
Giles, Howard	Accommodation Theory Communication in Later Life Cross-Cultural Communication Intercultural Communication Theories Interpersonal Communication Theories	Gramsci, Antonio	Critical Discourse Analysis Cultural Studies Gender and Media Ideology Popular Culture Theories Power and Power Relations
Gilligan, Carol	Ethics Theories	Greene, John O.	Action Assembly Theory Interpersonal Communication Theories
Gitlin, Todd	Americanization of Media	Grice, Paul	Deception Detection Language and Communication Pragmatics Rules Theories
Glaser, Bernie	Grounded Theory	Griffin, Cindy L.	Feminist Communication Theories Invitational Rhetoric
Glaserfeld, Ernst von	Constructivism Cybernetics	Grint, Keith	Leadership Theories
Goffman, Erving	Agency Conversation Analysis Cultural Performance Theory Dramatism and Dramatistic Pentad Facework Theories Framing Theory Impression Management Interaction Involvement Interpersonal Communication Theories Performance Ethnography Performance Theories Politeness Theory Rules Theories Social Interaction Theories Stigma Communication Symbolic Interactionism	Grize, Jean- Blaise	Constructivism
Golombisky, Kim	Feminist Communication Theories	Grootendorst, Rian	Argumentation Theories
Goodnight, Thomas	Argumentation Theories	Grossberg, Lawrence	Cultural Studies Popular Culture Theories
		Gudykunst, William B.	Cross-Cultural Communication
		Gullion, Dead Edmund	Media Diplomacy
		Gunaratne, Shelton A.	Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory Culture and Communication Intercultural Communication Theories
		Gurevitch, Michael	Audience Theories Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency

<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	
Habermas, Jürgen	Asian Communication Theory	Hall, Stuart	Audience Theories	
	Communicative Action Theory		Broadcasting Theories	
	Competence Theories		Critical Discourse Analysis	
	Corporate Colonization Theory		Cultural Studies	
	Critical Constructivism		Culture and Communication	
	Critical Discourse Analysis		Fans, Fandom, and Fan Studies	
	Critical Organizational Communication		Language and Communication	
	Critical Theory		Power and Power Relations	
	Culture and Communication	Visual Communication Theories		
	Deliberative Democratic Theories	Halliday, Michael A. K.	Critical Discourse Analysis	
	Ethics Theories		Hamelink, Cees	International Communication Theories
	Frankfurt School	Harraway, Donna		Feminist Standpoint Theory
	Globalization Theories		Harré, Rom	Positioning Theory
	Hermeneutics	Harris, Tina M.		Interracial Communication
	Media Ethics Theories		Harris, Zelig	Discourse Theory and Analysis
	Medium Theory	Hart, Roderick		Theory Rhetorical Sensitivity
	Metatheory		Harwood, Jake	Communication in Later Life
	Modernism in Communication Theory	Hasain, Marouf		Legal Communication Theories
	Political Communication Theories		Hebdidge, Dick	Fans, Fandom, and Fan Studies
	Power and Power Relations	Hecht, Michael		Communication Theory of Identity Cultural Identity Theory Identity Theories Interracial Communication
	Public Opinion Theories		Hegde, Radha	Feminist Communication Theories Postcolonial Feminism Postcolonial Theory
	Public Sphere	Hegel, Georg		System Theory
	Rhetorical Theory		Heidegger, Martin	Critical Theory Hermeneutics Phenomenology Traditions of Communication Theory
	Social Interaction Theories			
	Traditions of Communication Theory			
	Hall, Edward T.	Chronemics		
		Cultural Types Theories		
Culture and Communication				
Intercultural Communication Theories				
Interpersonal Communication Theories				
Nonverbal Communication Theories				
Popular Culture Theories				
Proxemics				
Rules Theories				
Values Theory: Sociocultural Dimensions and Frameworks				

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<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Heider, Fritz	Attitude Theory Interpersonal Communication Theories Interpretive Theory Persuasion and Social Influence Theories	Hovland, Carl	Attitude Theory Learning and Communication Persuasion and Social Influence Theories Public Opinion Theories Scientific Approach Traditions of Communication Theory
Held, David	Globalization Theories	Humboldt, Wilhelm von	Hermeneutics
Herbeck, Dale	Legal Communication Theories	Hummert, Mary Lee	Communication in Later Life
Hewes, Dean E.	Dual-Level Connectionist Models of Group Cognition and Social Influence	Husserl, Edmund	Ethnomethodology Hermeneutics Interpretive Theory Phenomenology Traditions of Communication Theory
Hirokawa, Randy Y.	Functional Group Communication Theory Group Communication Theories	Hymes, Dell	Community Consequentiality of Communication Culture and Communication Ethnography of Communication Rules Theories Social Interaction Theories Speech Codes Theory
Hobbes, Thomas	Ethics Theories Humorous Communication Theory	Imahori, Tadasu Todd	Identity Theory
Hofstede, Geert	Cross-Cultural Communication Cultural Types Theories Culture and Communication Intercultural Communication Theories Values Studies: History and Concepts Values Theory: Sociocultural Dimensions and Frameworks	Infante, Dominic A.	Trait Theories Argumentativeness, Assertiveness, and Verbal Aggressiveness
Hoggart, Richard	Cultural Studies Popular Culture Theories	Ingelhart, Ronald	Values Theory: Sociocultural Dimensions and Frameworks
Holling, Michelle	Feminist Communication Theories	Innis, Harold Adams	Chronemics International Communication Theories Medium Theory
Horkheimer, Max	Critical Theory Frankfurt School Modernism in Communication Theory Popular Culture Theories Power and Power Relations	Irigaray, Luce	Feminist Communication Theories French Feminism
House, Robert	Leadership Theories	Ishii, Satoshi	Asian Communication Theory
Houston, Marsha	Feminist Communication Theories Genderlect Theory Interracial Communication Womanism	Isocrates	Classical Rhetorical Theory
		Jablin, Fredric	Organizational Socialization and Assimilation

<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Jackson, Ronald L., II	Cultural Contracts Theory Identity Theories Interracial Communication	Katz, Elihu	Audience Theories Media Effects Theories Two-Step and Multi-Step Flow Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency
Jackson, Sally	Language and Communication Practical Theory	Keane, John	Media Democracy
Jacobs, Scott	Language and Communication	Kelley, Harold	Attribution Theory Interpersonal Communication Theories
James, William	Interpretive Theory	Kelly, George	Constructivism
Jakobson, Roman	Poststructuralism Pragmatics	Kelman, Herbert	Attitude Theory
Jamieson, Kathleen	Feminist Communication Theories Genre Theory	Key, Valdimer O.	Public Opinion Theories
Janis, Irving	Functional Group Communication Theory Group Communication Theories Groupthink	Kilmann, Ralph	Conflict Communication Theories
Jefferson, Gail	Conversation Analysis Language and Communication	Kim, Min-Sun	Conversational Constraints Theory
Jenkins, Henry	Fans, Fandom, and Fan Studies New Media Theory	Kim, Young Yun	Contextual Theory of Interethnic Communication Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory Cross-Cultural Communication Identity Theories
Jenkins, Steven	Ideological Rhetoric	Kincaid, D. Lawrence	Convergence Theory
Jensen, Klaus Bruhn	Interpretive Communities Theory	Kintsch, Walter	Cognitive Theories
Johannesen, Richard	Dialogue Theories	Klapper, Joseph	Media Effects Theories Spiral Models of Media Effects
Jones, Edward	Impression Management	Klein, Gary	Sense-Making
Jourard, Sydney	Self-Disclosure	Kluckhohn, Clyde	Values Studies: History and Concepts Values Theory: Sociocultural Dimensions and Frameworks
Jung, Carl	Myth and Mythic Criticism	Knapp, Mark	Interpersonal Communication Theories Relational Communication Theory Relational Development
Kahneman, Daniel	Cognitive Theories	Knobloch, Leanne K.	Relational Uncertainty
Kant, Immanuel	Agency Ethics Theories Media Ethics Theories Modernism in Communication Theory	Koerner, Ascan F.	Conflict Communication Theories Family and Marital Schemas and Types Family Communication Theories Relational Communication Theory
Karatani, Kojin	Popular Culture Theories		
Katz, Daniel	Attitude Theory		

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<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Kolb, Deborah	Negotiation Theory	Lasswell, Harold	Broadcasting Theories Journalism and Theories of the Press Public Opinion Theories
Korzybski, Alfred	General Semantics	Latour, Bruno	Actor–Network Theory
Kraidy, Marwan	Flow and Contra-Flow Hybridity Transculturation	Lauretis, Terese de	Queer Theory Spectatorship
Kracauer, Siegfried	Film Theories	Lave, Jean	Community
Kramarae, Cheris	Feminist Communication Theories Genderlect Theory	Lazarsfeld, Paul	Audience Theories Broadcasting Theories Journalism and Theories of the Press Media and Mass Communication Theories Media Effects Theories Political Communication Theories Public Opinion Theories Two-Step and Multi-Step Flow
Krippendorff, Klaus	Constructivism Cybernetics	Lederach, John Paul	Peace Theories
Kristeva, Julia	Feminist Communication Theories French Feminism Semiotics and Semiology	Lee, Kwan Min	Presence Theory
Krizek, Robert	Feminist Communication Theories Identity Theories Whiteness Theory	Lee, Wenshu	Queer Theory
Krugman, Herbert	Advertising Theories	Lengel, Robert	Media Richness Theory
Kuhn, Thomas	Theory	Leontiev, A. N.	Activity Theory
Lacan, Jacques	Critical Theory Film Theories Popular Culture Theories Poststructuralism Spectatorship	Lerner, Daniel	Globalization Theories International Communication Theories
Lake, Randall	Myth and Mythic Criticism	Levinas, Emmanuel	Ethics Theories Traditions of Communication Theory
Lakoff, George	Metaphor	Levinson, Stephen	Accounts and Account Giving Compliance Gaining Strategies Facework Theories Impression Management Interpersonal Communication Theories Politeness Theory
Lakoff, Robin	Feminist Communication Theories Genderlect Theory Rules Theories	Lévi-Strauss, Claude	Film Theories Popular Culture Theories
Lang, Annie	Cognitive Theories	Lewin, Kurt	Communication Skills Theories Field Theory of Conflict Group Communication Theories
Langellier, Kristin	Performance Theories	Lewis, St. Elmo	Advertising Theories
Lanigan, Richard	Phenomenology		
Laozi (Lao-Tzu)	Asian Communication Theory Taoist Communication Theory Values Studies: History and Concepts		

<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Lindlof, Thomas R.	Interpretive Communities Theory	Marwell, Gerald	Compliance Gaining Strategies
Lippmann, Walter	Corporate Campaign Theories Framing Theory Learning and Communication Public Opinion Theories	Marx, Karl	Agency Critical Discourse Analysis Frankfurt School Ideology Marxist Theory Power and Power Relations System Theory Traditions of Communication Theory
Littlejohn, Stephen W.	Conflict Communication Theories	Maslow, Abraham	Humanistic Perspective
Lombard, Matthew	Presence Theory	Matson, Floyd	Dialogue Theories
Luckmann, Thomas	Ethnomethodology Language and Communication Social Construction of Reality	Mattelart, Armand	International Communication Theories
Luhmann, Niklas	Cybernetics	Maturana, Humberto	Constructivism Cybernetics
Lull, James	Social Action Media Studies	McCombs, Maxwell	Agenda-Setting Theory Broadcasting Theories Framing Theory Media Effects Theories Political Communication Theories Public Opinion Theories
Lundsford, Andrea	Feminist Communication Theories	McCornack, Steven	Deception Detection
Lyman, Stanford	Accounts and Account Giving	McCroskey, James C.	Communibiology Social and Communicative Anxiety Trait Theory
Lyotard, Francois	Narrative and Narratology Popular Culture Theories Poststructuralism	McGee, Michael	Critical Rhetoric Critical Theory Ideological Rhetoric Myth and Mythic Criticism
Madison, Soyini	Performance Ethnography Performance Theories	McGrew, Anthony	Globalization Theories
Manalansan, Martin	Queer Theory	McGuire, William	Attitude Theory Inoculation Theory Persuasion and Social Influence Theories
Marcuse, Herbert	Broadcasting Theories Critical Constructivism Critical Theory Frankfurt School Popular Culture Theories Power and Power Relations	McIntosh, Peggy	Privilege
Marshall, T. H.	Citizenship		
Martin, Judith	Identity Theories		
Martinez, Jacqueline	Latino Perspectives		

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<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
McKerrow, Raymie E.	Critical Rhetoric Critical Theory	Meyrowitz, Joshua	Medium Theory
McKersie, Robert	Negotiation Theory	Miéville, Denis	Constructivism
McLuhan, Marshall	Broadcasting Theories Globalization Theories International Communication Theories Meaning Theories Medium Theory New Media Theory	Miike, Yoshitaka	Asian Communication Theory Interracial Communication
McPhail, Mark Lawrence	Complicity Theory	Mill, John Stuart	Ethics Theories Public Opinion Theories
McPhee, Robert D.	Constitutive View of Communication Group and Organizational Structuration Theory Group Communication Theories	Miller, Courtney Waite	Conflict Communication Theories
Mead, George Herbert	Community Empathy Interpersonal Communication Theories Interpretive Theory Learning and Communication Meaning Theories Modernism in Communication Theory Political Communication Theories Symbolic Interactionism Traditions of Communication Theory	Minha, Trinh T.	Postcolonial Feminism
Mead, Margaret	Cultural Types Theories Gender Role Theory Values Studies: History and Concepts	Mitchell, W. J. T.	Visual Communication Theories
Mehrabian, Albert	Immediacy Nonverbal Communication Theories Paralanguage	Mohanty, Chandra Talpade	Postcolonial Feminism
Mencius	Taoist Communication Theory	Monge, Peter	System Theory
Merleau-Ponty, Maurice	Phenomenology	Montagu, Ashley	Dialogue Theories
Metz, Christian	Film Theories Spectatorship	Montgomery, Barbara	Relational Communication Theory Relational Dialectics
		Montville, Joseph	Peace Theories
		Morris, Charles	Language and Communication Pragmatics Values Studies: History and Concepts
		Mouffe, Chantal	Ethics Theories
		Mouton, Jane	Conflict Communication Theories
		Mulkay, Michael	Discourse Theory and Analysis
		Mulvey, Laura	Feminist Communication Theories Popular Culture Theories Spectatorship
		Mumby, Dennis	Critical Organizational Communication Ideology
		Nagarjuna	Asian Communication Theory
		Nakayama, Thomas	Feminist Communication Theories Identity Theories Whiteness Theory
		Nass, Clifford	Media Equation Theory

<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Newcomb, Theodore	Co-Orientation Theory	Osborn, Michael M.	Metaphor Myth and Mythic Criticism
Nietzsche, Friedrich	Agency Ethics Theories Interpretive Theory	Osgood, Charles	Cross-Cultural Communication Persuasion and Social Influence Theories
Noddings, Nel	Ethics Theories	Pacanowsky, Michael	Organizational Communication Theories Organizational Culture
Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth	Broadcasting Theories Japanese <i>Kuuki</i> Theory Media Effects Theories Public Opinion Theories Spiral Models of Media Effects Spiral of Silence	Palmgreen, Phillip	Activation Theory of Information Exposure Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency
Norton, Robert	Style, Communicator Trait Theories	Panini	Asian Communication Theory
Nussbaum, Jon	Communication Across the Life Span	Parameswaran, Radhika	Cultural Studies Postcolonial Feminism
O'Donnell-Trujillo, Nick	Organizational Communication Theories Organizational Culture	Paramitas	Ethics Theories
Oetzel, John G.	Conflict Communication Theories Effective Intercultural Workgroup Communication Theory	Paredes, Américo	Latino Perspectives
Ogawa, Dennis	Interracial Communication	Parsons, Talcott	Values Studies: History and Concepts Values Theory: Sociocultural Dimensions and Frameworks
Ogden, C. K.	Meaning Theories	Pearce, W. Barnett	Conflict Communication Theories Coordinated Management of Meaning Interpersonal Communication Theories Rules Theories
Olien, Clarice	Public Opinion Theories	Peirce, Charles S.	Interpretive Communities Theory Interpretive Theory Meaning Theories Semiotics and Semiology Traditions of Communication Theory
Olson, David	Family Communication Theories	Perelman, Chaïm	Argumentation Theories Rhetorical Theory
Olson, Scot Robert	International Communication Theories	Peterson, Eric	Performance Theories
Omi, Michael	Racial Formation Theory	Peterson, Theodore	Journalism and Theories of the Press
Ong, Walter	Meaning Theories Medium Theory	Petronio, Sandra	Self-Disclosure Privacy Management Theory
Ono, Kent	Vernacular Discourse		
Oravec, Christine	Environmental Communication Theories		
Orbe, Mark P.	Co-Cultural Theory Identity Theories Interracial Communication		
Ortiz, Fernando	Transculturation		

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<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Petty, Richard	Advertising Theories Elaboration Likelihood Theory Persuasion and Social Influence Theories Political Communication Theories	Pukui, Mary Kawena	Hawaiian <i>Ho'oponopono</i> Theory
Philipsen, Gerry	Community Ethnography of Communication Rules Theories Speech Codes Theory	Putnam, Linda	Bona Fide Group Theory Group Communication Theories Negotiation Theory System Theory
Piaget, Jean	Communication and Language Acquisition and Development Communication Skills Theories Constructivism Critical Constructivism Empathy Intrapersonal Communication Theories	Quintilian	Classical Rhetorical Theory
Plato	Classical Rhetorical Theory Learning and Communication Meaning Theories Rhetorical Theory Traditions of Communication Theory Values Studies: History and Concepts	Radway, Janice	Interpretive Communities Theory Gender and Media Popular Culture Theories
Pollock, Della	Performance Ethnography	Rafaeli, Sheizaf	Computer-Mediated Communication
Pollock, Griselda	Spectatorship	Rancer, Andrew S.	Argumentativeness, Assertiveness, and Verbal Aggressiveness Theory
Poole, Marshall Scott	Group and Organizational Structuration Theory Group Communication Theories Rules Theories	Raven, Bertram	Compliance Gaining Strategies Dyadic Power Theory Power, Interpersonal
Poster, Mark	New Media Theory	Rawls, John	Community Ethics Theories Media Ethics Theories
Potter, Jonathan	Discourse Theory and Analysis Positioning Theory	Ray, Michael	Advertising Theories
Powell, Walter	Institutional Theories of Organizational Communication	Reeves, Byron	Media Equation Theory
Poyatos, Fernando	Chronemics	Reid, Scott	Social Identity Theory
Pribram, Karl	Silence, Silences, and Silencing	Ribeau, Sidney	Interracial Communication
Prochaska, James	Campaign Communication Theories	Robertson, Roland	Globalization Theories
Puar, Jasbir	Queer Theory	Rokeach, Milton	Values Studies: History and Concepts Values Theory: Sociocultural Dimensions and Frameworks
Pudovkin, V. I.	Film Theories	Roloff, Michael	Conflict Communication Theories
		Rosengren, Karl	Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency
		Ross, W. D.	Media Ethics Theories
		Rousseau, Jean-Jacques	Ethics Theories Public Opinion Theories
		Rheingold, Howard	Digital Cultures
		Richards, I. A.	Meaning Theories Metaphor Rhetorical Theory

<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Ricoeur, Paul	Critical Organizational Communication Hermeneutics	Saussure, Ferdinand de	Consequentiality of Communication Cultural Studies Documentary Film Theories Film Theories Language and Communication Meaning Theories Poststructuralism Rules Theories Semiotics and Semiology Traditions of Communication Theory
Robinson, John	Two-Step and Multi-Step Flow	Schank, Roger	Cognitive Theories
Rogers, Carl	Dialogue Theories Empathy Humanistic Perspective Rogerian Dialogue Theory Traditions of Communication Theory	Schechner, Richard	Cultural Performance Theory Performance Ethnography Performance Theories
Rogers, Everett M.	Culture and Communication Diffusion of Innovations Entertainment–Education Two-Step and Multi-Step Flow	Schegloff, Emmanuel	Conversation Analysis Language and Communication Rules Theories
Rogers, L. Edna	Relational Communication Theory Relational Control Theory	Schein, Edgar	Organizational Socialization and Assimilation
Rollins, Boyd C.	Dyadic Power Theory	Schenk-Hamlin, William	Compliance Gaining Strategies
Roskos-Ewoldsen, David	Cognitive Theories	Schiller, Herbert	Flow and Contra-Flow Free Flow Doctrine Globalization Theories International Communication Theories Power and Power Relations
Rowe, Aimee Carrillo	Privilege	Schleiermacher, Friedrich	Hermeneutics Interpretive Theory
Ruesch, Jürgen	Pragmatics	Schmidt, David	Compliance Gaining Strategies
Russell, Daniel	Sense-Making	Schramm, Wilbur	Constitutive View of Communication Journalism and Theories of the Press Media and Mass Communication Theories Propaganda Theory
Rust, Paula	Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Theories	Schutz, Alfred	Ethnomethodology Social Action Media Studies
Sacks, Harvey	Conversation Analysis Ethnomethodology Language and Communication Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) Rules Theories	Schutz, William	Interpersonal Communication Theories
Said, Edward	Culture and Communication Dramatism and Dramatistic Pentad Postcolonial Theory	Schwartz, Shalom	Values Theory: Sociocultural Dimensions and Frameworks
Sanchez, George	Latino Perspectives		
Śankara, Adi	Hindu Communication Theory		
Sapir, Edward	Cultural Types Theories Linguistic Relativity		

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<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Scott, Marvin	Accounts and Account Giving	Siebert, Fred	Journalism and Theories of the Press
Scott, Walter Dill	Advertising Theories	Sigman, Stuart J.	Consequentiality of Communication
Searle, John	Ethnomethodology Interpersonal Communication Theories Language and Communication Performance Ethnography Performance Theories Speech Act Theories	Simmel, George	Interpretive Theory
Sebeok, Thomas A.	Semiotics and Semiology	Singhal, Arvind	Entertainment–Education
Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky	Queer Theory	Skinner, B. F.	Attitude Theory Communication Skills Theories Learning and Communication Persuasion and Social Influence Theories
Selznick, Philip	Institutional Theories of Organizational Communication	Slater, Michael D.	Spiral Models of Media Effects
Sethi, Suresh	Corporate Campaign Theories	Sloop, John	Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Theories Vernacular Discourse
Shannon, Claude	Constitutive View of Communication Cybernetics Information Theory Mathematical Theory of Communication Traditions of Communication Theory	Smith, Rachel A.	Stigma Communication
Shaw, Donald	Agenda-Setting Theory Broadcasting Theories Framing Theory Media Effects Theories Public Opinion Theories	Snowden, David	Sense-Making
Sherif, Muzafer	Advertising Theories Attitude Theory Persuasion and Social Influence Theories Political Communication Theories Social Judgment Theory	Solomon, Denise	Cognitive Theories Relational Uncertainty
Shimanoff, Susan B.	Rules Theories	Spender, Dale	Feminist Communication Theories
Shome, Raka	Cultural Studies Feminist Communication Theories Postcolonial Feminism Postcolonial Theory	Spitzberg, Brian	Communication Skills Theories Competence Theories
Shugart, Helene	Feminist Communication Theories	Spivak, Gayatri Chakrovorty	Feminist Communication Theories Neocolonialism Postcolonial Feminism Postcolonial Theory
		Staat, Arthur	Attitude Theory
		Stephan, Cookie White	Conflict Communication Theories
		Stephan, Walter	Conflict Communication Theories
		Stewart, John	Dialogue Theories
		Stohl, Cynthia	Bona Fide Group Theory Functional Group Communication Theory Group Communication Theories System Theory
		Storey, John	Popular Culture Theories
		Strauss, Anselm	Grounded Theory
		Strodtbeck, Fred	Values Theory: Sociocultural Dimensions and Frameworks

<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Sudnow, David	Conversation Analysis	Tölölyan, Khachig	Diaspora
Sunzi	Asian Communication Theory	Tompkins, Philip	Critical Organizational Communication Organizational Control Theory Organizational Culture Organizational Identity Theory
Swales, John	Community	Toulmin, Stephen	Argumentation Theories Constructivism Critical Constructivism
Tajfel, Henri	Identity Theories	Tracy, Karen	Action-Implicative Discourse Analysis Ordinary Democracy
Tannen, Deborah	Genderlect Theory Gender Role Theory Rules Theories Social Interaction Theories	Trager, George	Paralanguage
Tarde, Gabriel	Diffusion of Innovations	Triandis, Harry	Cross-Cultural Communication Values Theory: Sociocultural Dimensions and Frameworks
Taussig, Michael	Silence, Silences, and Silencing	Tuchman, Gaye	Gender and Media
Taylor, Dalmas	Interpersonal Communication Theories Relational Communication Theory Self-Disclosure	Tunstall, Jeremy	Flow and Contra-Flow
Taylor, James	Actor–Network Theory Constitutive View of Communication Organizational Communication Theories Organizational Co-Orientation Theory	Turkle, Sherry	New Media Theory
te Molder, Hedwig	Discourse Theory and Analysis	Turner, John C.	Identity Theories
Tenayuca, Emma	Latino Perspectives	Turner, Victor	Cultural Performance Theory Performance Ethnography Performance Theories
Thibault, John	Interpersonal Communication Theories	Ury, William	Negotiation Theory
Thomas, Kenneth	Conflict Communication Theories	Van Dijk, Jan	Network Society
Thomas, William	Attitude Theory Interpretive Theory Symbolic Interactionism Values Studies: History and Concepts	Van Dijk, Teun	Cognitive Theories Critical Discourse Analysis Discourse Theory and Analysis
Tichenor, Phillip	Public Opinion Theories	Van Eemeren, Frans	Argumentation Theories
Ting-Toomey, Stella	Conflict Communication Theories Cross-Cultural Communication Face Negotiation Theory Facework Theories Identity Theories Intercultural Communication Theories	Van Elteren, Mel	Americanization of Media
		Van Langenhove	Positioning Theory
		Van Maanen, John	Organizational Socialization and Assimilation
		Varela, Francisco	Constructivism Cybernetics
		von Neumann, John	Cybernetics Organizational Co-Orientation Theory

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<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>	<i>Theorists</i>	<i>Entry Titles</i>
Vygotsky, Leo	Activity Theory Communication and Language Acquisition and Development Communication Skills Theories Critical Constructivism Intrapersonal Communication Theories	Wetherell, Margaret	Positioning Theory
Walther, Joseph B.	Social Information Processing Theory	Whorf, Benjamin Lee	Linguistic Relativity
Walton, Richard	Negotiation Theory	Wiemann, John	Communication Skills Theories
Wander, Phillip	Critical Rhetoric Ideological Rhetoric	Wiener, Norbert	Cybernetics System Theory Traditions of Communication Theory
Warren, John T.	Critical Communication Pedagogy	Williams, Raymond	Broadcasting Theories Cultural Studies Popular Culture Theories Power and Power Relations
Watzlawick, Paul	Constructivism Interpersonal Communication Theories Palo Alto Group Pragmatics Relational Control Theory Rules Theories Social Interaction Theories System Theory	Wilson, Steven	Cognitive Theories
Weaver, Richard	Information Theory Traditions of Communication Theory	Winant, Howard	Racial Formation Theory
Weaver, Warren	Constitutive View of Communication Information Theory	Winston, Brian	New Media Theory
Weber, Max	Institutional Theories of Organizational Communication Interpretive Theory Modernism in Communication Theory Social Action Media Studies	Wiseman, Richard	Compliance Gaining Strategies
Weick, Karl	Organizational Communication Theories Organizing, Process of Rules Theories Sense-Making System Theory	Witte, Kim	Campaign Communication Theories
Weiner, Bernard	Attribution Theory	Wittgenstein, Ludwig	Ethnomethodology Interpretive Theory Language and Communication Pragmatics Speech Act Theory
Wenger, Etienne	Community Community of Practice	Wodak, Ruth	Critical Discourse Analysis
		Wolf, Julia Penelope	Feminist Communication Theories
		Zerubavel, Eviatar	Silence, Silences, and Silencing
		Zhuangzi	Asian Communication Theory Taoist Communication Theory
		Znaniiecki, Florian	Attitude Theory

About the Editors and Editorial Board

General Editors

Stephen W. Littlejohn is an adjunct professor of communication and journalism at the University of New Mexico. He is also a communication consultant and mediator. He has a long-standing interest in communication theory, having coauthored *Theories of Human Communication*, currently going into its 10th edition. In addition to numerous papers and articles, Littlejohn has also coauthored several books, including *Moral Conflict: When Social Worlds Collide*, *Elements of Speech Communication*, *Persuasive Transactions*, *Engaging Communication in Conflict: Systemic Practice*, *Mediation: Empowerment in Conflict Management*, *Facework: Bridging Theory and Practice*, and *Communication, Conflict, and the Management of Difference*. He received his PhD in communication at the University of Utah.

Karen A. Foss is a regents professor and a professor of communication and journalism at the University of New Mexico. She earned a PhD in communication from the University of Iowa and an MA in communication from the University of Oregon, and she has been at the forefront of bringing issues of gender and feminist perspectives into the communication discipline. She was named Scholar of the Year at Humboldt State University, a Presidential Teaching Fellow at the University of New Mexico, and Gender Scholar of the Year for 2005 by the Southern Communication Association. She also was awarded the Francine Merritt Award, given by the National Communication Association, for contributions to the lives of women in communication. She is the coauthor of *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*, *Women Speak: The Eloquence of Women's Lives*, *Inviting Transformation:*

Presentational Speaking for a Changing World, *Feminist Rhetorical Theories*, and *Theories of Human Communication*, which have consistently defined and challenged the communication discipline.

Editorial Board

Brenda J. Allen is an associate dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and a professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Colorado Denver. Her research and teaching areas are organizational communication, social identity, social construction, critical pedagogy, and computer-mediated communication. Among her numerous publications is a groundbreaking book titled *Difference Matters: Communicating Social Identity*. She is a coeditor of the *International and Intercultural Communication Annual*, and she recently received a Master Teacher Award from the Western States Communication Association.

J. Kevin Barge is a professor of communication at Texas A&M University. He received his MA and PhD degrees from the University of Kansas. His research interests center on developing a social constructionist approach to management and leadership, exploring the role of appreciative forms of communication to transform organizations and articulating the relationship between dialogue and organizing in organizational and community contexts. His research has been published in the *Academy of Management Review*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *The OD Practitioner*, *Communication Theory*, and *Communication Monographs*.

Roger de la Garde is a retired professor of sociology, Department of Communication, Laval University (Quebec, Canada). Still active in the academic field, he continues to supervise doctoral theses and remains is editor of the scientific journal *Communication*, which he cofounded in 1975. Past president of the Canadian Communication Association, his research interests and publications cover popular culture, mass communication, ideology, public discourse, and identity. He has contributed to the *Canadian Journal of Communication*; *Media, Culture & Society*; and the *Encyclopedia of Television*. He is a member of the editorial board of *Communication Theory* and *Cyberlegenda*.

Lisa A. Flores is an associate professor of communication at the University of Colorado Boulder. Her research explores rhetorical dynamics of domination and subordination, principally as linked to race and gender. Current projects include a rhetorical history of Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans and a rhetorical analysis of contemporary representations of masculinity. Her work has appeared in such places as the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, and *Text and Performance Quarterly*.

Vijai N. Giri is an associate professor in the Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India. He received his PhD in *Interpersonal Communication* from Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur in January 2002. He has been teaching undergraduate, postgraduate, and MBA students since 1984. His excellent academic record is evidenced by his many awards and distinctions. To mention a few, he was awarded the National Merit Scholarship and the *German Academic Exchange Service* (DAAD) Fellowship, and he has visited Germany several times to conduct his research in the area of organizational-intercultural communication. He has published a book, six book chapters, and about 30 research articles in refereed journals. He is a member of the editorial board of *Communication Theory*. He worked as the guest editor of *International Journal of Communication* and ad hoc reviewer of *Social Behaviour and Personality: An International Journal*. He organizes short-term training programs on *Interpersonal Communication* for college teachers and middle-level managers. His current research interests include interpersonal, intercultural, and organizational communication.

Charlotte Kroløkke holds a PhD and serves as an associate professor of communication and cultural studies at the Institute of Literature, Culture and Media at the University of Southern Denmark. She is the coauthor of *Gender Communication Theories and Analyses: From Silence to Performance* and the author of several articles within the areas of computer-mediated communication, gender and technology, and reproductive technology. She is currently working on a project on three-dimensional fetal ultrasound imaging in which focus rests on the ways in which participants assign personhood, gender, and nationality to the fetus. Kroløkke is also board member of the Danish National Gender Association and vice-chair of the board of the Danish National Gender Library, Kvininfo.

Mark P. Orbe received his PhD from Ohio University and is a professor of communication and diversity in the School of Communication at Western Michigan University where he holds a joint appointment in the Gender and Women's Program. His teaching and research interests center on the inextricable relationship between culture and communication as played out in a number of contexts (intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, mass media). He has presented over 80 papers at regional, national, and international academic conferences, published close to 75 articles in scholarly journals or chapters in edited books. He has also published seven books to date, including the seminal work, *Constructing Co-Cultural Theory: An Explication of Culture, Power, and Communication*. Orbe is the immediate past editor of *The Journal of Intergroup Relations*, current coeditor of *The International and Intercultural Communication Annual*, as well as the guest editor of a *Critical Studies in Media Communication* special issue on race and reality TV.

James Taylor is a professor emeritus of communication science at the Université de Montréal, a department that he initiated as its first chair in 1970. His role in developing communication studies in Canada was recognized by the university at the time of its hundredth anniversary, by naming him one of its pioneers. Author or coauthor of eight books and nearly a hundred published papers, he was honored by being named Fellow of the International Communication Association in 2007. His role in breaking new ground in the development of a theory of communication as the basis of organization

has recently been recognized by the holding of a major international conference that addresses this theme in May of 2008. He is now preparing a new book aimed at publication in 2009.

Ingrid Volkmer is an associate professor of media and communication, University of Melbourne, Australia. She has held visiting appointments at Harvard and MIT. Her main field of interest is the influence of globalization on public cultures of vari-

ous societies. She has published widely in this area. Among her latest publications are *News in Public Memory* and an article, "Governing the Spatial Reach: Sphere of Influence and Challenges to Global Media Policy." Volkmer is an associate editor of the *Encyclopedia Globalization* and serves as chair of the Philosophy of Communication Division of the International Communication Association and on the advisory board of various journals, such as *Global Media & Communication*.

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Denmark*
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*Shanghai International Studies
University*
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Introduction

Communication students frequently approach librarians seeking a source that will provide a ready summary of a particular theory or tradition. Communication scholars also occasionally need a good central reference for their teaching and research. This encyclopedia provides a one-stop source for theories and theoretical concepts and a relatively comprehensive overview of the entire field of communication theory. It is a significant resource because it summarizes in one place the diversity of theory in the communication field. Yet unlike larger topical encyclopedias that try to cover all topics in many volumes, this is a relatively small set focused just on theory. It will provide an excellent starting place for individuals seeking information on the various topics covered. Furthermore, readers will be able to see how topics relate to one another, get a sense of larger traditions and histories, and find a variety of bibliographical sources with which they can begin to expand their reading lists.

About This Encyclopedia

This encyclopedia is a two-volume set that, in more than 300 entries, offers current descriptions of the theories that explain numerous aspects of communication and present the background issues and concepts that comprise these theories. These entries have been written by nearly 200 contributors from 10 countries, including Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, India, Italy, Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Entries range in length—from 1,000 to 3,000 words, depending upon the scope and detail required. To ensure adequate coverage, an editorial board of 10 members—also of diverse cultures and countries of origin—was formed to review the entries. All are recognized experts in several areas within communication theory and have contributed

significantly to its development. All reviewers are also contributors.

The entries are written for the introductory reader—students who have little or no background in the topic. For the most part, contributors have avoided unnecessary jargon and defined terms as needed. Although many of the entries require attentive reading, serious readers will find them accessible and informative, and those who want more advanced treatment can pursue further readings or entries in the bibliography. Readers who may have trouble understanding an entry can move to related topics identified in the “See also” sections and then return to the more difficult one.

We made the decision to feature elements, concepts, dimensions, and traditions of theory, as well as to feature individual theories, as entries. Individual theorists are listed separately with reference to the entries in which their work is discussed. Entries do not include citations, but each lists a few key sources as Further Readings. Cross-references are provided in the “See also” section at the end of each entry. A single classified bibliography of major theoretical works is also included. Readers can access the information in a number of ways:

- The alphabetical list of entries at the beginning of each volume provides the easiest way for a reader to identify topics of interest. Readers may want to start here by scanning the list of topics to identify those most relevant to their research.
- The Reader’s Guide at the beginning of the set provides a classified list of topics organized around 17 themes. With this guide readers can begin with a broad theme and see which entries relate to it. This guide is also of value for showing connections among theories and for developing a sense of the field as a whole.

- The alphabetical list of theorists adjacent to the Reader's Guide will be an important index for readers who wish to learn more about individual scholars and their work. This list identifies the entries that cover each theorist's work.
- The Selected Bibliography of Major Works by Topic, located at the back of Volume 2, will be a vital resource for readers seeking original works. Readers can scan the alphabetical listing of topics to find major works of interest. This tool comes with instructions on how best to use it.
- The Chronology, located immediately after this introduction, lists major events in the history of communication theory. This tool facilitates an understanding of the various developments in the field of communication as a whole.
- The index is an obvious method of accessing information. It is a detailed list of topics with page references.

A Brief History

Communication as a concept always has been with us, but the origins of the discipline are more recent. In the United States, the humanistic roots of the discipline can be found in the study of rhetoric in ancient Greece and Rome, while the social scientific side typically dates its origins to the rise of studies of mass media, public opinion, propaganda, and persuasion early in the 20th century and especially during World War II. Both strands had a decidedly pragmatic bent: The five canons of rhetoric—*invention, organization, style, delivery, and memory*—were designed to help a speaker better prepare for and argue a position in the court, the assembly, or at a ceremonial event. Social scientists had a similarly pragmatic concern in understanding the functions and possibilities for communication in advertising, media, and technology as well as in face-to-face contexts.

Communication theory, then, followed from the pragmatic concerns about the study of communication. At first, communication scholars turned to existing disciplines for theories—not surprising since virtually every discipline concerned with the human being must study communication to some degree. The recognition of social sciences as legitimate disciplines after World War II gave even more

credence to the contributions of psychology and sociology for understanding human communicative behavior. European scholars began to influence communication theory in the United States after World War II as well; heavily influenced by Marxist theories, European scholars from a variety of disciplines have been responsible for the introduction of critical-cultural theories and methods into the study of communication.

Gradually, however, separate communication departments began to form. At first often referred to as departments of speech communication to reflect both the rhetorical and social scientific roots, most departments today are simply called departments of communication or communication studies. In contrast to scholars in related disciplines who tend to consider communication a secondary process for transmitting information about the world, communication scholars see communication as the organizing principle of human social life: Communication constructs the social world rather than simply providing the means for describing that world.

Of course, theories of communication are not distinctive to the Western tradition and the United States. Virtually every culture has been concerned with the nature and functions of communication, and communication scholars are beginning to integrate theories from a variety of countries and cultures. Feminist scholars have sought to describe ways feminine worldviews might foster different modes of communication since the 1970s. Afrocentric and Asiatic communication are perhaps the best articulated bodies of work to date that describe the communication assumptions and practices of African Americans and Asians, respectively. Increasingly, then, communication scholars are seeking to understand similarities and differences across cultures and to articulate more nuanced theories to reflect these more comprehensive understandings of how communication works.

Although the communication field now has the legitimacy and coherence that comes from disciplinary status, it remains a continually evolving and changing discipline. This encyclopedia will offer the student of communication a sense of the history, development, and current status of the discipline with an emphasis on the theories that

comprise it. We hope readers in communication will engage these theories in a spirit of ongoing inquiry that is crucial to the continued development of the field. And we hope those in related fields will gain a better understanding of what the communication discipline is all about.

Acknowledgments

We are indebted to our editorial board and to all of our contributors, listed by name at the beginning of the encyclopedia. Their expertise, effort, and commitment contributed to the excellence of this project. We are especially indebted to our colleagues in the Communication and Journalism Department

at the University of New Mexico who provided guidance and wrote contributions to this work. This work is the product not only of authors and managing editors, but also of a team of professionals at Sage Publications who made the successful completion of the project possible by their many hours of work from its inception to final publication. We want to express particular appreciation to these individuals: Jim Brace-Thompson, Yvette Pollastrini, Laura Notton, Bonnie Freeman, Renee Willers, Kevin Gleason, Sandy Zilka Livingston, Joan Shapiro, and Kate Schroeder. Because of the efforts of all involved, we are confident that this encyclopedia will be an important resource about and reference for communication theories.

Chronology

This chronology contains major themes and developments in each period and is not intended to be exhaustive.

Classical Period

Foundations of Western thought are established in ancient Greece and Rome.

- Western debates on epistemology, ontology, ethics, and axiology form the bases of Western philosophy, prefiguring debates about knowledge, being, and values that continue to the present day within communication.
- Plato and Aristotle lay foundations for classical rhetorical theory.
- Forensics is established as the field of legal communication.
- Ancient Greek rhetoricians grapple with what constitutes persuasive technique and skill.
- Cicero codifies the classical canons of rhetoric— invention (invention), disposition (organization), elocution (style), memoria (memory), and pronounciation (delivery).
- Cicero and other Romans develop speaking standards consistent with the Roman legal code and delineated legal issues that must be argued.
- Greeks and Romans such as Theophrastus, Cicero, and Quintilian study gestures as persuasive accompaniment to rhetorical discourses, setting the stage for contemporary studies of nonverbal communication.
- Augustine writes *On Christian Doctrine*, which sets out a guide for interpreting scriptures, later to be taken as one of the foundational works in hermeneutics.
- Eastern religions and philosophies emerge with future implications for how non-Western cultures will come to think about and practice communication. Laozi and Zhuangzi found

Taoism, which remains influential in Eastern thought regarding communication, human relationships, and values.

- The creation of the *Vedas* through an oral tradition in India provides a basis for religious rituals in the Hindu tradition.
- The creation of the texts known as *Upaniṣads* in ancient India form the core of modern Hinduism.
- Confucius's teaching begins to influence many strands of religion and philosophy, including modern-day ideas about communication.
- Buddha and his disciples travel in what is now northern India and Nepal and spread teachings that were later written by disciples and became the foundation of Buddhism.
- Bhartḥhari and Śankara analyze language and speech, providing a foundation for Hindu communication theory.
- The concept of *rasa* is developed in the writings of Bharata and Abhinavagupta in India.

The role of African civilizations in human life, communication, rhetoric, and world history is established.

- Egyptian and Nubian thought emerge.
- Imhotep, Ptahhotep, Kagemni, Merikare, and Duauf establish a classical set of philosophies that contribute to Afrocentric ideas about communication.

1600 to 1700

The age of rationalism and the Enlightenment begin, as major issues in epistemology are set by philosophers of this period.

- René Descartes develops ideas about the cognitive and rational basis of human experience, becoming a major influence in Western thought in many branches of science and humanities.

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau writes about the social contract as a means of establishing order in society, greatly influencing Western concepts of the person and social life.
- Immanuel Kant extends Western rationalism by integrating ideas about empirical experience and human knowing.
- John Milton writes *Areopagitica*, which sets the stage for freedom of speech, leading to much work in public communication in the centuries to come.

The Reformation, begun a century earlier, contributes to the broadening of reading and the need for textual interpretation.

- Matthias Flacius, a follower of Luther, develops principles for scriptural interpretation.

1800s

Scholars intensify an interest in gesture and various forms of expression.

- Charles Darwin writes *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*.
- Garrick Mallery compares North American Plains sign language with other languages, including that of the deaf.
- The elocution movement, focusing on the art of expression in public address, anticipates an intense interest in communication as performance in the next century.

Dialectical thinking emerges, influencing social critiques.

- Georg Hegel proposes a philosophy of change based on dialectic, which influences Karl Marx and later dialectical and critical schools of thought in communication.
- Following the ideas of Hegel, Marx publishes social and economic critiques that form the foundation for 20th-century communist and critical thought.
- Friedrich Nietzsche creates a philosophy of power and self-interest that has influenced social scientific thinking to the present day, including theories of communication.

Interest in collective action and public communication becomes a topic of scholarly interest.

- Crowd theories and theories of mass society set the stage for media effects work in the following century.

- Gabriel Tarde introduces the concept of diffusion of innovations, later to inspire a whole tradition of work in the following century.
- British utilitarian thinkers such as John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham set the stage for intense interest in public communication and democratic processes.

Major work centers on the relationship among signs and between signs and signified objects.

- Charles Sanders Peirce founds the field of semiotics, which continues to influence the study of signs, language, and logic to this day.

Early persuasion work begins.

- St. Elmo Lewis proposes a stair-step hierarchical framework for sales.

1900 to 1910

Interest in collective action continues.

- The term *fandom* comes to be used for sports-club fans and later science fiction fans as well, setting the stage for more recent studies of fans and fandom.
- Walter Dill Scott begins historic research on advertising.

Psychoanalysis captures intellectual interest, later to become a major factor in behavioral and social theory.

- Sigmund Freud publishes landmark works on psychoanalysis, setting a counterpoint to rationalist empiricist philosophies of human agency.

1910 to 1920

Interest in nonlinguistic expression continues.

- Wilhelm Wundt conceives of gestural communication as a universal language.

Phenomenology becomes a branch of philosophy.

- Edmund Husserl publishes his philosophy of phenomenology, which later impacts thinking throughout the social sciences and humanities, including communication.

Psychoanalysis continues with intense interest in hidden processes of human thought and action.

- Carl Jung's ideas on the collective unconscious open interest in the study of mythology across several fields, including communication.

Structural theories of language develop.

- Ferdinand Saussure publishes *Course in General Linguistics*, providing a foundation for the study of signs and language that remains alive and influential to the present day.

Studies of collective action turn toward the formal study of organizations.

- Max Weber publishes *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, a landmark work giving rise to much 20th century thought on institutions and organizations.

American pragmatism shifts philosophical attention toward practical action.

- John Dewey introduces the reflecting thinking process in his classic treatise *How We Think*, which will later have a huge effect on communication, especially group process.

Attitudes become an object of study, leading the way to serious research and theory development later in the century.

- William Thomas and Florian Znanicki define attitude as a mental and neural state of readiness.

1920 to 1930

Studies of mass media rise.

- Science fiction fandom becomes apparent.
- Early media research, based in large part on stimulus-response psychology, assumes powerful media effects leading to the hypodermic needle theory or magic bullet approach.
- French writers identified film as an art form, referring to it as the "sixth art."
- Journalist Walter Lippmann asserted that media develop simplistic "pictures" in the public of a complex social world.

Phenomenology and existentialism advance.

- Martin Heidegger publishes major philosophical works in the phenomenological tradition, including his classic *Being and Time*.

Scholars begin to develop interest in human social behavior and relationships.

- Early impression formation studies in psychology provide an impetus for ongoing research on how people make attributions and evaluations of others through communication.
- Martin Buber publishes *I and Thou*, which is widely translated and influences studies of communication and dialogue throughout the century and beyond.
- The now famous studies at the Hawthorne Works outside Chicago led to the discovery of the Hawthorne effect, which sparked intense interest in employee-centered approaches to organizational communication.

Language studies become popular.

- I. A. Richards publishes foundational work in literary criticism, semiotics, and meaning, influencing theories of communication to the current day.

Psychologists become intensely interested in how humans think and how cognition relates to behavior.

- Jean Piaget begins a 50-year investigation into the stages of human cognitive development, influencing cognitive theory in many fields, including communication.
- B. F. Skinner develops the radical behaviorism project, which will come to have immense influence in the social sciences.

The critical turn in social theory intensifies.

- Felix Weil founds the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt am Main in Germany, providing a home for the well-known Frankfurt School, which led the way in Marxist thinking in the 20th century.

1930 to 1940

The first serious work on individual traits begins.

- Psychologist Gordon Allport advances the concepts of personality and attitudes, which sets the stage for work on communication traits and persuasion.

Studies on signs, language, and meaning continue.

- Kenneth Burke begins a career of study and writing on human symbol use and its relationship to identification between persons and groups, later to heavily influence thinking in contemporary rhetoric.
- Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky publishes highly influential works on human development and language and thought, later to have an impact on critical and linguistic theory.
- Aleksei Leontiev, a close colleague of Vygotsky, begins work on activity theory, the idea that meanings are created in concrete social-interaction activities.
- Charles Morris establishes an influential model for dividing semiotics into semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics, which gives rise to interest in studying the pragmatics of language, or how language is used in actual talk.
- Roman Jakobson defines six functions of language, functions which help further the new pragmatic approach to language and communication.
- *Mind, Self, and Society*, based on the lectures of George Herbert Mead, provides the basis of symbolic interactionism, which will have a tremendous impact on social interaction theories of communication.
- Benjamin Lee Whorf and Edward Sapir develop the ideas now known as linguistic relativity theory.

Marxist critical theory continues to advance.

- Antonio Gramsci writes prison notebooks, substantially elaborating and extending Marxist thought, especially the idea of hegemony.
- Emma Tenayuca put forward an American perspective on Marxism by applying it to peoples in the United States bound culturally to Mexico.

Studies of media communication grow.

- The growing popularity of radio raises important research questions about media effects and leads to such studies as Hadley Cantril's famous study of H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds*.

1940 to 1950

Social scientists look more closely at the influence of culture and situation.

- David Efron investigates the influence of race and environment on use of gesture.
- Fernando Ortiz introduces the concept of transculturation, later to influence both cultural and critical studies.

New major works in phenomenology appear.

- Maurice Merleau-Ponty begins to publish his ideas about phenomenology.

Social psychology begins to influence thinking about behavior, social action, and communication.

- Kurt Lewin, commonly acknowledged as the father of social psychology, develops a field theory of conflict and also explores group influence.

The power and role of the media are explored.

- In landmark media-effects studies, Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet shift the view of media from powerful to limited effects, granting much influence to interpersonal rather than mass channels and leading the way to the two-step and multi-step flow models.
- Harold Lasswell and Charles Wright identify major functions of the press.
- The Hutchins Commission publishes *A Free and Responsible Press*, outlining the normative obligations of journalism to society.

As the technical challenges of communication increase, mathematical and engineering approaches emerge.

- Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver publish their classic *A Mathematical Theory of Communication*, which builds an information theory model of communication.
- The Macy Conferences on Cybernetics bring together important intellectuals of the era.
- John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern publish *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, which launches an entire field of investigation on rational behavior, interdependency, and negotiation.

Applications of dialectical thinking to critical theory become clearer.

- Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno publish *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, giving rise to the theory of the culture industry.
- Roland Barthes begins to publish critical works related to literature, semiotics, and society, his influence felt throughout the humanities and social sciences today.

Organizational studies continue.

- Philip Selznick's studies of leadership and administration bring attention to the relationship between institutions and communities.

Serious clinical studies of relational communication begin.

- Jürgen Ruesch and Gregory Bateson introduce the concept of metacommunication, or communication about communication, moving the study of communication beyond superficial ideas about simple message transmission.

The crucial distinction between sex and gender calls attention to the place and role of women in society.

- Simone de Beauvoir publishes her landmark treatise, *The Second Sex*.

1950 to 1954

Studies of nonverbal communication develop in earnest.

- Ray Birdwhistell explores social interaction and becomes known especially for kinesics, the study of symbolic bodily movements.
- George Trager begins pioneering work into paralanguage and voice quality.

Attitude change research, particularly in social psychology, becomes a major field of study.

- Theodore Newcomb publishes a co-orientational model, one of the first relationally oriented approaches, which stimulated much thinking in attitude theory and organizational communication.
- Carl Hovland and his colleagues begin landmark persuasion studies at Yale University, highly influencing the study of attitude change and

persuasion in several disciplines, including communication.

- Foundational values studies are produced by Talcott Parsons, Clyde Kluckhohn, Alex Inkeles, Daniel Levinson, and others.

Studies of media influence intensify.

- International communication flow studies begin to show a predominant one-way influence of more powerful nations to less powerful ones.
- Harold Adams Innis publishes landmark works on the biasing effects of the predominant media of an era.
- Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm publish their classic *Four Theories of the Press*, outlining various roles media can take in society.

Rhetorical and language studies broaden to include new forms of discourse and new ways of looking at discourse.

- Kenneth Burke introduces the concept of dramatism from literary theory, which sparks a long-term multidisciplinary interest in this topic as a way of understanding communication.
- Ludwig Wittgenstein publishes *Philosophical Investigations*, leading the way to the study of meaning as intentional communication.

Cybernetics emerges as an important field.

- Norbert Wiener publishes highly influential books on cybernetics and society.

Citizenship is explored.

- Thomas Humphrey Marshall conceptualizes citizenship, giving rise to ongoing research in this area.

Group communication studies advance.

- Robert Bales first develops interaction process analysis, stimulating much research and theory-building in group communication.

1955 to 1959

Interpersonal communication studies broaden significantly with the introduction of fresh new approaches.

- Carl Rogers begins to publish ideas about client-centered therapy, which launches decades of study of person-centered communication and dialogue.
- Erving Goffman begins publishing a well-known series of books on human interaction and self-presentation that heavily influenced research and theory building in interpersonal communication.
- George Kelly presents his personal construct theory, which provides the basis for constructivism in the United States.
- John French and Bertram Raven publish their highly popular model of interpersonal power, positing five sources of power frequently cited in the communication literature.
- George Homans publishes a foundational article titled “Social Behavior as Exchange,” opening a scholarly movement throughout the social sciences on social exchange theory, which has had a major influence on studies of interpersonal communication.
- Fritz Heider publishes his acclaimed book *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*.
- George Trager advances paralinguistics by creating a voice classification system.
- Edward T. Hall proposes the study of proxemics, or the study of space in communication, in his landmark book *The Silent Language*.

Powerful media effects models wane.

- Joseph Klapper publishes *The Effects of Mass Communication*, giving credence to the limited-effects theory.
- Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch introduce the uses and gratifications approach to media, leading to a movement of studies on how people choose and use media and the ways in which they become dependent on media.

Social psychological approaches to attitude and attitude change continue to develop and now begin to have a major impact on the study of persuasion.

- Leon Festinger begins a visible program of research on cognitive dissonance, which is to have a major impact on persuasion and attitude studies.

Profound shifts occur in our understanding of language and discourse.

- Noam Chomsky proposes a new way of thinking about language and thought based in transformational grammar.

- Stephen Toulmin publishes *The Uses of Argument*, which is to impact the study of argumentation by directing attention toward informal and away from formal logic.

1960 to 1964

Research on persuasion dominates the empirical research agenda.

- Muzafer Sherif and his colleagues publish their landmark work on social judgment theory.
- William McGuire proposes inoculation theory to explain resistance to persuasion.

Alternative approaches to the study of language broaden the study of symbols and communication.

- Michael M. Osborn, Douglas Ehninger, and others begin a decades-long inquiry into the role of metaphor in language, rhetoric, and communication.
- Murray Edelman takes a communication perspective in his classic treatise *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*.
- Jacques Lacan, already a practicing and controversial psychotherapist, begins a 2-decade series of public seminars in which he connects human subjectivity and the unconscious to language, furthering the poststructuralist move in the study of language and society.
- Hans-Georg Gadamer completes the first edition of his magnum opus *Truth and Method*, which would propel hermeneutics into social science and humanities scholarship in the coming decades.
- J. L. Austin publishes *How to Do Things with Words*, widely considered the beginning of speech act theory.
- Basil Bernstein produces his theory-breaking article on elaborated and restricted codes.

Critical theory begins a significant foray into communication studies.

- Jürgen Habermas writes his first book, *The Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere*, published in English in 1989, which creates intense interest in public democratic communication. Habermas’s publications, spanning nearly 40 years, make him one of the most influential communication theorists in the critical and pragmatic traditions.
- Richard Hoggart founds the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the Birmingham

University in United Kingdom, which will become a base for much influential work on power and cultural production.

- Scholars begin developing postmodern theory as a counterpoint to modernism and in the process open new questions about truth claims and traditional values.

Diffusion theory is published.

- Everett Rogers publishes the first edition of his classic book *Diffusion of Innovations*.

The second wave of feminism begins.

- Betty Friedan publishes *The Feminine Mystique*.
- Effects of media on society and human thought are explored.
- Marshall McLuhan publishes landmark works on the biasing effects of media.

1965 to 1969

Qualitative approaches involving careful attention to the details of social life begin to develop.

- Harold Garfinkel introduces ethnomethodology.
- Influenced by ethnomethodology, Harvey Sacks lays the foundation for work in conversation analysis.
- Marvin Scott and Stanford Lyman publish their landmark work on accounts.
- Dell Hymes proposes an ethnography of speaking, which sparks later interest in the study of cultures in the communication field.
- Bernie Glaser and Anselm Strauss introduce grounded theory.

Alternative critical theories challenge traditional views of language and discourse in society.

- Michel Foucault begins a career of writing and study about the relationship of discourse, language, and knowledge to power relations in society.
- Jacques Derrida first publishes *Of Grammatology* in French, introducing the idea of deconstruction, which greatly influenced poststructuralist thinking.

Nonverbal communication studies continue apace.

- Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen begin research on types of nonverbal communication, with emphasis on the face and hands.
- George Trager and others continue work relating paralanguage to animal vocalization.
- Albert Mehrabian introduces his concept of immediacy, which will have a great effect on the study of nonverbal communication.

Considerable new thinking about human relationships begins.

- The pragmatic work of the Palo Alto Group becomes widely known when Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin, and Don Jackson write their landmark treatise *Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes*, which influenced theories of relationships, interpersonal communication, and systems.
- John Bowlby publishes pioneering work on human relational attachment.
- With the concept of transparency, Sidney Jourard begins a tradition of research and theory on self-disclosure.

Cybernetics and system theory gain attention.

- Ludwig von Bertalanffy popularizes system theory and starts a movement around General System Theory (GST), later inspiring advances in systems theory and complexity theory.

Rhetorical and discourse studies broaden from traditional concepts to an increasingly wide range of phenomena.

- Lloyd Bitzer codifies the rhetorical situation, providing a major conceptual center for rhetorical theory.
- Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca publish their book, *The New Rhetoric*.
- John Searle publishes *Speech Acts: An Essay on the Philosophy of Language*.

Major new proposals in media theory develop.

- Gerbner introduces cultivation theory, which grants heavy television viewing great power to affect individuals' perceptions of the world around them.
- After studying the 1968 presidential campaign, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw propose an agenda-setting theory of media, which begins a

decades-long project to weigh agenda-setting effects.

- The term *johoka* is coined in Japan to refer to the use of information technologies and dissemination of information through media to the public, leading to the development of informatization policies in Japan.

Traditional epistemologies are challenged by social approaches.

- Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann publish their highly influential work on the social construction of reality, catalyzing a movement in communication and throughout the social sciences.

Gender and cultural perspectives start to gain attention.

- The Combahee River collective begins a womanist movement, later theorized by Patricia Hill Collins, to express the perspectives and experiences of Black women.

Cognitive studies in communication are born.

- Jean-Blaise Grize begins a career-long project on the logic of everyday communication, developing the concept of schemes, which will later come to be commonplace in cognitive theories of communication.

Communication strategy studies gain popularity.

- Gerald Marwell and David Schmidt identify 16 compliance-gaining strategies, sparking a whole tradition of research on this subject.
- Richard E. Walton and Robert B. McKersie publish their classic book, *A Behavioral Theory of Labor Negotiations*, introducing the concepts of distributive and integrative bargaining.

1970 to 1974

Major new developments in philosophy and epistemology occur.

- Thomas Kuhn publishes landmark work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.
- Richard Lanigan introduces the field to important philosophical concepts, particularly

phenomenology, later to evolve into the field of philosophy of communication.

- Umberto Maturana and Francisco Verela publish first works on autopoiesis, or self-defining systems, later to impact the study of the cybernetics of knowing.

Interest in nonverbal communication increases.

- Canadian linguist Fernando Poyatos shows the relationship between written punctuation marks and paralinguistic characteristics.
- Fernando Poyatos also coins the term *chronemics* to capture the role of time in communication.

Critical theory focuses on language, discourse, and media.

- The rise of the Birmingham school opens avenues for increased fan studies.
- Herbert Schiller publishes sharp critiques of U.S. media and cultural hegemony, calling attention of critical scholars to this form of imperialism.
- Jeremy Tunstall chronicles the global influence of U.S. media.
- Michael Halliday introduces critical linguistics, greatly influencing critical approaches to discourse analysis.
- Louis Althusser publishes his highly influential ideas about ideology and state apparatuses.
- Paulo Freire publishes *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in English, giving rise to a more critical approach to communication education and critical theory.

Interpersonal communication becomes a major emphasis in the field.

- Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor present social penetration theory, which influenced much thinking about relational development and disclosure.
- Roderick Hart and Don Burks describe rhetorical sensitivity as an ideal approach to framing messages in communication, later to be elaborated by a team of colleagues.
- Gregory Bateson publishes his landmark treatise *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, providing a basis for decades of research on systemic and social approaches to relationships.
- Harold Kelley stimulates a huge line of work throughout the social sciences on attribution theory, which will come to influence the study of

interpersonal communication in the following decades.

- Michael Argyle and his colleagues explore skilled interaction behavior.
- Milton Rokeach publishes *The Nature of Human Values*.

Gender and feminist studies rise in the communication field.

- Cheris Kramer (later Kramarae) introduces the idea that women's and men's language may be different, leading the way to genderlect theory.
- Karlyn Kohrs Campbell publishes her highly influential article on the rhetoric of women's liberation, setting in motion a tradition of feminist rhetorical criticism.
- French feminism, later to influence U.S. feminist communication thought, begins to develop.

New methods of discourse and conversation analysis are developed.

- H. Paul Grice produces his principle of cooperation and identifies conversational maxims, which provide a foundation for the ongoing tradition of conversation analysis.

Media theory expands.

- Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann proposes a fresh approach to understanding public opinion known as the spiral of silence.
- Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw's agenda-setting theory elicits a decades-long interest in ways that the media and audiences shape the public agenda of important issues.
- George Gerbner begins research on cultural indicators, leading to fruitful investigations of media impacts on culture and the development of cultivation theory.
- The U.S. Surgeon General's 1972 report on television violence stimulates much research interest in the effects of media violence.

Culture studies enter the picture.

- Mary Pukui revives interest in *ho'oponopono*, the traditional form of Native Hawaiian conflict resolution, increasing interest and inquiry into this thoroughly alternative form.

- Clifford Geertz publishes influential works on the interpretation of cultures, impacting studies in communication and culture.
- Scholars such as Victor Turner and Richard Schechner highlight performance as integral to human experience, influencing the study of communication and culture.
- Andrea Rich and Arthur Smith (later Molefi Kete Asante) publish ground-breaking books on interracial communication.

New rhetorical methods continue to be developed.

- Ernest Bormann builds on ideas from Robert Bales's work on group communication and popularizes fantasy theme analysis, later to develop this into symbolic convergence theory.
- Phillip Wander and Steven Jenkins publish the foundational article on ideological rhetoric titled "Rhetoric, Society, and the Critical Response."

Group influence is studied.

- Irving Janis introduces the groupthink hypothesis.

The field of communication begins to look at human developmental issues.

- Frank Dance and Carl Larson propose a speech theory of human communication.

1975 to 1979

Rules theory is introduced to the communication field.

- W. Barnett Pearce, Vernon Cronen, and colleagues first propose coordinated management of meaning, a highly published and popular theory that will later go through several extensions.
- A doctoral honors seminar sponsored by the Speech Communication Association provides a springboard for a tradition of work on rules theory.

Empirical research and theory building on interpersonal processes rise markedly.

- Charles Berger and colleagues publish first works on uncertainty reduction theory, which will

influence several generations of interpersonal communication scholars and stimulate a whole tradition of related theory.

- Frank Millar and L. Edna Rogers begin a long tradition of research on relational control patterns.
- Jesse Delia and his colleagues begin developing the theory of constructivism and person-centered communication, which is to become a mainstay in the study of interpersonal communication.
- Howard Giles begins a program on speech accommodation, which leads to a fruitful 3-decade project and the development of communication accommodation theory.
- Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson introduce politeness theory, which will become highly heuristic in stimulating much research in conversation, culture, and interpersonal relations.
- Nancy Rollins and Kathleen Bahr explore power in interpersonal relations.
- John Wiemann begins to theorize communication competence.

Attitude theory and persuasion research remain popular and influential.

- Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen propose the theory of reasoned action to explain how attitudes are formed and how they in turn predict behavior.

Rhetorical methods continue to expand.

- Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson elaborate a contemporary version of genre theory in rhetorical studies.

Concerns for media culture and power relations continue.

- Oliver Boyd-Barrett defines media imperialism in terms of the international flow of information and influence.
- James Lull, James Anderson, and others introduce ideas leading to social action media studies.

Investigations of the discourse of cultural communities, including marginalized groups, receive increasing attention.

- Michael Omi and Howard Winant introduce racial formation theory.

- Anthropologists Edwin Ardener and Shirley Ardener propose muted group theory, which will have a major influence on feminist analyses of communication.
- Gerry Philipsen publishes “Speaking like a Man in Teamsterville,” sparking a tradition of communication ethnographies and leading to a cultural speech codes movement in communication theory.
- Derrick Bell introduces the first formal statement of critical race theory based on the influential writings of W. E. B. DuBois, Martin Luther King, Jr., César Chávez, and others.

Poststructuralism and the challenge to stable meaning emerge.

- Jacques Derrida introduces deconstruction, questioning the stable meaning of words and texts and thereby no stability in being or self.

Organizational communication becomes an increasingly popular subject of theory.

- John Van Maanen and Ed Schein introduce a model of organizational socialization.
- Karl Weick publishes his influential book, *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, which forwards the idea that organizing is an interactional process.

Work on communication apprehension begins.

- James McCroskey and his colleagues begin a decades-long research program on social and communicative anxiety.

Postcolonialism is introduced.

- Edward Said publishes *Orientalism*.

1980 to 1984

Nonverbal communication studies continue.

- Adam Kendon studies relationship of gesture and speech.

Communication trait research explodes.

- Dominic A. Infante and his colleagues publish initial work on argumentativeness, later expanding this work to include verbal aggressiveness and assertiveness.

- Donald J. Cegala and his colleagues begin to operationalize the concept of interaction involvement, based on ideas from Erving Goffman.
- Robert Norton summarizes his research and theory on communicator style in his monograph of the same name, identifying a major thematic area of interest in interpersonal communication.

European communication theory is “discovered” by North American communication scholars and begins to make a huge impact.

- Translations of Mikhail Bakhtin’s works make his ideas, published during the 20th century, accessible in the English-speaking world.
- Habermas publishes *The Theory of Communicative Action*, which greatly influences critical communication theory.
- Scholars affiliated with science and technology studies, particularly Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, and John Law, begin to study science as symbolic production, leading to a line of work now known as actor–network theory.
- Stuart Hall broadens the popularity of British Cultural Studies among critical scholars.

Cognitive theory becomes a serious focus within communication.

- John O. Greene first proposes action assembly theory, which will later influence thinking about cognitive processes in communication.
- Sandra Bem first proposes gender schema theory, paving the way for much research in gender and communication.
- George Lakoff and Mark Johnson publish their highly influential text *Metaphors We Live By*.

Media response theories continue to develop.

- Lewis Donohew and Philip Palmgreen introduce their activation theory of communication exposure.
- Stanley Fish introduces the idea of interpretive communities in his classic *Is There a Text in This Class*, later to be applied to media communities by Janice Radway in *Reading the Romance*.

Organizational and group communication studies emerge as a major theoretical voice.

- George Cheney and Philip Tompkins begin to explore rhetorical dimensions of organizational

communication, particularly control and identification.

- Michael Pacanowsky and Nick O’Donnell Trujillo introduce studies of organizational culture, opening great interest in this subject within the field of organizational communication.
- Dennis Gouran and Randy Hirokawa introduce functional group communication theory.

System theory exerts serious influence on the study of communication.

- D. Lawrence Kincaid first proposes convergence theory, an application of cybernetics and information theory to meaning and human understanding.

A new era of electronic communication stimulates a flood of research and theory on new media.

- William Gibson coins the term *cyberspace* in his novel *Neuromancer*, and the term stuck.
- Marvin Minsky introduces the term *presence* to capture the feeling of being transported to another location through telecommunications, a term later to be applied to all virtual environments.

Rules theory, popularized in the 1970s, becomes codified and well known in the field.

- Susan B. Shimanoff publishes an influential book on rules theory, codifying the work done in this area to date.

Interpersonal communication studies intensify.

- Sandra Petronio begins to develop and later to publish privacy management theory.
- Edward Jones and colleagues publish their influential theory of self-presentation.
- Brian Spitzberg, William Cupach, and others present theories of interpersonal communication competence.

New forms of public and media communication are explored.

- Jane Mansbridge inspires a tradition of research on local nonadversarial democracy in her classic study of a Vermont town hall meeting.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s MacBride Commission first explores

issues of media sovereignty, opening increased scholarship on media and globalization.

The study of environmental communication emerges.

- Christine Oravec publishes a now-classic study of conservationism and preservationism in the Hetch-Hetchy controversy.

Feminist studies produce increasing insights about women and communication.

- Janice Radway conducts ethnographic studies of women's engagement with media.

1985 to 1989

Communication scholars first begin to explore the life span perspective.

- Jon Nussbaum is the first communication scholar to articulate a life span perspective.

Critical communication theory intensifies its focus on oppressive arrangements, with special attention to particular groups.

- Fan studies see a shift from a descriptive approach to emphasize the resistive and subversive status of fan communities.
- Donna Haraway applies Marxist standpoint theory to feminist thought leading to work in communication on feminist standpoint theory.
- Norman Fairclough introduces critical discourse analysis as a way of uncovering power and ideology in social relations.
- Tuen Van Dijk expands work on discourse analysis to expose the development of oppressive systems of meaning.
- Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa creates the theory of borderlands about the Chicana experience, sparking scholarly interest about Mexican American women within the communication field.
- Peggy McIntosh forwards ideas about how privilege works, adding additional substance to feminist and critical thought.
- Gayatri Spivak, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and others address postcolonial feminism.
- Teresa de Lauretis introduces queer theory.

- The concept of diaspora, originally used in regard to the Jewish people, is revived and applied to all peoples who are dispersed from their original lands.
- Raymie E. McKerrow codifies critical rhetoric in his well-known article "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis."

Dual-processing models of cognition and persuasive communication are developed.

- Richard Petty and John Cacioppo publish elaboration likelihood theory, which will have a major influence on persuasion research and theory.
- Shelly Chaiken introduces the heuristic-systematic model of information processing.

Media choice and use continue as a popular theme in media theory.

- Dolf Zillman and Jennings Bryant explain media choice in terms of maximizing pleasure and minimizing unpleasant stimuli, leading to the affect-dependent stimulus arrangement theory.

Culture studies and intercultural communication theory continue to mature.

- Mary Jane Collier, Michael L. Hecht, and others begin to explore cultural identity formation, leading to a line of research and theory in this area.
- Guo-Ming Chen and his colleagues begin research and theory building on intercultural communication competence.
- Stella Ting-Toomey introduces face negotiation theory.
- Young Yun Kim first presents cross-cultural adaptation theory.

Serious theoretical attention is given to gender differences in communication.

- Alice Eagly publishes gender role theory.

Behavioral-cognitive theories of interpersonal communication continue.

- Judee K. Burgoon and her colleagues introduce expectancy violations theory.

Increasing attention is given to global communication.

- Ulrich Beck proposes a critical paradigm on globalization.

1990 to 1994

Performance studies emerges as an important development in communication theory.

- Dwight Conquergood takes a critical turn in the development of performance ethnography.

Studies of culture and community expand.

- Min-Sun Kim and her colleagues introduce culture as an important factor in conversational constraints.
- Michael L. Hecht relates identity and culture.
- Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger introduce the concept of communities of practice.
- Mark Lawrence McPhail introduces complicity theory.

Discourse theory advances.

- Margaret Wetherall and Jonathan Potter introduce positioning theory.
- Larry D. Browning raises awareness of lists as a legitimate and important form of discourse that can be researched and theorized.
- Frans van Eemeren, Rian Grootendorst, and their colleagues develop the pragma-dialectical approach to argument and argumentative conversation.

Modern-Postmodern debates dominate critical communication theory.

- Kimberl Crenshaw introduces the idea of intersectionality, claiming that categories like race and gender cannot be homogenized and challenging essentialist notions of identity.
- Dana L. Cloud publishes her well-known critique of the materiality of discourse, sparking a lively debate on the nature of discourse and the material world.

Cognitive approaches to interpersonal communication advance.

- Austin S. Babrow introduces problematic integration theory.
- William Gudykunst introduces anxiety/uncertainty management theory.

Relational communication theory intensifies.

- Daniel Canary and his colleagues publish initial works on relational maintenance.

New communications technologies give rise to the study of virtual relationships.

- Howard Rheingold publishes his book *Virtual Community*, expanding the discussion of new technologies to digital cultures created in cyberspace.
- Joseph Walther introduces social information processing theory.
- Jan Van Dijk publishes *The Network Society* in Dutch, which would be translated into English later in the decade.
- Mark Poster announces the arrival of the second media age.

Group and organizational communication theory explores new directions.

- Linda Putnam and Cynthia Stohl first articulate bona fide group theory.
- Stanley A. Deetz publishes his landmark book *Democracy and Corporate Colonization of America*, opening intense interest in power, domination, and resistance in organizations.

1995 to 1999

Traditional definitions of rhetoric are questioned.

- Sonja Foss and Cindy L. Griffin introduce invitational rhetoric as an alternative to traditional notions of persuasion.

New developments in media bring about shifts in theoretical attention.

- Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass introduce media equation theory, suggesting that people treat media as persons.
- Frank Biocca, Matthew Lombard, and others explore communication in virtual environments.

Interest in relationships and small groups continues.

- Leslie A. Baxter and Barbara Montgomery first articulate the relational dialectics theory.
- John G. Oetzel introduces culture as a variable into group task work.
- Peter A. Andersen advances thinking on intimacy in his cognitive valence theory.
- In a well-known monograph, Charles Berger relates planning to ideas about communication goals.

- Judee K. Burgoon, Lesa Stern, and Leesa Dillman introduce interaction adaptation theory.
- David Buller and Judee K. Burgoon introduce interpersonal deception theory.

Critical attention to discourse continues.

- Luk Van Lanagenhove and Rom Harré publish their foundational work on positioning theory.
- Kent Ono and John Sloop identify vernacular discourse as the object of critical rhetorical study.
- Raka Shome introduces postcolonialism to the communication field with the publication of her germinal essay on this subject.
- Thomas Nakayama and Robert Krizek introduce Whiteness theory.

2000 to 2008

- Julie Yingling extends the relational-dialogical perspective to communication development across the life span.
- Norah E. Dunbar introduces advances in dyadic power theory.
- Fan studies moves toward a spectacle–performance paradigm that emphasized the everyday nature of fandom.
- James Taylor and associates develop a co-orientational approach to organizational communication, bringing a constitutive view of organizational communication to the fore and founding that theoretical perspective known as the Montréal School.
- James Price Dillard proposes a model of communication goals featuring goals, plans, and action.
- Patricia Hill Collins integrates and publishes ideas about Black feminist epistemology.
- Guo-Ming Chen introduces Chinese harmony theory.
- Andrea Feenberg and Maria Bakardijeva, in separate studies, propose a constructivist critique of technology.
- Wallid Affifi and Judith Weiner first publish motivated information management theory.
- Leanne K. Knobloch and Denise Solomon begin to publish work on relational uncertainty.
- Michael J. Beatty, James McCroskey, and their colleagues put forward a biological approach to communication, which stands in opposition to many social theories in the field.
- Kwan Min Lee explains how people come to feel presence in virtual environments.
- Victoria DeGrazia, Jeremy Tunstall, and Mel van Elteren raise awareness of the Americanization of media.
- Jon Nussbaum and colleagues set forth a broad life span theory that integrates much work in this area and provides a possible umbrella for all communication theory.
- Karen Tracy advocates the study of ordinary communication practices through action-implicated discourse analysis.
- Deanna Fassett and John T. Warren bring together critical approaches to communication education and introduce the term *critical communication pedagogy*.
- Combining critical and constructivist ideas, Milton N. Campos proposes a theory of the ecology of meanings.
- Michael D. Slater summarizes work done to refocus media effects theory on reinforcing spirals.

A

ACCOMMODATION THEORY

Sociolinguistic research in the 1950s and 1960s had shown how people change the degree of formality of their language as a function of the social contexts in which they find themselves. This was explained in terms of social norms dictating language use. In other words, we should speak very softly and respectfully here, but we can be more boisterous and casual there. *Communication* (or speech) *accommodation theory* (CAT), while acknowledging such normative demands, was an attempt to move beyond these and toward a more dynamic framework underscoring the more complex sociopsychological dynamics involved in language use. More specifically, the theory provides a framework for understanding how and why people adapt their communication *toward and away from others* and the social consequences of doing so.

Spawning a robust literature over the past 40 years, CAT has been elaborated many times. Importantly, it has been revised regularly as a formal propositional structure that indicates the conditions likely to trigger certain accommodative moves, as well as the social effects that can ensue from these moves. In what follows, forms of accommodation—as well as the motives attending them—are introduced, as are some of the satellite models that sprang from the theory.

Accommodative Moves

CAT first emerged as a consequence of observing people shifting their dialects—and bilingual

speakers switching their languages—toward others they address on an everyday basis. Many times, these shifts, called *convergences*, come about so as to reduce significant social distances between the speakers. For example, speakers can shift their accents toward higher, as well as sometimes lower, prestige-sounding speakers, shifts called *upward* and *downward convergence*, respectively. In response, recipients might, or might not, reciprocate, thereby resulting in *symmetrical* or *asymmetrical* patterns. Although these shifts could be strategic and consciously performed, other times participants may not have been consciously aware that such convergent activities had even occurred.

The driving force behind these convergent adjustments was initially construed in positive reinforcement terms. In other words, increasing one's similarity with another's communicative style would promote mutual liking—which research in fact confirmed. In this vein, CAT proposed that the more you admire or wish to gain the respect of an influential person, the more likely you are to converge toward that individual, assuming you have the communicative repertoire to enable this. While an abundance of accommodative moves is good for greasing the wheels of interactional success, there can be limits to this. Hence, CAT addresses notions of optimal magnitudes and rates of convergence in that social costs could be incurred by completely converging toward the communicative style of another (e.g., deliberately mimicking them in a potentially patronizing manner), and also doing so too swiftly.

As this discussion would suggest, relative social power became integral to the theory in the sense

that it was people of lower status who converged more to people of higher status than vice versa as people of higher status controlled more social capital. Similarly, the process of immigrant acculturation is, in large part, a communicative one: Immigrants converge to the dominant language of their new culture whereas members of the host community typically feel little need to accommodate the various subordinate ethnic groups around them. Indeed, near natively proficient in the host language can often be one of the strongest symbols that immigrants have assimilated to the new culture's values, practices, and ideologies.

Nonaccommodative Moves

Not converging toward another individual or other group can signal that the speaker does not value the approval or respect of the other. Predictably, nonconvergence would be unfavorably evaluated by recipients. After all, most of us do not appreciate it when we are not taken seriously or when we are not considered a worthy ally. That said, the attributions we make about why accommodations and nonaccommodations occur can be critical in mediating our evaluative reactions to them. For instance, an American sojourner's inability to speak or even pronounce the Welsh language could assuage any negative reactions associated with nonconvergence by most open-minded Welsh people.

The other side of the accommodative coin of convergence is, of course, *divergence*, and its ability to explain these contrastive shifts provides CAT much of its theoretical bite. Hence, depending on circumstances, speakers may diverge upwardly by sounding more sophisticated than their partner, for instance, while on other occasions, they may diverge downwardly and emphasize their contrastive cultural roots, regional origins, and so forth. Either way, these forms of divergence can increase perceived social distance as well as dissimilarities and are often consciously crafted for such purposes.

On the basis of social identity theory, divergence can often be conceived of as a strategy of social differentiation. In interethnic situations, diverging speakers are those who accentuate their in-group language style and do so when their ethnicities are salient within the situation and when they feel their

group is accorded an illegitimately low status by others. An example would be an African American adopting more Black Vernacular English when encountering an aloof (and possibly prejudiced) White speaker. Although in-group peers might applaud such divergent moves, recipients of it might not view it quite so positively. Indeed, sometimes recipients can interpret divergences as personally directed when in fact they are actually intended to diverge from the group and not the individual.

Divergences can, however, fulfill other social and cognitive functions, as in the case of a speaker really slowing down in reaction to another talking way too quickly, and agitatedly so, about a topic he or she knows little about. Such a divergent reaction would be enacted in an attempt to calm the person down, thereby getting them to pace their utterances in a more measured fashion. Interestingly, CAT acknowledges the feasibility of blending convergences and divergences simultaneously, but at different communicative levels, in order to fulfill complementary identity and social needs. For instance, a communicator might wish to be respectful to a workplace superior and hence converge on some linguistic and nonverbal levels (such as politeness and deference), yet also wish to emphasize his or her own cultural allegiance by diverging on others (e.g., in-group slang, pronunciations, and posture).

Elaborations on the Theory

CAT really began to blossom as a more general theory of language and communication when it stepped beyond the adaptive use of accents and languages to embracing different discourse styles and nonverbal practices (e.g., gait, smiling, and dress). In addition, the theory has been invoked beyond face-to-face interactions into the domain of electronic communications, such as e-mail, text messages, and voice mail, and has also been used to explain interpersonal and intergroup encounters within the family. Furthermore, convergence and divergence, called in the theory *approximation strategies*, have been conceived of as but two of the many ways in which people do or do not accommodate. Attention now is also being paid to *interpretability strategies*, *discourse management*, and *interpersonal control* by taking into account the knowledge shared by the communicators and their

communicative needs and relative social statuses. Once again, though, speakers can be more or less accommodative. Underaccommodative individuals—that is, those who may talk more from their own idiosyncratic agendas and feelings—may be viewed as egotistic, insensitive, and uncaring.

Subsequently, CAT took on more of a *subjectivist twist*. The insight here was that communicators accommodate not to where others are in any objectively measurable sense but rather to where they are believed to be. An example would be slowing down one's speech rate for an older person who is stereotyped as somewhat incompetent (and erroneously so), simply because of advanced age. This tactic, sometimes intended to nurture, could also be conceived of as overaccommodation. In parallel fashion, and drawing on self-categorization theory, people sometimes diverge from a contrastive out-group member and toward the linguistic *prototype* of what they believe is a typical-sounding in-group member. Speakers have, of course, widely different prototypes of what, say, an American should sound like, and hence divergences can manifest in very different forms. Indeed, miscarried convergences and divergences—albeit with positive intent—can be very potent forms of miscommunication. Put another way, effective accommodation is really an integral component of communicative competence.

The larger-scale social conditions necessary to trigger communicative differentiations (e.g., high group vitality) led to the development of *ethnolinguistic identity theory*, which in turn inspired the intergroup model of second language acquisition. The theoretical position holds that immigrants' inability to master, or failure to accommodate, their host country's dominant language could often be due to their desire to retain a strong and healthy vitality for their heritage language. Hence, what is typically attributed to learners' cognitive incapacities or to inadequacies of teacher or material could be more successfully defined as rugged cultural maintenance.

Satellite models emerged in other intergroup contexts as well, such as between people of different genders, physical abilities, and institutional roles and status (including medical specialties and in police-civilian interactions). Of prominence here was the development of the *communication predicament of aging model*. This theoretical position

has fueled a large amount of work in communication and aging and examined the ways in which accommodative acts, mediated by age stereotypes, can negatively impact older people's somatic processes to the extent that they actually accelerate physical demise. In addition, the model implies that a highly accommodative family or network climate can contribute to life satisfaction and maybe even longevity.

Concluding Remarks

Gratifyingly, CAT has achieved some stature in influential communication theory texts as well as in other disciplines, and many of its propositions have received empirical support across an array of diverse languages, cultures, and applied settings. The theory, like most others, can still be developed and applied to new situations without falling prey to the temptation of moving beyond its explanatory boundaries. Hence important issues still face CAT: (a) Which kinds of linguistic and communicated features are, more precisely, accommodated? (b) What constitutes optimal levels of accommodation? (c) Why do those who have not accommodated to their new linguistic communities for years continue not to do so, despite manifold rewards for being heard to be vocally a part of this group? (d) Finally, a future challenge will be to theorize about, not only how sociopsychological processes mediate accommodative communications, but how accommodation mediates sociopsychological processes.

Howard Giles

See also Action Assembly Theory; Attribution Theory; Interaction Adaptation Theory; Intercultural Communication Theories; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Power, Interpersonal; Social Exchange Theory; Social Identity Theory

Further Readings

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ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNT GIVING

Accounts help people explain or make sense of events when something out of the ordinary occurs. An account can range from a speech to a story to a single word or nonverbal expression. Much of the research in this area focuses on accounts as linguistic devices employed in response to evaluations by self or others; accounts are communicated following troublesome conduct in order to transform what might otherwise be viewed as offensive into something acceptable. Accounts perform what is called *remedial work* and are linked to theories of politeness, face, attribution, conflict escalation, and impression management.

Accounts are of particular relevance to communication researchers, not only because they are firmly grounded in spoken and written discourse, but because the entire accounting process both enables and constrains present and future communication possibilities. Accounts create and maintain social order, they are used by people to influence one another, and they help people make sense of communication situations in particular and life in general. We account for our own failure events, but we also spend a great deal of time collaboratively constructing events and meanings based on the accounts of others. Speculating as to why someone did something is a ubiquitous conversation activity, whether in romantic relationships, in work settings, or around the family dinner table. In a very applied sense, the study of accounts may help individuals actively create better relationships in personal and professional contexts and be both better understood and more understanding. In their 1968 work, Marvin Scott and Stanford Lyman noted that the giving and receiving of accounts can potentially repair what is perceived to be broken and restore a relationship in the face of

estrangement. Finally, people often focus on the construction of coherent identities and life stories in their narrative accounts when faced with traumatic losses and relational endings.

To fully appreciate the research on accounts, it is helpful to understand the background and history of research in accounts, to examine some of the empirical findings and typologies, and to look toward some of the promising new trends and directions in this line of inquiry.

Accounts in Conversation

The Account Episode

The interactional nature of accounts is clearly seen in the *account episode*. The account episode is initiated when someone recognizes a *failure event* (a violation of expectations or norms) that needs to be explained. The communication sequence is initiated by a verbal or nonverbal *reproach*, followed by the communication of an account and ultimately the *evaluation of the account*. Various researchers have focused on the types of accounts and their varying levels of politeness and preferability, the interactivity between the nature and severity of the reproach and the type of account given, and the subsequent attributions of the account giver after the account episode.

Types of Accounts

Early research on accounts focused on neutralizing offenses or performing remedial work, especially in interpersonal contexts. Scott and Lyman originally proposed two forms of accounts: *excuses* and *justifications*. Excuses acknowledge the failure event, but the account giver claims that she or he is not responsible for the failure event. The excuse maker may appeal to an accident, a biological drive, or a scapegoat. *Justifications* acknowledge the failure event, and the account giver accepts some responsibility for his or her actions but claims that the actions were not harmful or that the actions actually resulted in positive outcomes. The justification may deny the injury or victim altogether, may minimize the harm that came from the action, may appeal to a higher loyalty, may condemn the condemner, or may rely on a sad tale to justify current behaviors. Some forms of justifications are more credible and influential if they

appeal to the values shared by the hearer, fostering a loyalty to the organization or cause rather than the individual.

Later researchers added *refusals* and *apologies* to the typology, noting that account givers have more options than excuses and justifications. Refusals may rely on logical argument or physical evidence, as seen in Michael Cody and Margaret McLaughlin's research on accounts used in traffic court, or refusals may challenge the authority of the person seeking the account or the fundamental labeling of the behavior as a failure event. Further, a person may offer a refusal in the form of a *denial*.

Apologies or *concessions* acknowledge one's responsibility for the failure event. The five elements of a *full apology* most likely to result in successful remedial work in a relationship are (1) an expression of guilt or remorse; (2) clarification that one recognizes what the appropriate conduct would have been and acknowledges that negative sanctions apply for having committed the failure event; (3) rejection of the inappropriate conduct and disparagement of the bad self that misbehaved; (4) acknowledgment of the appropriate conduct and a promise to behave accordingly in the future; and (5) penance, restitution, or an offer to compensate the victim(s).

Politeness Theory

Early research on accounts suggested that apologies were preferred speech acts for receivers, while justifications and denials were not. Apologies were seen as more polite and served to maintain positive face for hearers. Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson note that politeness is expected and predicated on the notion of the "mutual vulnerability of face." That is, both individuals must cooperate to maintain face. People are generally more polite with powerful others who control resources or rewards, when the offense or goal is relatively serious, and when interacting with others who are socially distant. For example, people are often more polite with strangers and coworkers than with their own family members. In general, politeness theory predicted that concessions and full apologies would be received well because they communicate respect for the hearer and pose little or no threat to the hearer's face. An excuse is considered the second-most-polite form because

face is maintained for the hearer (an acknowledgment is made that the failure event occurred) as well as the speaker (he or she did not intend for the action to take place or had no control over the causes leading to the failure event). Justifications rank third in politeness since the account giver must fundamentally disagree with the hearer's perception of the situation, thereby failing to maintain the hearer's face. Denials and refusals are considered the least polite and are least preferred interpersonally since the hearer is challenged or proven wrong, threatening the hearer's positive face, or feelings of worth, and negative face, or freedom from intrusion.

Politeness theory is further relevant because empirical research indicates that how one asks for an account influences the kind of account provided. Initially, research indicated a matching of reproach-account-evaluation sequences. Polite reproaches elicit polite accounts. Polite accounts, or mitigating accounts such as apologies and excuses, often conclude with a positive evaluation by the hearer. Less polite reproaches, also called *aggravating reproaches*, threaten one's negative face and therefore elicit more aggravating accounts:

You're late again! Don't tell me you couldn't leave work at a reasonable time again!

I'm not late! You said you needed me here at 8:00 and here I am! (*denial*) Besides, who else is going to pay for your new garage if I don't bring home that bonus! (*justification*)

While not all the empirical research supports the notion that polite reproaches elicit polite accounts, we do know that with few exceptions, aggravating reproaches lead to aggravating accounts. Aggravating reproaches tend to predict aggravating accounts, which tend to be rejected, which tends to result in conflict escalation.

The second application of politeness theory focuses on the way that accounts operate in performing *remedial work* in relationships. Apologies are generally thought to be more effective (followed by excuses, justifications, and last, denials) in neutralizing negative evaluations, reducing penalties, reducing the perceived seriousness of the offense, reducing anger and aggression, and helping resolve disputes. A substantial body of literature supports

this notion of mitigating or polite accounts in contrast with aggravating or less polite accounts, but much of this research involves a single-offense scenario in which severity is low and there are no legal ramifications. For long-term or stable, reoccurring offenses that harm others, such as ethnic prejudice and sexual harassment, or for situations such as accounting for infidelity, many excuses are far more aggravating than mitigating. For example, relying on an appeal to a biological drive, as in “boys will be boys,” or denying intent (“Yes, I did proposition her, but I didn’t mean to offend her—she should take it as a compliment!”) is received with incredulity or anger.

It is also important to point out that expectations and forms of politeness may vary by culture. For example, while both Japanese and Americans generally prefer apologies, the second-most-preferred strategy for Japanese may be to say nothing. Other differences may include how elaborate, spontaneous, sincere, or relational apologies are in different cultural contexts. There are also differences in reproach, account, and evaluation based on status and power.

Attributions and Credibility

When hearing a reproach, when hearing an account, when evaluating an account, or when evaluating the entire account episode, communicators are making a whole series of judgments about the other. Hearers are judging whether the causes of behavior are stable or unstable, internal or external, personal or impersonal, controllable or uncontrollable, and intentional or unintentional. Empirical research suggests that excuses citing causes that are unintentional, unstable, uncontrollable, and external are more effective in achieving interpersonal goals than excuses that cite intentional, stable, controllable, and internal causes. We would rather hear that our date is late because of traffic than because of a lack of regard for us.

Related to attribution theory is *impression management*, or how individuals project a desirable and believable image and achieve particular goals through either *assertive* or *defensive* behaviors. Research indicates that accounts are most credible when they acknowledge both the gravity and the beliefs people hold about the situation at hand. Other research suggests that excuses may serve

account givers well in the short term, but at least in the workplace, excuses may lead to long-term attributions of being less competent and in control of one’s life. While excuses may initially get someone “off the hook,” an overreliance on them may prove detrimental to long-term impressions of competence. Some early studies found that workers employing justifications (accepting responsibility for one’s actions) and refusals were more likely to be judged as competent leaders than were workers relying on excuses.

In addition to the above findings regarding the correlation between an account giver and his or her public image, Deborah Dunn and Michael Cody demonstrated that an account giver also impacts the public image of others. In a study of sexual harassment accounts, the accused was able to significantly impact the public image of the accuser, relative to the account provided. Several projects have linked the communication of accounts to self-presentations, showing that account givers were perceived as more likable if they fully apologized or used the “higher involvement” justification, or used a justification that showed a higher level of involvement, followed by excuses and justifications that minimized harm. Those using denials or challenges to authority were considered unlikable. Account givers were rated as both “competent” workers and “dedicated” workers if they used a full apology, justified their actions, or used a “logical proof,” demonstrating their innocence. On the other hand, excuse givers (and individuals communicating only a perfunctory apology) were perceived as weak or indecisive, especially if using the “appeal to accident” claim, and people employing excuses were generally rated as less dedicated and competent (compared with those using a full apology or a justification). Attributions of strength, power, and intimidation followed from challenging a reproacher’s authority or from using a denial.

New Directions

Most of the research done on accounts has focused on conversational events or hypothetical interpersonal scenarios. Some of the new directions in accounts research include crisis communication, organizational communication, and narrative therapy. Research conducted in crisis communication

and organizational contexts highlights the challenge of communicating accounts to multiple audiences or stakeholders, which could also prove relevant in small groups and relational networks. New trends in narrative therapy indicate the power of accounts in narrating a coherent and healthy self.

Deborah Dunn

See also Attribution Theory; Conversation Analysis; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Impression Management; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Politeness Theory

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ACTION ASSEMBLY THEORY

Action assembly theory (AAT) is an approach to explicating the processes by which people produce verbal and nonverbal messages. The domain encompassed by verbal and nonverbal message production is obviously quite broad, and thus AAT

addresses issues such as the nature of consciousness, the processes that give rise to creativity in what people think and do, the link between thoughts and overt actions, the relationship between verbal and nonverbal components of behavior, and how people plan and edit what they say. AAT has been applied in investigating a range of phenomena, including the nature of the self-concept, the behavioral cues that accompany deception, communication skill and skill acquisition, communication apprehension, and conditions that affect speech fluency. The theory is most closely associated with John Greene, his colleagues, and his students.

Every theory is developed within a matrix of assumptions, methods, research findings, and even other theories. It is useful, then, to examine key elements of the intellectual matrix in which a theory is embedded. In the case of AAT, four hierarchically ordered, foundational influences are particularly noteworthy. At the most basic level, AAT reflects the commitments of *science* as a way of knowing (i.e., an emphasis on empiricism, intersubjectivity, and rigor). Moving up one level, the particular branch of science reflected in the theory is that of *cognitivism*—explanation of behavior by recourse to descriptions of the mental states and processes that give rise to that behavior. Cognitive science itself encompasses a number of distinct philosophical and methodological approaches. The cognitive approach exemplified in AAT is primarily that of *functionalism* (i.e., inferring the nature of the mind from observed input–output regularities). At the fourth level of the hierarchy, the theory reflects the commitments of *generative realism*: the idea that people are simultaneously social, psychological, and physical beings and that theories of human behavior need to incorporate all three of these elements.

Just as one's grasp of a theory is enhanced by understanding the assumptions and scholarly traditions that it reflects, it is similarly useful to be able to locate a theory along a timeline of pertinent intellectual developments. Relevant to AAT, cognitive science emerged as the dominant approach in experimental psychology in the mid-1950s, partly as a result of growing recognition of the inadequacies of behaviorism. The assumptions and techniques of cognitivism were quickly assimilated by scholars studying linguistics and speech production,

but cognitive science was rather slow to gain a foothold in the field of communication proper. Not until the mid-1970s did scholars in the field begin to adopt a cognitive perspective in exploring communication processes. By the early 1980s, cognitivism had become an important force in the field, but, with a few notable exceptions, this work was focused almost exclusively on input processing (e.g., message comprehension) rather than output processes (e.g., message production). In this context, in 1984, the first article on AAT appeared—a publication that subsequently received the National Communication Association’s Woolbert Award for seminal contributions to communication research. In 1997, “A Second Generation Action Assembly Theory” (AAT2) was published, and research and conceptual refinements in the AAT framework continue to the present.

Key Aspects of the Theory

Pattern and Creativity

The particular form and substance of AAT was shaped by the intellectual traditions and assumptions described in the introduction above, but the single most important idea from which the theory sprang is a very simple observation that had been around long before AAT was developed. This fundamental idea is that all human behavior is both patterned and creative. In other words, a person’s behavior exhibits his or her characteristic ways of doing things—the topics the person talks about, what he or she has to say about them, the vocabulary used to say those things, ways of pronouncing those words, facial expressions and gestures that accompany his or her speech, and so on. At the same time that speech and nonverbal behavior reflect each person’s patterned ways of doing things, they are also always novel or creative: It turns out that we never exactly repeat ourselves, and even more importantly, we can use our patterned ways of thinking, speaking, and moving to create ideas, utterances, and actions that we have never produced before. In that simple observation lies the seed from which AAT grew: If behavior is both patterned and creative, then how can we understand where the patterned aspect of action comes from, and how can we understand how patterns give rise to novelty?

Mental Structures and Processes

As noted above, in keeping with a cognitive *functionalist* perspective, AAT attempts to explain behavior by specifying the nature of the mental structures and processes that give rise to that behavior. In the case of AAT, the fundamental question, again, is how to understand the patterned and creative property of human behavior. According to the theory, the patterned aspect of action arises from structures in long-term memory that have been acquired over the course of one’s lifetime. These memory structures, termed *procedural records*, are like tiny packets of information about *what to do* (i.e., *action features*) in particular *situations* in order to accomplish specific *objectives*. So a person might have learned, for example, to say “I’m sorry” in an effort to undo the damage in a situation in which he or she hurt another’s feelings.

Three things about procedural records are important to note. First, the memory codes in which they are represented reflect a hierarchy of levels of abstraction. Some codes, such as the example of saying “I’m sorry,” are abstract (conceptual, languagelike). But other procedural records are expressed in codes that are far more basic than that. Some records, for example, consist of the motor-code memories that a person has acquired for walking, reaching and grasping, pronouncing the sound units of his or her native language, and swinging a golf club. An extension of the first point, the second is that a single procedural record does not represent all the information used to produce a behavior. People do not, for example, have one record that holds all the information they use to flick on a light switch or raise a glass of water to their lips; rather, even simple movements such as these reflect the combination of multiple action features. And in the same way, a person may have an abstract record that indicates the need to say “I’m sorry,” but to actually produce that utterance, the person will have to rely on lower-level records for pronouncing those words. The third point is that people possess a very large number of procedural records. A conservative estimate might be that an adult possesses perhaps tens to hundreds of thousands of them.

In simplest terms, then, AAT holds that the patterned properties of behavior reflect the contents

of procedural records held in long-term memory: Our behavior tends to reflect our own repertoire of ways of doing things. The creative character of behavior arises as a result of two processes by which the contents of procedural records are actually used in producing action. The first of these, *activation*, is basically a selection process that serves to retrieve those records that are relevant to one's goals and the situation, and the second, *assembly*, then integrates or combines activated action features to produce one's unfolding behavior. In essence, we think and do new things when we assemble new configurations of action features. Just as a child might construct an endless variety of forts, towers, and walls out of the same small set of building blocks, communicators constantly are assembling new thoughts, utterances, and nonverbal behaviors by combining novel configurations of action features.

The linchpin of AAT is the nature of the assembly process, which is described as *coalition formation*—combining action features that “fit” together, as, for example, when a high-level feature like the abstract notion to turn left meshes with motor-level features for turning the steering wheel and pressing the brake pedal. Activated action features that do not find their way into coalitions quickly decay and are not manifested in overt behavior. In contrast, those features that do mesh with others (a) stay activated longer, (b) are more likely to actually emerge in what a person says and does, and (c) are more likely to enter conscious awareness. The property of conscious awareness, in turn, brings to bear self-regulatory processes such as rehearsing, planning, problem solving, and editing.

The Nature of Message Behavior

From the perspective of AAT, human behavior is a complex, dynamic constellation of action features reflecting various hierarchically ordered representational codes. At any moment, only some coalitions will recruit motor-level features that permit them to be manifested in overt action; as a result, verbal and nonverbal behaviors reveal less than a person “means” (i.e., his or her momentary collection of coalitions). Conversely, because only a subset of coalitions is available to consciousness at any time, those same message behaviors will reveal more than the person “knows” (i.e., the

contents of phenomenal awareness). In contrast to standard goals–plans–action models of message behavior, AAT presents a picture of a much more rapid, chaotic, and disjointed system underlying message production. AAT is also distinguished from models of social skill that suggest that skilled behavior is the product of motivation and ability. AAT holds that people may be motivated to behave in socially appropriate and effective ways, and also possess requisite knowledge for doing so, and yet fail to act in an optimal way because of the nature of the activation and assembly processes.

Assembly Difficulties and Failures

A key point of emphasis in the various empirical and theoretical applications of AAT has been on situations in which people encounter difficulties in assembling action features. As might be expected, one effect of assembly problems is to slow message production. As a result, studies of the time course of message behavior have been an important part of the AAT research program. For example, several experiments have focused on the production of messages designed to accomplish multiple social goals. The general finding of these studies is that when one's social goals are incompatible (e.g., conveying a negative performance appraisal while showing support for the other), speech fluency is reduced. Another program of research, focused on skill acquisition, has examined patterns of improvement in speech fluency as a result of practice. An ongoing research program examines *creative facility*—individual differences in people's ability to produce novel messages—in an effort to understand why some seem to be better than others at “thinking on their feet.”

John O. Greene

See also Cognitive Theories; Intrapersonal Communication Theories; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Scientific Approach

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ACTION-IMPLICATIVE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Action-implicative discourse analysis (AIDA), developed by Karen Tracy, is the methodological arm of *grounded practical theory*, an approach that sees the cultivating of communicative practices as the desired end goal for research. Grounded practical theory, growing out of Robert Craig's work on communication as a practical discipline, is similar to Glaser and Strauss's *grounded theory*. Like grounded theory, grounded practical theory begins on the ground, studying existing communicative practices. Unlike grounded theory, which builds explanatory social science theory, AIDA, with its grounded practical theory roots, works to reconstruct the problems, interaction strategies, and normative ideals of a practice so that participants will be able to reflect in sophisticated ways about how to act.

AIDA is a theory–method hybrid that melds the analytic moves of discourse analysis—attending to situated talk and texts—with the goal of understanding a practice. AIDA takes a rhetorical point of view, presuming that people can make reflective decisions about how to communicate in order to achieve or avoid certain outcomes. It is also a normative approach, or one that has potential usefulness as a guide for acting wisely.

AIDA focuses on communicative practices in institutional sites. At its core, *practice* can be thought of as a way of referring to activities that occur in specific places among specific kinds of people; practice is another way to refer to a speech event that participants take to frame a situation. Ordinary names given to practices often call up a constellation of site–people–purpose connections. School board meetings, departmental colloquia, and classroom discussions are examples of easily recognized practices related to educational settings. A practice can be taken as a unit of the social world for purposes of analysis. Communicative practices that AIDA has studied have included physician–patient consultations, school board meetings, law enforcement crisis negotiations, and routine business meetings. Since institutional practices involve multiple categories of people who are positioned differently within any practice, the problems of a practice will differ with participants' positions.

As a kind of discourse analysis, AIDA begins by taping interaction and making a transcript of the talk involved in the practice. These two moves are the hallmark of any discourse analysis. In contrast to conversation analysis, another discourse approach, AIDA has a strong ethnographic thread, which means that the researcher must have extensive knowledge about the routine actions and variation in the practice. This requires observation of the practice, including how participants talk with each other in the practice (the focal discourse) and how the practice is discussed or written about in relevant institutional documents.

A basic assumption of AIDA is that most communicative practices are shaped by interactional dilemmas. In academic discussions, for instance, graduate students and faculty members want to appear intelligent but do not want to be seen as self-aggrandized and out to show off. In school boards, the meeting chair wants to move the meeting along so that decisions can get made but wants to do so in a way that ensures citizens feel they have had a fair chance to be heard. As a result of the dilemmas that are part of all practices, a normative proposal about how participants ought to act needs to weigh the multiple goods to which a practice is committed.

At the level of discourse moves and strategies, AIDA seeks to name and describe the site-specific interaction techniques that reveal a practice's

problems and that participants use to manage these problems. In a public meeting, for instance, in which a school district was working on its policy regarding how gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students were to be treated, the elected board members and citizen speakers spent several months arguing over whether the school district's policy should state that it *respected* or *valued* diversity. The activity of arguing over words—usually characterized negatively—was found to be essential; it was deeply intermeshed with the activity of managing the sensitive value differences that the policy needed to address. In seeking to address this dilemma, people in the public meetings repeatedly found themselves advocating that certain wording changes were more than technical editing and were necessary to resolve value differences in the policy itself.

At the normative level of a practice, similar to critical discourse analytic approaches, AIDA is interested in addressing the question of how communicative conduct ought to be done. A difference between the two approaches is that critical discourse analyses tend to focus on critique, exposing invisible practices of power and domination rooted in macrosocial inequities, whereas AIDA is interested in positive reconstructions of practices that propose how a practice ought to be conducted in ways that recognize the multiple, competing purposes that are part of most communicative practices.

A study of academic brown-bag occasions, for instance, forwarded a normative proposal about the importance of a dilemma faced by participants: to see intellectual discussion as a communicative activity that needed to take ideas seriously, which would include criticizing bad ideas, and at the same time to see the importance of honoring people, their relationships, and their feelings, keeping in mind the consequences if people felt humiliated. “Ideas matter and people count” was the proposed conduct norm for academic discussion. In addition, the AIDA studies made visible the array of novel discourse strategies participants used to pursue this two-headed goal.

Karen Tracy

See also Conversation Analysis; Critical Discourse Analysis; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Ethnography of Communication; Facework Theories; Grounded Theory; Pragmatics

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ACTIVATION THEORY OF INFORMATION EXPOSURE

The activation theory of information exposure, developed by Lewis Donohew and Philip Palmgreen, explains individual differences in attention and continued exposure to mass and interpersonal messages. The theory treats messages as sources of stimulation and holds that their success or failure to attract and hold listeners, viewers, or readers is a function of both cognitive and biologically based individual needs. Successful messages are those possessing enough novelty, movement, color, intensity, and other such formal features to generate a level of activation that will maintain attention but not so high as to cause distraction. Persons with lower stimulation needs may turn away from stronger messages and be attracted instead to messages with lower levels of stimulation. Messages may possess enhanced persuasive power when they are able to attract and hold attention long enough for the content to be processed.

In its early form, the theory relied primarily on the cognitive attraction experienced by message receivers and their conscious decisions about what information to view or read. It has evolved to include more emphasis on formal, nonverbal

features of message stimuli and out-of-awareness decisions to turn away from or stay exposed to certain information.

The theory has gone through a number of iterations since it was originally published in the 1980s. In one, Nancy Harrington, Derek Lane, and associates expanded the model to include need for cognition or thought, with John Caccioppo and Richard Petty's need-for-cognition scale as the measure. In another, Rick Zimmerman and associates broadened the studies to include other measures of appetitive and inhibitory systems and impulsive decision making. Some of the most recent research involves pilot functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) studies of brain responses to messages, which support the expectation that messages meeting novelty and sensation-generating criteria would generate arousal among higher risk takers in the more primal areas of the brain.

The activation theory of information exposure is deductive and nomological in nature. It is *deductive* in that it moves logically from general propositions to more specific ones. The theory is *nomological* in that it provides explanations of what causes the predicted responses across cases. The theory was developed in the tradition of *use-inspired basic research*, described as *Pasteur's quadrant*, which begins with a real-life problem and development of a general theory to account for underlying causes. On the basis of this explanation, a remedy is developed. In this instance, the problem was how to get people to expose themselves to information that could motivate them to accomplish a socially desirable goal such as becoming more competent citizens of a society. This entry explains the theory and provides a summary of supporting research.

Sensation Seeking and Message Exposure

A primary influence on the evolution of the theory has been the body of research on *sensation seeking* by Marvin Zuckerman and colleagues. Sensation seeking is a biologically based personality trait defined by Zuckerman as the tendency to seek varied, novel, complex, and intense sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical, social, legal, and financial risks for the sake of such experiences. Sensation seeking and sensation avoidance are thought to have developed as fundamental survival behaviors for adaptation to dangerous

environments. Novel stimuli tend to alert the system for fight or flight, and the absence of such stimuli means safety, permitting relaxation and a turn to other activities. According to the developers of the activation theory of information exposure, the stimuli may appear in the form of messages, which are more likely to be attended to by *high-sensation seekers* if they possess one or more of the unsafe, risky characteristics mentioned above.

In research, sensation seeking was treated as a correlate of underlying social, genetic, and neurobiological forces that generate risky behavior. These forces involve the same neural substrate that mediates the rewarding effects of often-abused drugs, for example. These forces also mediate other individual differences possibly related to differences in the mesolimbic dopamine system of the brain. At this point, it is not known whether individuals can accurately assess either their level of need or how well the source of stimulation satisfies that need. In fact, many of these actions may be carried out without the individual's being consciously aware of them. Recent fMRI research described later in this entry indicates a possible role for more primitive areas of the brain.

The activation theory of information exposure holds that individuals have differing needs that determine how comfortable they are with activation or stimulation, and these needs become a major force in exposure to messages. The theory posits that attention to a stimulus source—in this situation, a message—is in large part a function of how well the need for stimulation is met by the amount of stimulation provided by the message. In research on messages likely to reach high-sensation seekers, Donohew, Palmgreen, and associates found that these messages contained higher levels of one or more of the characteristics indicating a need for alertness. These were (a) novel, creative, or unusual; (b) complex; (c) intense, emotionally powerful, or physically arousing; (d) graphic or explicit; (e) somewhat ambiguous; (f) unconventional; (g) fast paced; or (h) suspenseful. Other messages possessing lower levels of these attributes are classified as having low sensation value. High-sensation-value messages have been found in later research to appeal to individuals who are greater risk takers, whereas the risk takers were not attracted to messages possessing only moderate

levels of the characteristics. Lower risk takers paid greater attention to the more moderate messages.

A primary proposition deduced from the above is that if the level of arousal generated is too high or too low, individuals will not achieve or maintain the sought-after state and will seek another source of stimulation, which could be another message. This could be accomplished with a click—or possibly many clicks—of the channel changer, which often appear to be made more or less automatically. A student listening to a lecture or a person reading a book might merely drift off into daydreaming. For high-sensation seekers in particular, messages are likely to be too boring if they do not provide considerable novelty, action, or other characteristics. This may also be true for *low-sensation seekers* but would occur at a lower level of sensation value. Certain very stimulating messages are far more likely to attract and hold the attention of high-sensation seekers but may be too threatening or otherwise repelling for lows. This is illustrated by the fact that high-sensation seekers tend to prefer scary movies far more than low-sensation seekers do. A second deduced proposition is that if activation remains within an individual's accepted range, that person is more likely to continue exposure to the message.

Research

Research involving the theory has been carried out by scholars in communication, psychology, and sociology, largely in the United States and Europe, studying prevention of drug abuse, risky sex, alcohol abuse, and other health-threatening behaviors. Given the tendency of the high-sensation seekers to engage in risky behaviors such as starting to have sex at an early age, having more sex partners, having sex without protection, and engaging in greater drug use, these individuals have become primary targets in health campaigns. Research involving predictions from the activation theory has established that with messages and other interventions designed to meet higher needs for novelty and sensation, attention to health information can be increased and desired behavioral responses can be brought about. Indeed, intervention programs using media and interpersonal communication and guided by this theory in combination with an applied model known as Sensation Seeking

Targeting, developed by Donohew and Palmgreen, have been highly successful in altering such risky behavior. One of the applications for *health campaigns* that emerged from this finding was that campaigns did not need to include both types of messages. High-sensation-value campaigns could be designed to persuade the prime target audiences, and these same messages could serve to reinforce the low-sensation seekers as well.

However, early research on the model did not involve either sensation seeking or health behaviors but rather responses to *political information* according to individual differences in cognitive and affective styles of information processing. Early on, however, the biological basis of the differences was suspected, and the sensation-seeking concept was adopted. Then came studies of message stimuli, leading to identification of characteristics of messages more attractive to high-sensation seekers and those more attractive to low-sensation seekers, as described earlier. This was followed by laboratory experiments in which messages possessing high- or low-sensation-value characteristics were shown on a television screen to high- and low-sensation seekers, and the amount of time spent with eyes on the screen was measured. It was discovered that high-sensation seekers tended to turn away from low-sensation-value messages, but low-sensation seekers tended to watch not only the latter but also almost as much of the high-sensation-value messages as high-sensation seekers did.

Although multiple studies were conducted with increasing levels of success, three in particular, carried out in two matched communities (Lexington, Kentucky, and Knoxville, Tennessee) and using controlled interrupted time series analysis, have offered the most convincing evidence in support of the activation theory in the service of persuasion campaigns. In the first, two televised antimarijuana campaigns were conducted in one city (Lexington) and, coinciding with the second campaign, in a comparison city (Knoxville). One hundred adolescents were interviewed each month in each city for 32 months—before, during, and after each campaign. All the campaigns significantly reversed upward developmental trends in marijuana use among high-sensation seekers. Several months after the first Lexington campaign, there was a “wear-out” effect for the persuasive message: Marijuana use had again begun to rise.

However, its use dropped again after the second campaign. Low-sensation seekers had low marijuana use across the period of measurement, and no campaign effects were observed.

In the second campaign study, the antimarijuana component of the Office of National Drug Control Policy's national media campaign was evaluated in the two cities by means of the same methodology as in the first two cities' study. Much of the campaign was declared a failure by the new drug czar, who called for more "hard-hitting" public service announcements (PSAs). The new PSAs came much closer to meeting criteria set out for high-sensation-value messages. These PSAs arrived in time for the final 6 months of the campaign and led to a dramatic reversal of use among high-sensation-seeking participants. Low-sensation seekers performed the same as in the previous study.

The third campaign was also conducted in Lexington and Knoxville but this time had as its goal a reduction of a number of specific risky sexual behaviors and the practice of specific safe-sex behaviors. Again, the approach was highly successful, even regarding a behavior that has been especially difficult to achieve: increased condom use among young adults, particularly those identified as high in sensation seeking.

Study of differential brain responses to messages drawing on the activation theory is in an early stage. An illustration of this work is a pilot study in which it was hypothesized that high-sensation seekers might attend more to the messages because they are biologically predisposed to show a greater response to visually presented arousal stimuli. In this instance, the messages were in the form of photographs. Researchers conducted fMRI with signals enhanced in the measurement of subcortical regions of the brain, including the hippocampus, nucleus accumbens, and amygdala. Research participants classified as high- or low-sensation seekers according to established criteria were given an emotional induction task, and brain images were collected while the participants viewed photographs, with half of the pictures classified as high arousal and half as low arousal in an established psychophysiological stimulus set known as the International Affective Picture Set. The most important finding was that limbic structures were more extensively activated in high-sensation seekers than in low-sensation seekers, with the *left*

medial orbitofrontal cortex (in the front or more advanced part of the brain) activated for both highs and lows and the *right amygdala* and *right insula* (in the rear or more primitive part of the brain) more extensively activated in the highs. This finding lends tentative support to the proposition that differences in exposure to information stimuli have a biological basis and have as yet unstudied implications for the human attention process.

Lewis Donohew

See also Communibiology; Health Communication Theories; Media Effects Theories; Trait Theory

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ACTIVITY THEORY

Activity theory is a psychological theory whose foundation was laid down by the Russian psychologist Lev S. Vygotsky. It has its roots in the Marxist concept of praxis—the dialectical connection of ideal and practical material activity.

Humans generally carry out activities ideally (symbolically) before they carry them out materially (concretely). Planning thus avoids, or at least mitigates, the dangers and pitfalls that inhere in straightforward trial-and-error activity. The symbolic activity, as one pole of praxis, can occur completely on the internal plane, as when a speaker plans what to say in a conversation, or it can take place externally, as when an architect uses a computer to develop plans for a skyscraper. An important aspect of the ideal pole of praxis is that it takes account of the conditions of practical material activity. Speakers are sensitive to the constraints of language, and the architect considers physical forces of nature (e.g., gravity and load-bearing properties of building materials).

Vygotsky proposed that the basic unit of analysis of mind is *word meaning*. This entails far more than simple reference, whereby a word such as *apple* references a particular object. It also reflects an abstract concept that allows us to reference linguistically (i.e., symbolically) such objects regardless of their specific features (e.g., size, color, content) and to link these to other concepts (e.g., orange, fruit, nutrition). In addition, words create categories that mediate our thoughts and actions even though the categories themselves may not actually exist in the material world. The English word *fruit*, for example, is a generalization that references no single concrete object that exists in the absence of the word itself. Things called apples, oranges, and pears exist, but not fruit. The fact that English, and other, though certainly not all, languages, use the category fruit means that speakers of these languages think and therefore act through the generalized category—for instance, when medical experts extol the health merits of eating fruit. What is consumed, however, is not fruit per se, but apples, oranges, or pears.

The explanatory principle that Vygotsky proposed to account for the origin and function of mind is *activity*. Although he laid the foundation for the theory, he did not fully flesh it out. This task was taken up by Vygotsky's colleague, A. N. Leontiev. (Some contemporary scholars have moved the theory in directions that diverge from Vygotsky's original and Leontiev's expanded notion of the concept and that background its psychological implications.) *Mind*, or more appropriately *consciousness* in Vygotsky's theory, is the ideal representation of

activity interacting with an external object. The object can be a thing, a person, or an event. Importantly, included in the individual's representation of the activity is the attitude of others that emerges through social interaction. This is because individual consciousness results from the internalization of the meanings made available as the individual participates in socially organized and goal-directed collective activity aimed at transforming the natural world into a cultural, or humanized, world (e.g., transforming a piece of wood into a chair). The activity is mediated primarily through spoken (and written) communication. To communicate is to take account of not only one's own point of view but also that of others, including the objects they attend to and how they attend to and what they do in relation to these objects. In this way, our consciousness is imbued with representations of the needs, interests, and positions of others who participate in our social activity. In essence, we are first and foremost social individuals, but through social activity, we become psychological individuals. In other words, the inner plane of consciousness is created as we internalize the meanings that arise in and through social activity.

Leontiev proposed a unified theory of activity comprised of three distinct, though integrated, components: activity, action, and operation. Although the general theory is referred to as activity theory, one of its three components is characterized as activity, which, on the ideal plane, corresponds to the motive or driving force of activity. The motive arises from crystallization of a (biological or social) need (e.g., hunger, shelter, learning, labor, accumulation of wealth). Action corresponds to the material goal toward which an activity is directed. Operation refers to the concrete conditions under which an activity is carried out.

Consider first the case of a working-class family of four with an annual income of \$50,000 whose members wish to satisfy the basic human need for shelter. They have a few options for meeting the need, including renting an apartment or purchasing a house. If they decide on the latter option, their need then coalesces into a motive, which drives their search for an appropriate abode. However, the motive is impacted by such conditions as the range of houses they have access to, given their income. The factors that come into play are size, amenities, location, taxes, insurance costs,

and mortgage rate. Consequently, the goal of their search then becomes a concrete object constrained by the motive.

Next, consider the case of a family whose annual income exceeds \$1 million and whose members also wish to satisfy the need for shelter. They are not constrained by the same conditions as the previous family, although nothing in principle would prevent them from purchasing the same type of house. As a result, their motive is likely shaped not only by their need for shelter but also by the socially influenced need to display their wealth. Thus, factors such as size, amenities, location, taxes, and the like will play out very differently in this case. For one thing, on the American scene, location and taxes play a major role in determining the quality of schools that children attend, which in turn impacts the odds of the children attending university. Even though both families are searching for a house, they are engaged in different activities, given that the search is driven by different motives and conditions. The ideal concept *house* that guides the concrete search action is quite different in each case. For one family, it is constrained by low cost, modest size, and lack of upscale amenities, and it most likely does not include concern for the quality of schools the children will attend. For the other, the concept entails high price, upscale amenities, ostentatious size, and concern over school quality. Thus, the families have divergent concepts of house, which means they talk, think, and act accordingly with regard to the object. Activity theory explains the difference.

James P. Lantolf

See also Cognitive Theories; Language and Communication; Marxist Theory; Reasoned Action Theory; Social Construction of Reality; Social Interaction Theories

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ACTOR–NETWORK THEORY

Actor–network theory (ANT), also known as *sociology of translation*, is a theory initially developed by *science and technology studies* scholars—notably Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, and John Law—to account for the hybrid and plural nature of scientific work. Instead of starting from culture and society or, conversely, from nature and technology to explain the production of scientific knowledge, ANT scholars proposed from the 1980s to develop what they call a *performative* view of the production of science, a view that takes into account not only what scientists accomplish in their laboratory or fieldwork but also what nonhumans do, whether they be machines, texts, or even objects of study.

Accounting for the logic of scientific work is impossible, ANT scholars contend, if we do not acknowledge the difference that sensors, graphs, or samples make, for instance in the development of scientific practices. Symmetrically, they contend that political agendas and strategic alliances also make a difference in the unfolding of such practices. As scholars, we therefore do not have to choose between two starting points—nature or technology versus society or culture—to explain given practices; we have, on the contrary, to start from these practices themselves to explain the production of nature, technology, culture, and society.

Although this perspective could have remained limited to science and technology studies, it quickly became quite influential in many different disciplines, such as geography, philosophy, anthropology, organizational studies, and communication, to name just a few. In communication studies, this approach was especially introduced through the work of representatives of the Montreal School of Organizational Communication, constituted around the work of James R. Taylor. According to this perspective, an organization, as any collective, should never be considered the starting point of our studies and reflection but should rather be understood as the product of communication activities. This bottom-up approach thus proposes to study the organizing properties of communication by analyzing various interactional and textual activities that literally constitute what we call an organization. An organization, according to this

approach, should be considered as literally filled with agencies in interaction, whether these agencies are procedures, managers, computers, architectural elements, workers, or machines.

Several key concepts have been developed over the years to account for the constitution of the hybrid and plural world we live in. One of the most important is *spokesperson*, or *macroactor*, in that it shows how a given (human or nonhuman) actor can become a network (and vice versa); hence the expression *actor–network*. Acting and/or speaking in the name of, on behalf of, and/or in the stead of something or someone else, that is, *macroacting*, is indeed the main way by which collectives or networks are constituted. Once an agent is recognized and acknowledged as acting or speaking in the name of others, whether they are a collection of individuals (a *we*) or a collective (an *it*), these others can be said not only to have an identity—they start to exist as a *we* or as an entity, an *it*—but also to act from a distance, that is, to tele-act or telecommunicate.

For instance, when French diplomats meet their U.S. counterparts in official settings, it is not only they who talk to each other but also the respective countries they each represent and even, to a certain extent, the citizens of these two countries. If these representatives are recognized as speaking and acting on behalf of their respective countries and constituents, their voices become France's and the United States' voices, as well as the voices of the French and of the Americans. As can be seen in this example, and it is another distinguishing feature of ANT, we do not need to choose between so-called macro- and microperspectives, given that this illustration shows how one country can talk to another without leaving the terra firma of interaction. What France and the United States are and do can be defined only through who and what their spokespersons and “spokesobjects” are and do in their name. In other words, both are performed into being each time representatives are interactively acknowledged as acting and speaking for them.

Another key concept developed by ANT is *translation*. Using the same illustration, one could notice that these diplomats are supposed to not only incarnate or represent—that is, make present—their respective country's interests but also translate them. Translation implies transformation, which means that translating requires, by

definition, that the result of this operation be sanctioned (positively or negatively). Do the constituents or president recognize themselves in these talks? Are the diplomats faithfully translating their interests? This is a question that any activity of representation and/or translation implies. Interestingly enough, translation can be used to account not only for political representation but also for any kind of activity or practice (whether scientific, technological, or cultural).

For instance, a traffic light installed in a busy intersection is supposed to technically translate an injunction to stop or go at regular intervals of time. From the administrative body that authorized this device through the engineers who designed it to the workers who actually installed the lights, a series of translations took place that made this traffic regulation possible. ANT is precisely interested in all these activities of translation that involve the filling in of forms, the designing of plans, the mobilization of machines, all partaking in the unfolding and tracing of an organized and collective activity.

What makes this approach especially interesting to communication scholars is that any act of communication can be understood as an activity of translation. Whenever people talk or write to each other, what is said is supposed to translate what is meant by the interlocutors, but what is meant always implies a form of implicit or explicit sanction that is displayed physically in the turns of talk (especially through the presence or absence of conversational repairs, or corrections, as shown by conversation analysts). Through the detailed study of interaction, one can also retrace what or who is made present in a given discussion, whether under the form of collectives, ideologies, passions, principles, attitudes, or emotions. Thanks to this approach, one can show how our world is literally performed into being through interaction.

François Cooren

See also Conversation Analysis; Ethnomethodology; Organizational Communication Theories; Organizational Co-Oriented Theory; Performance Theories; Semiotics and Semiology

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ADVERTISING THEORIES

Since the early 1900s, scholars have attempted to discern whether advertising has its own distinctive theories because it seemed that any serious profession should draw from a systematic analysis of its trade rather than from chance or instinct. With U.S. advertising expenditures at about \$149 billion in 2007 (about 1.1% of the total U.S. gross domestic product), there is no doubt that advertising can be looked at as a serious industry. Yet when Walter Dill Scott, director of the Psychological Laboratory of Northwestern University, conducted his research in 1903 for his work on advertising theories, he could not find any reference to a theory other than psychological approaches. Even more contemporary works, such as the well-known title *How Advertising Works*, still describe the advertising process as a strategic communication procedure whose function is to create a psychological (and subsequently behavioral) change in a potential consumer of a product, service, or idea. Thus, when we talk about advertising theories, we basically talk about theories of consumer psychology.

Lacking its own theories but operating at the intersection of business and social sciences, advertising has not only borrowed from these disciplines but often attracted these disciplines to engage with it and explain the advertising process and its success with their own models and theories. In general, the major influence of advertising seems to occur in the area of consumer perception of a brand. To that extent, advertising must understand the meaning an object has over the life of a consumer, as well as the limits of these cultural definitions, before trying to amplify this object into a

brand. Irving White provided a fitting example with the social values implied by the concept of perfume. Given that this concept invokes ideas of femininity for many individuals in the U.S. culture, advertising of male cosmetics has to carefully sidestep beliefs about femininity and narcissism. At the same time, this example illustrates how conceptual valuations of an object or idea—ideas, beliefs, feelings, and actions expressed by members of a culture—can shift over time. Today's brand advertising of male-oriented cosmetic products is different from that of just 20 or 30 years ago for the very reason that perceptions of men using perfume have changed.

The idea of how people come to understand and relate to artifacts is of interest to social psychology and anthropology. As thinkers such as George Herbert Mead and Jean Piaget have indicated, the relationship between objects and users is dynamic; as individuals acculturate into the larger society, they redefine their relationship to an object in accordance with the values frame of their environment. Culture, in other words, fills a product with meaning based on biological, social, and psychic needs the product fulfills. In other words, consumers purchase not just the plain product but also the multitude of meanings associated with the product. The function of advertising is to create subcategories of values and needs within the social structure and to connect these with the product. Consumers then select those brands whose sets of implied experiences fit into the subgroup with which they identify.

With the growing globalization of brands in an emerging global marketplace, advertising increasingly takes (sub)cultural differences into account. The different social histories of Europe, Asia, and other parts of the world produce consumers who exhibit unique cultural characteristics that influence their needs and wants, their methods of satisfying them, and the messages to which they are most likely to respond. Failure to understand the cultural environment can lead to miscommunication. Beginning to understand that words and symbols have specific meanings for consumers in a given culture, scholars in international advertising turned to the idea of cultural distance. Advertising studies now include the analyses of the meaning of verbal and nonverbal language, concepts of time and space, and cultural-values indicators such as

individualism–collectivism, masculinity–femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term versus short-term orientation.

It is difficult to succinctly group theoretical approaches to advertising into neat categories since the literature on advertising is varied and is rooted in different premises. For instance, works focusing on the functional areas of advertising would group it by campaign creation, media placement, budgeting, and testing and measurement. Literature focusing on advertising processes would highlight rational and emotional theories of persuasion such as the *elaboration likelihood model* and *conditioning* theories. Literature focusing on advertising outcomes would categorize along persuasive components such as *argument strategies*, *arousal strategies*, and *endorser strategies*. Psychological process analyses would regard persuasion as one component of effects, along with *attitude change* and *involvement*. Finally, popular culture studies would analyze advertisements themselves as an *expression of symbolic structures* that give significance and importance via subjective constructions and decoding procedures (e.g., presentation of minorities and women, commercialism, group dynamics). In addition, the different approaches are highly interrelated and overlapping. For instance, affective and cognitive models populate all but one approach. Therefore, the most prevalent theories will be discussed here, acknowledging that many others exist.

Hierarchy-of-Effects Models

Originally developed in the personal-selling literature, the *hierarchy-of-effects model* has undergone various modifications in its historical development such that today we use it in the plural form, indicating that competing models exist.

In 1898, St. Elmo Lewis proposed a stair-step hierarchical framework that theorized the necessity for salespeople to attract attention, interest, and desire in a logical sequence. By the later addition of action as a final step, this original model came to be known as action-implicative discourse analysis, which is still one of the most referred-to models in the advertising and sales literature. In the 1960s, Robert Lavidge and Gary Steiner challenged the immediate-sales argument of advertising effectiveness, arguing instead that advertising effects are

often long-term in nature and do not necessarily translate into sales (e.g., brand image building). They proposed seven steps consumers go through en route to the purchasing point: unawareness, awareness, knowledge, favorable attitude toward the product, favorable attitude toward the brand, desire and conviction, and actual purchase. At the same time, Russell Coney developed his model, known as *defining advertising goals for measured advertising results*, which stressed an awareness, comprehension, conviction, and action hierarchy. Coney reasoned that most advertising objectives were too vague for their effectiveness to be measured with sales data and hence should be measured with communication objectives.

While these models loosely touched on the cognition, affect, and conviction stages, psychological and sociological research addressing the consistency between attitudes and beliefs incorporated the described hierarchy of persuasive communication into consumer behavior models. For example, William McGuire's information processing model suggested that information first has to be presented, then attended to, then comprehended, then yielded to, then retained, and finally acted on.

A serious challenge to the traditional hierarchy came in the 1970s from Michael Ray and his colleagues, who argued that there are actually three different models that can explain audience responses. The first, the so-called learning model, puts cognitive understanding (thinking) first, before attitude development (feeling) and later action (behaving). This model most closely resembles the original models discussed above. A second model, known as dissonance-attribution hierarchy, suggests a reversal of the previous model, that is, consumers first behave or act, then develop feelings toward the brand as a result of their actions, and finally create cognitive arguments to support their behavior. Finally, as the result of research on repetition and slow learning processes in advertising, the third model, known as the low-involvement hierarchy, contends that consumers act, then learn as a result, and finally develop feelings and attitudes from the combined results of the behavior and learning.

Despite the ongoing modification attempts to its structure, the persistent attention given to the hierarchy of effects in advertising research attests to its continuing importance. Nevertheless, questions about the direction of research tied to this concept

remain. For instance, a result of challenges and subsequent debates about the “right” hierarchy has been a growing perception that advertising might be less powerful than originally thought and that its main contribution lies more in its reinforcement of an idea than in its original persuasive force. Moreover, hierarchy-of-effects models are theoretically weak as they are missing the motivational mechanisms necessary to explain how to move individuals to the various stages in the models. Finally, given the many influence factors present, advertising’s impact on sales seems to be less immediate and direct than originally assumed. One factor, for instance, is the concept of involvement, which has been considered by many as a crucial mediating variable in the sequential nature of the three main phases of the hierarchy of effects.

Audience Involvement

In response to the accepted position that persuasive communication depends on active message processing, Herbert Krugman, in 1965, offered a thesis that linked message effectiveness with the audience’s degree or lack of personal involvement with the message. More specifically, Krugman understood involvement not as attention or interest but as connections that an audience member makes between the message stimuli and the member’s own life; Krugman distinguished between two types of involvement (high and low), both of which can lead to effective advertising. The argument goes that a decrease in involvement does not increase resistance to the message but rather lowers processing; that is, learning is passive as consumers do not connect the message with a personal want or need and hence learn information randomly as a result of repetitive message encounter. In high involvement, a message acts directly on modifying beliefs; in low involvement, the impact is rather on exposure to sensory appeals (e.g., brand logos). As the latter occurs more gradually, effectiveness requires repeated exposure. According to Krugman, there are only three levels of exposure in psychological terms: curiosity, recognition, and decision. Since many advertisers misunderstood his arguments as ideas about effective media planning and placement, his thesis of a *frequency of three* subsequently became ensnared in debates about message repetition and recency effects.

Involvement also plays a pivotal role in Carolyn and Muzafer Sherif and colleagues’ work in *social judgment theory*. According to the theory, the level of ego involvement depends on whether the issue arouses an intense attitude. It further argues that individuals who are highly involved in an issue are more likely to evaluate all possible positions, therefore increasing their standpoint of unacceptability regarding the issue. Because discrepant positions are less tolerable when a person is highly involved, highly involved individuals will be harder to persuade than will uninvolved individuals. Uninvolved consumers are willing to consider more brands but less willing to evaluate brands. In short, lack of involvement leads to perception with little or no cognitive activity.

A third theory connected with involvement is the *elaboration likelihood model*, a framework developed by psychologists Richard Petty and John Cacioppo in 1981. This cognitive-process model derives its name from the likelihood that a person thinks deeply (elaborates) about an advertisement when exposed to it and is primarily concerned with changing the direction of attitudes through persuasion. The basic premise of this model is that the route by which a message persuades consumers depends on their involvement with the message. Two routes exist: the *central route* and the *peripheral route*. In the former, people have both the motivation and the ability to evaluate the message and will hence diligently process the message; that is, they will look for and respond to strong arguments in favor of the message and counter what they perceive as weak arguments. In the latter, people may lack the motivation or ability to evaluate the message and thus are more likely to respond to cues associated with the message, such as entertainment value or a celebrity spokesperson, rather than to cognitive arguments. In short, high involvement leads to central processing resembling traditional hierarchy models, whereas low involvement leads to peripheral processing.

Important to note is that attitude change in terms of central processing is the result of thoughtful reflection on information. As such, change does not occur just as an outward compliance (behavior change) but indicates a change in beliefs (personal acceptance or a shift in values or opinion). This kind of change, then, is seen as fairly stable and resistant to counterarguments that may

be encountered later. Attitude change in the peripheral route of processing, on the other hand, emanates from affective cues or social compliance. While it seems plausible to assume that this would lead to an unstable change process, this is not necessarily so. Empirical work based on the model has shown that people can internalize a message solely on the fact that it is socially and emotionally satisfying; that is, persuasion relies not necessarily on information and logic alone but also on social and affective factors.

Theories of Personality and Motivation

In the discussion of advertising strategy and consumer targeting, one central topic is the factors within the recipient of a message that render an advertising appeal successful; that is, how can messages use an individual's personality or motivation to create favorable brand attitudes and images? Individual factors include the reasonably stable patterns of emotions, motives, and behavior that distinguish one person from another. Personality is the key to adjustment. Similarly, most motivation theorists assume that motivation is involved in the performance of all learned responses; that is, a learned behavior will not occur unless it is energized. The major question among psychologists, in general, is whether motivation is a primary or secondary influence on behavior. That is, are changes in behavior better explained by principles of environmental influences, perception, memory, cognitive development, and emotion, or are concepts unique to motivation more pertinent?

Association Theories

Associationism in philosophy refers to the idea that mental processes operate by the association of one state with its successor states. The idea was first recorded in Plato and Aristotle, especially with regard to the succession of memories. Four principles define the core of the theory: (1) All ideas are associated together in the mind through experience; (2) all ideas can be reduced to a basic stock of simple ideas; (3) these simple ideas are elementary, unstructured sensations; and (4) simple, additive rules are sufficient to predict the properties of complex ideas from the properties of the underlying simple ideas.

Association theory was advanced primarily by a succession of 18th- and 19th-century British philosophers, such as John Locke, David Hume, and John Stuart Mill. Many principles have been proposed to explain how ideas become associated with each other. These include contiguity (ideas formed close together in time), repetition (ideas that occur together repeatedly), recency (associations formed recently are the easiest to remember), and vividness (the most vivid experiences form the strongest associative bonds). A closely related concept to associationism is behaviorism, whose principles of conditioning are based on the association of responses to stimuli.

The relevance of the above principles for advertising becomes evident when we consider that humans are able to associate with each other via symbolic bonds and thus have collective existences built on symbols that encapsulate shared memories. Therefore, the aim of consumer advertising is to associate products with symbols that exemplify values, group identity, pleasure, achievement, and the like. Since brand names themselves carry associations, the idea of *brand image* is entirely based on association concepts as anything associated with a brand has the potential to affect its image.

Furthermore, brand image is often used as a heuristic for brand choice. On one hand, it saves cognitive energy (consumer as *cognitive miser* concept); on the other hand, it relieves or avoids inner tension or doubt about the choice (*cognitive dissonance* and *loyalty* concept). Since this choice is consequently purely one of likability and trust, advertising has to make sure of two things. First, it must create a likable and trustworthy association cue, such as a likable spokesperson, a positive emotional state (nostalgia, fun), or effective symbolism (patriotic signs, desirable lifestyles). Second, it must monitor consumers' impression of these cues over time. The effect that, for instance, a celebrity spokesperson's tarnished image can have on a brand (Martha Stewart and Kmart, Kobe Bryant and Nike) is an example of the close connection that is built in people's minds.

Reversal Theory

Reversal theory is a theory of motivation and emotion. Unlike conventional trait theories, which measure the amount and consistency of one's behavior,

reversal theory focuses on flexibility and what spurs reversals from one psychological state to another. The theory is organized into four domains of focus (means–end, rules, transactions, and relationships). Each has two opposing motivational states. An individual reverses between states as situations—and the meaning one attributes to them—change. A person’s emotions result from whether one’s motives are being fulfilled or not. If they are, good emotions result; if they are not, negative emotions emerge. The theory’s name comes from the idea that there is a frequent switching between the two modes. If we are bored, we seek excitement; if we are anxious, we seek relaxation.

Advertising applies these ideas in two ways: (1) It aims to understand the mental state that is conducive to positive brand associations in order to create targeted strategies (e.g., destination marketing), and (2) it attempts to switch someone’s motivation in order to be able to reduce the number of valid arguments that need to be brought forth to influence someone (e.g., when in a positive, playful mood, people create fewer counterarguments).

Summary

Advertising is a complex and diverse field, and often even those involved with it have difficulty discerning what works and why. In 1976, Charles Ramond argued that advertising has no general theory that is widely accepted but forms a discipline in which a collection of pseudotheories exist whose reason for existence is introspection. While advertising typically uses information, the emphasis in a persuasive advertising message is on influencing the receiver. Moreover, since the advent of the Internet and online marketing, the long-held notion of the mass market has given way to that of a more individualized consumer as digital consumers are no longer “passive” receivers of the advertiser’s message but will actively select the advertising message or completely disregard it. New theoretical models are emerging to explain the many-to-many communication processes evolving.

Olaf H. Werder

See also Attitude Theory; Cognitive Theories; Elaboration Likelihood Theory; Emotion and Communication; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Social Judgment Theory

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AFFECT-DEPENDENT THEORY OF STIMULUS ARRANGEMENTS

Based on the core assumption that individuals are motivated to seek pleasure and avoid pain, the affect-dependent theory of stimulus arrangements of Dolf Zillmann and Jennings Bryant can be applied to many communication contexts. However, in practice, applications of the theory have been used to explain how and why individuals choose particular media content when faced with numerous alternatives. In our world of abundant, if not excessive, media options, the theory provides a parsimonious account of media choice based on individuals’ moods and emotional states. This entry describes fundamental assumptions, identifies four key predictor variables, and briefly notes recent theoretical developments.

The idea that individuals are hedonists forms the foundation of the affect-dependent theory of stimulus arrangements. This means that individuals will

actively arrange their surroundings in such a way that minimizes exposure to unpleasant stimuli while maximizing exposure to positive stimuli. The theory further assumes that individuals learn through a process of operant conditioning the types of environmental stimuli that best aid in accomplishing this hedonistic objective. In other words, people come to associate exposure to mediated communication, particularly entertainment media, with positive outcomes—either relief from negative moods and other unpleasant stimuli or the enhancement of pleasurable experiences. The theory is broad enough, however, to allow that nonmediated experiences can also serve the hedonistic objective.

Research evidence in support of the theory relies mainly on preferences for entertainment media as the dependent variable and the initial emotional state of individuals as the crucial independent variable. These investigations have identified three message-related characteristics and one psychophysiological factor that predict media choice: excitatory homeostasis, message-behavioral affinity, intervention potential, and hedonic valence.

Excitatory homeostasis refers to the notion that individuals prefer to experience a state of arousal that is neither over- nor understimulating. Thus, in the context of the theory, it is assumed that overstimulated individuals will arrange their environments so as to decrease their level of arousal, whereas individuals who are understimulated will do the opposite. By unobtrusively recording the television programs preferred by bored or stressed study participants, Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillmann observed this tendency to seek out excitatory homeostasis in a carefully controlled experiment. In that study, they found that bored participants selected arousing media content and avoided relaxing fare when given the opportunity to do so. Conversely, participants who were manipulated to feel stressed opted to view relaxing programs for longer periods of time than bored individuals did.

The second key predictor of selective exposure to entertainment media is *message-behavioral affinity*. This variable refers to the degree of similarity between communication content and affective state. A seminal study by Dolf Zillmann, Richard Hezel, and Norman Medoff tested the hypothesis that mood would dictate preferences for situation comedies, game shows, and action dramas on television. To a large degree their

predictions were supported, with one notable exception. Unexpectedly, participants who were placed in a bad mood did not opt for situation comedies, as predicted; they avoided such content. Subsequent analyses and follow-up studies showed that this behavior can be attributed to a motivation to avoid media content that is similar or related to a person's negative emotional state. Thus, study participants who were insulted tended to avoid situation comedies that featured put-downs and other insults. Therefore, the theory assumes that individuals experiencing negative mood states will prefer messages with little behavioral affinity, whereas individuals in positive moods will tend to prefer messages with high behavioral affinity.

Researchers have also observed that media content has varying ability to alter emotional states, primarily due to its capacity to disrupt mental rehearsal of thoughts related to specific moods. Thus, media essentially functions as a distracter by preventing individuals from dwelling on their current mood or feelings. This ability of media content to engage cognitive processing resources is referred to as its *intervention potential* (some literature also uses the term *absorption potential* or *capacity*). Messages with a high intervention potential have the greatest potential to diminish the intensity of a mood, so long as the content in that message is not related to an individual's emotional state. For example, in one study, viewing a game show effectively reduced anger in provoked individuals whereas viewing an aggression-filled ice hockey match failed to do so. However, a nature film demonstrated little intervention potential for either provoked or nonprovoked participants.

The fourth key predictor is *hedonic valence*, which refers to the positive or negative quality of a media message. Media content that can be described as noxious, threatening, and distressing has a negative hedonic valence, but uplifting, amusing, happy, and reassuring media content has a positive hedonic valence. In general, individuals in negative moods prefer hedonically opposite media content, whereas positive moods will tend to motivate preferences for hedonically similar content.

Theoretically, these four factors are conceptually distinct and can be experimentally manipulated to ascertain their effects on media selections, but in practice it is not always possible to isolate each variable. For example, messages that are highly negative

or positive also tend to be inherently involving. Despite these difficulties, a large body of literature supports the basic assumptions of the affect-dependent theory of stimulus arrangements.

Recently, the theory has been expanded to include other concepts, namely, spontaneous and telic hedonism and informational utility. To date, the bulk of the research supporting the theory has investigated situations that explore the effects of prevailing moods on immediate selection of media—so-called *spontaneous hedonism*. However, at times individuals may opt to delay the immediate management of mood states in favor of other goals or needs. In such cases, their behavior may appear to be counterhedonistic in the short run but may conform to theoretical expectations at a later time. *Telic hedonism* refers to this type of behavior. The concept of *information utility* refers to situations in which individuals seek out information in order to reduce uncertainty. At present, only a handful of studies have explicitly incorporated these new concepts in experimental research.

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See also Cognitive Dissonance Theory; Emotion and Communication; Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency

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AFROCENTRICITY

Afrocentricity is a philosophical paradigm that emphasizes the centrality and agency of the

African person within a historical and cultural context. As such it is a rejection of the historic marginality and racial otherness often present in the ordinary paradigm of European racial domination. What is more, Afrocentrists articulate a counterhegemonic or domination-resisting view that questions the application of epistemological ideas rooted in the cultural experiences of Europe to Africans or others as if these ideas were universal principles. In this sense, Afrocentricity is a critique of domination that aggressively establishes the agency of Africans in their own communication sphere. This critique may be discovered in the type of language, art forms, expressive styles, arguments, economics, or social ideas within an interactive situation. Thus, the Afrocentric idea is critical to any behavioral activity that involves Africans or people of African descent. One cannot very easily engage in communication study of Africans without some appreciation of the authentic voices of Africans. This implies, of course, a serious study of the deep structure of African philosophical thought.

Necessitated by the conditions of history that have removed Africans from their traditional cultural, expressive, philosophical, and religious base, the Afrocentric idea in communication seeks to reposition Africans in the center of their own historical experiences rather than on the margins of European experiences. In essence, two political situations removed Africans from their own terms. First, the enslavement of African people brought about a massive physical and cultural dislocation of millions of Africans. Such a large-scale movement did not have mere displacement implications but more profound implications for how Africans would communicate out of the new reality and what Africans would say about their new reality. Thus, it was both *how* and *what* that mattered in the process of communication among Africans in the Americas. The second political situation was the colonizing of the continent of Africa itself, which left people on the continent but already endangered in their cultural, psychological, and cognitive selves. Thus, the disassembly of African ideas, ideals, standards, and methods was fundamental to the making of both enslaved Africans and colonized Africans.

The Afrocentrist's claim that Africans were removed from their own terms in expressive and

religious ways is an existential claim based on the reality of the European slave trade and the imperial colonization of Africa. When Africans were forbidden to speak their own languages, to dress in their own clothes, and in some cases, to use their own names, they were in the midst of the turmoil of dislocation. Those who were also separated from their familiar physical and environmental contexts were further alienated from their own cultural terms.

The quest for Afrocentric location, that is, a place from which the African can view reality and phenomena associated with reality from the standpoint of Africans, is a liberating journey. One experiences the quest in the language of the best orators in the African American community. They are forever on the road to bringing into the arena of now the language and color of the African reality. Their voices, words, and cadences are those of Africans who are discovering their way back to the center of their own histories. Marginality is a place, but it is not a stable place from which to seek redefinition, relocation, and centering of one's perspective.

This is a philosophical turn that is essential for conceptualizing Africans as subjects or agents within the communication process. If Africans are not subjects—empowered actors—in the situation, then the old patterns of marginality and peripherality are maintained; the interaction takes the form of one party taking an active role against another, more passive party, rather than subject-to-subject communication, in which both parties are agents who speak from the position of self-activation, of being in charge of one's self. Consequently, if the subject-to-subject pattern does not adhere, then the communication cannot be authentic.

In its attempt to shift discourse about African phenomena from ideas founded in European constructs to a more centered perspective, Afrocentricity announces itself as a form of antiracist, antipatriarchal, and antisexist ideology that is innovative, challenging, and capable of creating exciting ways to acquire and express knowledge. The denial of the exploitative expression of race, gender, and class often found in older ideas about knowledge is at once controversial and a part of the evolving process of developing a new way of thinking about knowledge. Afrocentricity confronts the marginality of Africans and critiques European patriarchy and sexism as a part of the baggage of

the hegemonic tendencies frequently found in Western communication. Like the double ax of the African god Shango, Afrocentricity strikes going and coming. On one hand, it challenges African communicators to come from the margins of European reality and to claim their own centered space. On the other hand, in its emphasis on each person's assuming agency and not being trampled on or victimized, Afrocentricity offers a liberating space for the struggle against all forms of oppression.

Origins

The origin of Afrocentricity as a concept is traced to a quartet of books written by Molefi Kete Asante between 1979 and 2008: *Afrocentricity*; *The Afrocentric Idea*; *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge*; and *An Afrocentric Manifesto*. Ama Mazama's *The Afrocentric Paradigm* and *L'Imperatif Afrocentrique*, which appeared in 2003 and 2005, respectively, added immensely to the theoretical and intellectual development of the theory. Afrocentricity became a discourse that thrust the concept of agency into the intellectual arena as a perspective whose core was the interpretation and explanation of phenomena from the standpoint of Africans as subjects rather than victims or objects.

In order to return to an authentic consciousness rooted in self-respect, affirmation, and dignity, it was necessary for African people to see themselves in the midst of their own history and not as in the margins of Europe. Viewing oneself as an agent means also knowing one's history. Someone who does not know his or her own history will speak with the wrong metaphors and appeal to inauthentic events and phenomena to make a communication case.

The Afrocentrist believes that it is essential to return to the classical civilizations of Africa for necessary models of argument, construction, encounter, and ethics, in much the same way as Westerners had harkened back to the likes of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Thus, the return to a discussion of the ancient African civilizations of Egypt (2900 BCE to 330 BCE) and Nubia (750 BCE to 340 CE) during the classical periods was essential for an appreciation of the role that Africans and Africa played in human behavior, communication, rhetoric, and world history.

Afrocentrists were the first to see the overthrow in the African's mind of European domination by a return to classical Africa. Besides its acceptance of classical Africa, Afrocentricity was grounded in the historical reality of African people through the presentation of key intellectual ideas. The point is that the Afrocentric idea in communication was not merely stuck in the fertile ground of ancient philosophies of Imhotep (2700 BCE), Ptahhotep (2414 BCE), Kagemni (2300 BCE), Merikare (1990 BCE), or Duauf (1340 BCE); rather the theorists saw these philosophers as departure positions, not destinations. They wrote on themes such as aging, books, the value of speaking well, and protocol. For example, it was important for the Afrocentrist to contend that the Eurocentric view had become an ethnocentric view, which elevated the European experience as universal and downgraded all others. For the Afrocentrist, it was clear that Afrocentricity was not the counterpoint to Eurocentricity but a particular perspective for analysis that did not seek to occupy all space and time, as Eurocentrism has often done. All human cultures must be centered, in fact, the subject of their own realities.

Key Points

In the Afrocentric view, the problem of location takes precedence over the topic or the data under consideration. Two methodological devices have emerged to assist in the construction of a new body of knowledge: *reasonable plausibility*, or believability based on careful consideration, and *intelligent conclusion*, or logical inference. Both are common terms used in a definite and precise sense to deal with the issue of historical, social, and cultural lacunae, or gaps, in many discourses on African people.

Afrocentrists contend that human beings cannot divest themselves of culture, whether participating in their own historical culture or that of some other group. A contradiction between history and perspective produces a kind of incongruity that is called *decenteredness*. Thus, when an African American speaks from the viewpoint of Europeans who came to the Americas on the Mayflower when Africans really came on slave ships, or when literary critics write of Africans as the Other, Afrocentrists claim that Africans are being peripheralized within their own narrative.

Metaphor of Location

Metaphors of location and dislocation—being centered or decentered from events, situations, texts, buildings, dreams, and literary works—are the principal tools of analysis. To be centered is to be located as an agent instead of as the Other. Such a critical shift in thinking has involved the explanation of psychological misorientation and disorientation, attitudes that affect Africans who consider themselves to be Europeans or who believe that it is impossible to be African and human. Severe forms of this psychological attitude have been labeled extreme misorientation by some Afrocentrists. Additional issues have been the influence of a centered approach to education, particularly as it relates to the revision of the American educational curriculum. Hundreds of dissertations and numerous books and articles have been written extending the idea of Afrocentricity in communication, architecture, social work, religion, politics, historical and cultural analysis, criminology, and philosophy.

Afrocentricity creates, among other things, a critique of human communication and social history in the search for a unique standing place for agency. Such an action is at once a liberalizing and a liberating event, marking both the expansion of consciousness and the freeing of the mind from hegemonic thinking. Therefore, Afrocentric communication theory raises the bar for an authentic relationship of equals in which African people are no longer viewed in the traditional Western manner as victims and objects.

Molefi Kete Asante

See also Black Feminist Epistemology; Critical Race Theory; Critical Rhetoric; Critical Theory; Interracial Communication; Neocolonialism; Postcolonial Theory; Power and Power Relations; Privilege; Racial Formation Theory; Whiteness Theory

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AGENCY

Agency is a concept that is generally understood as a capacity to act or cause change. The person who—or thing which—acts or causes change is termed an *agent*. In communication theory, agency is most commonly associated with people, as opposed to animals or things. To communicate, an agent must have the capacity, or *agency*, to do so. Consequently, most communication theories assume the existence of agency. Not all communication theories, however, require agency to be human in origin. Until the late 20th century, agency was a relatively straightforward concept in communication studies. In light of human irrationality and evil in the past century, however, a number of scholars have called many assumptions about human agency into question.

Terminological Confusion

The notion of an agent and the capacity of agency are often confused or conflated with closely related, but nevertheless distinct, concepts. Chief among them are the *subject*, a philosophical concept that refers to a typical, or paradigm, self-conscious human being, and *subjectivity*, a concept that refers to the conscious awareness of oneself as a subject. Originally, being a subject meant that one was ruled by, or under the legal control of, a king or prince, but gradually the term came to denote one's status as a citizen beholden to the laws of a given government or nation-state (e.g., "Josh is a subject of the United States").

In philosophical circles, the subject has come to denote a perceiving human being who is conscious

of himself or herself as a human being. In this philosophical sense, the subject is discussed in relation to the *object*, which refers to that which is perceived by the subject or that which the subject knows he or she is not. The philosophical distinction between the subject and object as categories, however, is not stable, and the meaning can change from one context to the next. In psychoanalysis, for example, the subject denotes a self-conscious person, but the object denotes another person whom the subject loves, hates, is ambivalent about, and so on (e.g., the infant subject loves the maternal object, mother).

A subject who self-consciously acts or causes change is said to possess agency. Hence, a subject with agency is an agent. An agent does not necessarily need to be a subject, however, nor does a subject necessarily possess agency. To complicate matters, agency is often confused with the term *subjectivity* as well. Whereas the subject denotes a self-conscious person, subjectivity refers to consciousness of one's perceptions as an individual or discrete subject. Consciousness of oneself as a discrete individual (subjectivity) does not mean that one has agency or is an agent. Only an awareness of one's ability or capacity to act (subjectivity) imbues the subject with agency.

In sum, agency is the capacity to act; the agent is the source or location of agency; the subject is a self-conscious human being; and subjectivity is consciousness as a subject. All these concepts are implicated in the idea of communication.

Agency and Modern Philosophy

Contemporary understandings of agency can be linked to 18th-century Western thought, often termed the *Enlightenment*. Although Enlightenment thought is not easily summarized, key among its goals was the use of reason to improve society and understand the natural world. In Enlightenment thought, we find agency and the subject tied together in complex ways. For example, just prior to the Enlightenment, the philosopher René Descartes reasoned that absent any knowledge or sensory perception whatsoever, an individual could know one thing: It thinks, therefore it exists (this argument is known as the *cogito*). Insofar as thinking is a type of action, this "it" that thinks is an agent, but it is not necessarily a subject. The it or

agent that thinks is not a subject until it is conscious of itself as an agent who thinks (subjectivity). The Enlightenment thinker Immanuel Kant extended Descartes' argument about this most basic kernel of knowledge—something exists that is thinking or acting, and therefore agency and an agent exist. Yet self-conscious knowledge, he suggested, depends on exposure to the world outside our minds, or the empirical world. In other words, to be subjects, we have to have sensory experience. Subjectivity, consequently, is wholly “in our heads” but requires a confrontation with the external world. The resulting concept of the *transcendental subject* advanced by Kant consisted in both the necessity of a thinking thing independent of the outside world and the necessity of that outside world to make the thinking thing conscious of itself (subjectivity). For Kant, all knowledge subsequent to fact of self-existence is impossible without sensory experience. The meaning of the external world, however, is entirely dependent on the way in which the human mind works. This view implies that the paradigm self-conscious human being, or subject, is destined to become an agent and thus harbors an incipient agency at birth.

After Kant, the concept of the subject emerged as the relatively stable notion of a self-conscious agent. Consequently, in the mature subject, agency was understood as the ability to cause change or act by making *choices*. In other words, the subject was believed to have agency because he or she could cause change by choosing among alternative actions. Insofar as choosing was a key characteristic of the agency of the modern subject, Enlightenment thinkers associated agency with freedom and, by extension, individual autonomy: One became an autonomous subject by understanding and accepting his or her freedom, using reason to make choices.

Because of the influence of modern philosophy, agency became associated with self-transparency, self-knowledge, and rational choice making. Because choice making was understood as a component of human agency, today agency is often associated with matters of epistemology (how we come to knowledge), ethics (how we discern right from wrong), and politics (how we act collectively in the face of uncertain outcomes). In the social sciences, agency is also understood as a component of one's self-perception as autonomous. Owing to

these associations, in educational settings *giving agency* to students is often expressed as a goal of teaching: By working with students on their communication skills, it is thought, communication educators can help students to better realize their agency and become social, moral, and political actors in the public sphere and in private life.

The Posthumanist Critique of Agency

The Enlightenment view of agency and subjectivity is classically *humanist*, meaning that it is party to a larger perspective on the world termed *humanism*. In general, humanism is the view that human beings have a special status in the universe, a status that is superior to the supernatural or divine, on one hand, and a status that cannot be resigned to scientific naturalism or biologism, on the other. It is commonly assumed the humanist subject is an autonomous, self-transparent, fully conscious agent who acts rationally by making choices. In the 19th century, this view of the subject and agency was challenged by a number of thinkers. For example, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche argued that humans were motivated by the “will to power” and made choices that were typically self-interested. Karl Marx argued that human choices were constrained by material circumstances and frequently animated by the interests of those in power (*ideology*). Sigmund Freud argued that the choices of human subjects were often irrational and motivated by unconscious desires. Together, the critiques of the Enlightenment agency advanced by Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud laid the groundwork for what would come to be known as *post-humanism*, a view that would rigorously dispute human subjectivity as the seat of agency.

Although difficult to define, posthumanism is the idea that the human being is only one of many types of beings in the universe and, as such, has no special status or value (other than, of course, what human beings assign to themselves). More specifically, in the theoretical humanities, posthumanism mounts a critique of the subject as self-transparent, autonomous, choice making, and rational. Understandably, if the human subject is not characterized by these qualities, then the Enlightenment notion of human agency as rational choice making is also questioned by posthumanism. Many 20th-century thinkers associated with posthumanism,

such as Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Lacan, for example, would not deny that human agency consists of choices; they would question, however, the extent to which such choices were conscious or reasoned, arguing that they are constrained by larger forces such as language, ideology, social norms, the threat of imminent death, and so on.

The frequent rationale for questioning the fully conscious, rational, choice-making capacity of human subjects concerns world wars, torture, genocide, and other atrocities caused by human beings. For example, although it is unquestionably the case that many Nazi war criminals made conscious decisions to do evil, it is also the case that many Nazi sympathizers aided and abetted such evil without consciously doing so. In the latter instance, the status of agency in the conduct of evil is unclear. Furthermore, insofar as human reason can be used toward evil ends (e.g., the rationally calculated extermination of millions of Jewish people during World War II), posthumanism questions the value once afforded to reason by Enlightenment thinkers.

Because the problem of evil poses complex questions about the character of agency without any clear answers, posthumanist thinkers prefer to leave the status of the human subject open, as if the concept of the subject is a question itself, never to be fully answered. Agency after the posthumanist critique in the theoretical humanities is thus disassociated from full consciousness, choice making, freedom, and autonomy, becoming a term for the capacity to act. The agent, in turn, can be anything that causes change or action.

Agency in Rhetorical Studies

Owing to the Enlightenment legacy of agency, scholars who study persuasive speaking and writing (*rhetoric*) have traditionally taken the Enlightenment subject for granted. Since the days of Plato, Aristotle, and the ancient Greeks, rhetoricians understood the persuasive process to involve speakers or writers who consciously developed their rhetoric by making conscious choices. A persuader, or *rhetor*, would select a topic, then proceed to outline an essay or speech, selecting some arguments and ignoring others. The rhetor would choose the appropriate language and tone of the

address, analyze the intended audience to help adapt to its expectations, and so on. These assumptions about the persuader tend to assume a self-transparent, autonomous subject.

In the 20th century, however, the influence of Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud on rhetorical studies began to shift focus from the agency of the rhetor to the active understanding of audiences (a psychological move). The work of Kenneth Burke was particularly influential in this regard. Burke argued that persuasion was not the result of arguments offered by a rhetor but rather the result of *identification*, or the ability of persuader and “persuadee” to understand each other as sharing a common identity in some fundamental way (*consubstantiality*). Diane Davis has even suggested that Burke’s redefinition of persuasion leads us to the domain of the unconscious and the possibility that persuasion is akin to hypnosis. If this is the case, then agency in persuasive encounter is difficult to locate in any one individual as it is a shared, unconscious, and dynamic relation between two or more people.

Because of the posthumanist critique of human subjectivity, one finds a variety of positions on the concept of agency among rhetorical scholars at present. There is no consensus among them about what agency means; some would even dispute this summary. Very generally, these positions can be reduced to three: (1) rhetoricians who continue to defend the Enlightenment subject and agency as conscious choice making (humanistic agency), (2) rhetoricians who understand agency as a complex negotiation of conscious intent and structural limitation (dialectical agency), and (3) rhetoricians who narrowly define agency as a capacity to act and the subject as an open question (posthumanist agency).

Agency in Social Science

Among social-scientific scholars in communication studies, the concept of agency has been less controversial, and the literature is decidedly larger in volume and scope. In various theories of communication from a scientific standpoint, agency is assumed to be the capacity to act and is usually associated with human subjects, as the preponderance of studies of communication concerns humans. Owing to centuries-old discussions in modern philosophy discussed above, much of the work in

social-scientific communication theory associates agency with autonomy. More specifically, agency in communication theory can be traced to social-scientific studies that investigate individuals' self-perceptions of autonomy, control, and free choice in respect to a number of cognate concepts, including Piaget's investigations of agency, Albert Bandura's studies on the *locus of control*, and various explorations of *attributional* or *explanatory style*. These and similar studies, in turn, are indebted to classical investigations by Jack Brehm on *reactance* and Erving Goffman's theory of *face-work*: Brehm's work investigated how subjects reacted to perceptions of constraint, and Goffman's focused on the ways in which subjects tend to work to preserve perceptions of autonomy and respect for others.

Closely related to common understandings of agency in social science is the concept of power, and a number of studies in the area of social and management psychology have focused on how various power structures (social, cultural, economic, relational, etc.) influence one's perception of agency and autonomy in interpersonal dynamics. This research overlaps with scholarship conducted in organizational communication studies. Because organizational environments often foreground a tension between the human subject and the housing institution, agency has been a fertile topic of discussion and debate: To what degree do organizational norms constrain the agency of the individual? To what degree do organizational structures empower an employee? Actor-network theory has been particularly influential among organizational scholars in answering these and related questions.

Finally, owing to the powerful role of nonhuman structures on organizations, it stands to reason that the agency of nonhuman things is an important dynamic worthy of study. Although the idea of nonhuman agency has been operative of the fields of linguistics and sociology for decades, it has become a topic of concern in organizational communication studies only in the 21st century. In this respect, François Cooren and others have argued that nonhuman agencies, especially what Cooren terms *textual agencies*, are crucial for understanding organizational cultures.

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See also Actor–Network Theory; Axiology; Empiricism; Facework Theories; Ideology; Ontology; Postmodern Theory; Poststructuralism; Power and Power Relations; Pragmatics; Spectatorship

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AGENDA-SETTING THEORY

Agenda-setting theory, as originally formulated in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, explains the relationships between the emphasis that the mass media place on issues and the importance that media audiences attribute to those issues. While agenda-setting theory started out as an explanation of media impact on political behavior and attitudes during election years—specifically, the ways that news media coverage can prioritize issues, or *set the agenda*, for the public—in the decades since McCombs and Shaw’s initial study was published, the theory has inspired hundreds of subsequent explorations into the ways that media and other institutions prime and frame issues and events for their audiences and therefore influence and shape public opinion, either intentionally or unintentionally. As a result, agenda-setting theory has had a profound influence, not only on mass communication and political communication research, but also on the development of various organizational communication, persuasion, and diffusion-of-innovations theories. At the same time, the original theory has been revised by Maxwell McCombs, one of its codevelopers, in ways that expand and even contradict one of its key tenets.

Early Days of Agenda-Setting Research

Although McCombs and Shaw were the first scholars to speak of an *agenda-setting function* of the mass media, the idea that media contribute to audience perceptions, values, and priorities predates their study. Indeed, McCombs and Shaw used a famous quotation by political scientist Bernard Cohen as a way of encapsulating their own early conception of agenda setting. As Cohen had observed in 1963, the press “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think *about*.” In other words, the idea behind McCombs and Shaw’s original notion of agenda-setting theory is that while the media do not tell us what attitudes or opinions we should have (what to think) and do not set out to deliberately or purposely engineer public opinion, they do tell us which issues we should be focusing on

(what to think about)—that is, which issues are most important and therefore most worthy of inclusion on our mental agendas.

What was groundbreaking about their 1972 article, “The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media,” was that McCombs and Shaw provided empirical support for the claim that the news media priorities become public priorities. Their article detailed the results of a study they conducted during the 1968 presidential campaign in which they asked 100 registered yet uncommitted voters in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, a set of fairly simple questions: “What are you *most* concerned about these days? That is, regardless of what politicians say, what are the two or three main things which you think the government *should* concentrate on doing something about?” At the same time, McCombs and Shaw analyzed the political news contents of the mass media used by Chapel Hill voters during the campaign (four local newspapers, *The New York Times*, the news-magazines *Time* and *Newsweek*, and the NBC and CBS evening news broadcasts). McCombs and Shaw found an almost perfect correlation between the issues listed by the voters as most important and the topics that were given the most space, time, and prominence in the news media. Additionally, the priority order given by voters to the issues almost perfectly matched the relative amounts of time or space given by the media to coverage of those issues.

McCombs and Shaw concluded that there is a strong relationship between the emphasis placed on issues by the media (that is, the *media agenda*) and voters’ own judgments about the salience and importance of campaign issues (that is, the *public agenda*). The researchers suggested that this was a straightforward, one-way, causal relationship, meaning that we learn from the media not only about an issue but also how much importance to attach to it. More broadly, by seeing an issue covered in the news media—and seeing it covered repeatedly and with great emphasis—we come to share with the media the view that the issue has legitimacy and thus place it on our own agendas.

Evolutions and Revolutions

The original McCombs and Shaw study inspired a variety of questions and challenges by other

communication researchers (and ultimately, even by McCombs himself). The studies in which these questions and challenges were investigated resulted in numerous revisions and extensions to the theory's initial formulation. Among the more important issues raised in the years since the first agenda-setting research was published are the following:

Who Sets the Media's Agenda?

Many researchers raised what might appear to be an obvious question: If the news media set the agenda for the public, then who (or what) sets the media agenda? Indeed, several scholars have suggested that the public agenda has an effect on the media agenda: audiences make clear to the media (through ratings, audience studies, market research, and consumption patterns) what they want to watch and read about, and the media simply respond. In other words, the media are market driven and thus give their audiences what they know will sell. Other scholars have argued that politicians and public relations practitioners contribute to the setting of the media agenda. In any case, news organization executives do not construct the media agenda in a vacuum.

How Many Agendas?

Everett Rogers and James Dearing believed that agenda-setting theory should acknowledge the coexistence and interrelationships among three agendas: In addition to the *public agenda* and the *media agenda*, Rogers and Dearing argued, scholars should also attend to the *policy agenda*—the hierarchy of issues that governments and other policy makers act on. In some cases, no one group sets the agendas for the others; rather, the real-world importance of an issue or event (e.g., a major earthquake or an act of war) will equally affect all three, and therefore all three groups will agree on its importance without one group's influencing the others. *Agenda building* was offered by Rogers and Dearing as a more appropriate term than *agenda setting* to characterize this collective, reciprocal process.

Do the Media (Also) Tell Us What to Think?

The most important challenges to the original claims of agenda-setting research directly rebut

Bernard Cohen's claim that the media tell us only what to think about but not what to think. Indeed, since the mid-1980s, communication scholars have published hundreds of studies showing that the media do tell us both what to think about (which issues to focus on) and what to think (which attitudes and judgments to have about them). Moreover, these scholars argue, there is a connection between the two: The perceived *salience* of an issue (the relative prominence given to an issue by the media and, presumably, agreed on by audiences) is related to the *evaluations* that audience members have about the political actors associated with the issue. Thus, agenda-setting scholarship—and agenda-setting theory—has expanded to encompass both the cognitive aspects of the agenda-setting function (the setting or structuring of the agenda by the mass media) and its affective or emotional aspects (influences on how audiences feel about the items on the agenda).

Central to this expansion have been the concepts of *priming* and *framing*, which McCombs and other theorists now claim to be natural extensions of agenda setting. Just as priming a pump prepares the device to work quickly and readily, the repetition and prominence given to a media message about a topic is said to prime our thoughts about that topic: The topic is brought to the forefront of our active cognition, becomes more immediately available to memory, and is thus made more salient (more quickly and readily remembered). As certain issues are primed, so are our attitudes about those issues and their attributes—attitudes that are formed in part by their media framing.

When applied to news coverage, the term *framing* describes the process of organizing, defining, and structuring a story. Many media theorists argue that even when journalists intend to be objective or balanced in their coverage, they necessarily report on issues in ways that give audiences cues as to how to understand the issues, including which aspects of the issues to focus on and which to ignore. Indeed, the core task of all media gatekeepers—to determine which stories to include or exclude from a given day's newspaper or broadcast and what to emphasize within those stories that are included—itsself frames the issues covered in their publications and programs. Beyond inclusion-exclusion decisions, news producers present or represent issues and political actors in specific

ways; how a story is told contributes to its framing and therefore to the communication of how the issues and actors comprising the story should be evaluated by the audience. (Even a seemingly straightforward headline about an election result inevitably involves a framing choice: An editor must decide whether the result should be framed as “Smith beats Jones” or, alternatively, as “Jones loses to Smith.”)

Limitations to Agenda Setting’s Power

Although agenda-setting theory and research now encompass both the what-to-think-about and the what-to-think components of Cohen’s formulation, debate still swirls around the core questions of media influence, namely, how directly and to what degree the media set the public agenda. Recent studies suggest that personal variables can mitigate the effects of media agenda setting on individual audience members. Those viewers who do not find the media (or a particular media outlet or source) credible are less likely to have their agendas set by the media. Similarly, viewers who actively disagree with the news values of the sources they use (“How could CNN possibly consider *that* to be an important story?”) will be less susceptible to the agenda-setting function of the media. Still, the findings of nearly four decades of agenda-setting, -priming, and -framing research provide a great deal of support for the claims first made in the 1960s and 1970s by Cohen and by McCombs and Shaw.

David Weiss

See also Diffusion of Innovations; Framing Theory; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Media Effects Theories; Political Communication Theories; Public Opinion Theories

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AGGRESSIVENESS

See Argumentativeness, Assertiveness, and Verbal Aggressiveness Theory

AMERICANIZATION OF MEDIA

At a time when economic, political, environmental, cultural, social, and even religious issues are raised on a global scale, communication research is faced with the question of the media’s power to influence these issues and their outcome. This question is usually phrased in terms of the overwhelming presence of U.S. media and their contents around the globe. Increasingly this power to influence has come to be recognized as the impact that the U.S. model of media production and distribution has on non-U.S. media and their reception—a process known as the Americanization of the media.

The debate over Americanization began around the 1800s within the context of cultural, technological, and economic exchanges between the United States and Europe, particularly Britain, France, and Germany. The United States embodied the essentials of modernity, democracy, progress, and freedom as it experimented with new and powerful ideas, values, knowledge, technology, and symbols. From both inside and outside its

borders, questions were raised as to how to exercise control over these new and powerful social forces and to whom this control could be (or not be) entrusted.

While much of the pioneering work in developing modern mass media was done in Europe during the early 19th century (for example, the penny press in France), it was, as Jeremy Tunstall argues, in the United States and especially in and around New York City that most new media were first successfully industrialized and sold to the bulk of the population. While a developing mass-market economy and urbanization were contributing factors, the need to integrate and acculturate the surge of immigrants from countries other than those of western Europe between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries also acted as an agent for the pulling together of scientific, technological, financial, entrepreneurial, and even moral forces to create what was to become the foundation of the U.S. cultural industries—contemporary mass media. These were set up to Americanize the incoming mass of immigrants and to Americanize the population within the United States, whose divisive wounds of the Civil War had not completely healed. Even today the Americanization of the media is carried on within the United States when foreign contents are acculturated, either through narrative posturing or through editing, to better fit a preconceived and homogenizing U.S. worldview.

Over the decades and centuries, then, ideas, values, knowledge, and artifacts from the United States have traveled across time and space through the words and deeds of men and women in every walk of life: entrepreneurs, teachers, artists, missionaries, journalists, humanitarians, athletes, military personnel, tourists, intellectuals, politicians, ambassadors, students, scientists, and consultants. Each served as a representative of what the United States stood for and, more globally, what America stood for. The United States became identified with America, the American dream, and the American way of life, thus co-opting all the Americas (North, Central, and South) and all that they contain.

This spreading of things “made in America”—first into Europe, then into the other Americas and parts of Asia, and finally touching every region of the planet—was sometimes imposed, sometimes solicited, sometimes welcomed, sometimes resisted.

Depending on the host country’s economic, political, cultural, religious, social, and historical context and power structures, at times the elites would resist and the popular would welcome, or the contrary would occur. In many cases, the representatives of the United States would side, outwardly or through intermediaries, with those whose power to influence the outcome was decisive.

The Americanization of the media is characterized by a push–pull dynamic. Media technology and content, as well as distribution and marketing strategies and practices, are pushed on importing-country buyers, raising issues and accusations of U.S. media imperialism. When someone speaks of Americanization, the image of an invasion of media products “made in America” in the local/national markets immediately comes to mind. But Americanization also refers to the apprehended menace of losing one’s cultural identity by “acting American,” by adopting from the United States “ways of doing things”—whether in the realms of politics, economics, or social and cultural practices. This means adopting the market economy of media ownership, production, distribution, and merchandization; the popularization of media contents; the ethics of news journalism (as opposed to opinion journalism); and the overt and covert alliances between culture and supply economy (as opposed to publicly funded culture) and between journalists and decision centers (as opposed to social critics).

However, there is also a “pull” factor based on high-quality technology and innovations, content attractiveness, and effective distribution. As a result, the importing countries are pressured to emulate and redefine their policies, modes of production, and canons of culture (especially those of popular culture) along the lines of those prevalent in the United States. The pull factor, then, can be interpreted as the political and cultural will to compete with the United States in the lucrative global market and also to safeguard national and regional cultures and identities by aggressively promoting their own highly attractive, professional, popular cultural productions. For some this is seen as beating the Americans at their own games; for others it is nothing more than a sellout to the United States.

There is no doubt that the media in the United States still influence media organization and

content in other countries (press, music, television, cinema); the counterinfluence, however, is rarely acknowledged. Waxing over such key components as intellectual property and national identities often fosters Americanization within the United States. Case in point: Disney made Cinderella and other figures from the writings of German academics Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm as American as Huckleberry Finn. In promoting *The Brothers Grimm*, Hollywood portrayed the brothers as “Will and Jake, traveling con-artists.”

Another case in point is the popular televised show *Deal or No Deal*, which is not U.S.-American but U.S.-Americanized. Because it is broadcast on a U.S. network with local participants, audiences assume that it, and its Canadian-born host Howie Mandel, are American. However the concept was developed and is owned by Endemol, a Netherlands-based production company known for creating such shows as *Big Brother* and *Fear Factor*. The first version of the show was broadcast in the Netherlands as *Miljoenenjacht* (The Hunt for Millions), followed by Australia, which was the first to broadcast it under the title *Deal or No Deal*. Versions of this show are now broadcast in 45 countries across the continents.

The combined weight of history, technology, and financial entrepreneurship has given the U.S. media such an overwhelming, self-centered, dominant position that even when the U.S. media import contents and formats from other countries, these are Americanized for the audiences within the United States and assumed as such by other countries. In this sense, the first successful industrialized mass media are the Americanized U.S. media. For other countries that underwent the same process of urbanization, industrialization, and nation building, this first social experiment in creating a contemporary, popular, urban, industrialized culture became a benchmark to be either emulated, adapted, or resisted.

For every argument that the media outside the United States are becoming more and more Americanized, there can be found a counterargument. The financial capacity to mass-produce and, more importantly, to effectively distribute U.S.-American media products, particularly film and television, across the globe is still impressive. Also impressive, as investigated by Jeremy Tunstall, are the large foreign revenues earned by Hollywood

movies and television series through exports to other countries. Screens everywhere, in airports, hotel rooms, theaters, private homes, bars, and waiting rooms, seem to offer an endless array of films, news reports, sitcoms, reality shows, talk shows, and sports events “made in the USA.” Such a massive presence is made possible because, through technology, financial investments, marketing, and merchandising, U.S. operators have obtained arrangements that favor the cornering of key distribution outlets and because they can overproduce and undersell many of the media products in countries outside the United States. In Canada, for example, as in many other countries around the world, the screens of film and television are overwhelmingly filled with U.S.-American content simply because the need to fill them is there (the attractiveness and aggressiveness of the market) and because it is cheaper to buy American than to produce and distribute national products.

While the issues at the heart of Americanization of media have shifted, the importance of the issue remains. During the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, the concepts and ideologies of cultural and media imperialism and the question of the hegemonic power of the U.S.-American media were an integral part of the battle between capitalism and Communism over the establishment of a new world order. At the same time, documented research has shown that, with the possible notable exception of music, national popular culture, while less favored in terms of exposition and financing, regularly wins the favor of the reading, listening, and viewing audiences. National media products reflect and may differentiate and reinforce cultural identities and even shore up resistance to Americanization. This does not mean that U.S. media will not impinge on values, norms, belief systems, mentalities, habits, rules, technologies, practices, institutions, and behaviors of non-U.S. Americans. Evidence to support this is quite strong, and those who argue that cultural resistance and adaptation can not only successfully counter Americanization but, in fact, de-Americanize national media underestimate the ties between U.S. cultural industries and the economic, military, and political interests of the United States and its power to influence change on a global scale. These ties are powerful in the sense that they allow cultural industries, in their own right, to wield power, defined as the ability to bring forth the

results one wants and, if necessary, to change the behavior of others to make this happen.

While this power to bring about desired change can no longer be expressed in terms of imperialism, of a forceful imposition on passive recipients reduced to a state of colonized people, it can be expressed in the Gramscian vocabulary of hegemony, particularly when a country's economy is founded, more and more, on mass consumption and on lifestyles for which the media are the major promoters and working agents. Adapting national standards, policies, and habits to accessible, popularized, and (relatively) low-cost imported U.S.-American media practices (genres, modes of production, programming, marketing, distribution, and merchandizing) is really adopting a politicoeconomic model that gears cultural products to fuel an economy based on a lifestyle of consumption. In this sense, the Americanization of the media is occurring not necessarily through their content but through the ties that interlock cultural industries with economic, political, and even military power interests within and outside the United States.

The United States' cultural influence is put to the test, and attested, when non-American and non-Western countries that have adopted the industrialized U.S. mass media system actively seek to acquire, either outright or through international coproduction, the hardware and software to foster and strengthen their own cultural identity and to better resist Americanization. Ironically, the way to counter and resist the influence of U.S. media is to accelerate the process of cultural exchange and diversity by using the very technology and practices that gave and still are giving dominance to the U.S. media.

Today the debate over Americanization of the media has moved from the spotlight of the international political arena to the more tempered circles of academia and international bodies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and the World Trade Organization, under the repeated and sustained critiques from fields of inquiry as diverse as political economy, cultural studies, postmodernism, and postcolonialism. But because this issue is now absent from the political, economic, and cultural public agendas of governments does not mean it does not have economic, political, and cultural implications; in fact, given the globalization of media, the issue remains

pressing. The United States was the first country to shape a media-based, modern, industrial, urban popular culture. The early capability to mass-produce, to attract hardworking, mobile, skilled migrants, and to expand trade certainly helped spread U.S.-American cultural products, entrepreneurship, and commercial practices abroad. Today the tendency toward Americanization of global media remains strong chiefly because the history of media production and urban culture is interlocked with the history of U.S. economic, political, and military power, which, in turn, has created an uneven playing field for the many newly competing national and regional cultural industries and their specific audiences.

To study the Americanization of the media, one needs to take into consideration two interconnected historical questions: First, what are the economic, technological, political, military, and social interests that Americanization best serves, and second, what are the social, economic, and political constraints countries must overcome to best appropriate the U.S. cultural industries' power to influence?

Roger de la Garde

See also Critical Theory; Popular Culture Theories

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ANXIETY/UNCERTAINTY MANAGEMENT THEORY

The anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory, developed by William B. Gudykunst, explains

how strangers can practice communication effectiveness via the mindful management of anxiety and uncertainty levels of interaction. The root of the AUM theory was based on an integration of the *uncertainty reduction theory* of Charles Berger and the *social identity theory* of Henri Tajfel. AUM theory is one of the major intercultural communication theories that explains the antecedent, process, and outcome dimensions of intergroup (intercultural) and interpersonal communication effectiveness.

The fermentation stage of the AUM theory first appeared in 1985 with a strong emphasis on effective intergroup communication process. Several versions later, the first “official” version of the theory—labeled clearly as the AUM theory—appeared in 1993. The theory was intended to be a practical theory to improve the quality of intergroup and interpersonal relations. In a later rendition, in 1998, the AUM theory was extended to explain effective intercultural adjustment processes. The building-block concepts of the theory include strangers, anxiety, uncertainty, thresholds, mindfulness, cross-cultural variability, effective communication, and intercultural adjustment.

According to the basic premise of the AUM theory, when individuals encounter strangers or culturally dissimilar others, they often experience both anxiety and uncertainty. The concept of *stranger* is drawn from the sociological work of Georg Simmel, which held that a stranger can reflect both *near* and *far* qualities; nearness connotes physical closeness, and remoteness refers to dissimilar values, outlooks, or behaviors. From this stranger-in-group, figure-ground context, AUM theory emphasizes the notion that almost all initial interactions are both intergroup and interpersonal in nature and characterized by anxiety and uncertainty.

Anxiety refers to affective feelings such as uneasiness, awkwardness, confusion, stress, or apprehensiveness about what might occur in the encounter. *Uncertainty*, on the other hand, is a cognitive phenomenon and involves both *predictive uncertainty* and *explanatory uncertainty*. While predictive uncertainty refers to our inability to predict strangers’ attitudes or behaviors, explanatory uncertainty refers to our inability to come up with a coherent explanation for strangers’ unfamiliar behaviors. In addition, as individuals navigate

across cultural boundaries, they have minimum and maximum thresholds for tolerating anxiety and uncertainty. Too much or too little anxiety or uncertainty hampers intercultural communication effectiveness.

For example, when emotional anxiety is too high, cultural strangers would tend to communicate on automatic pilot and interpret dissimilar others’ behaviors using their own cultural frame of reference. However, when emotional anxiety is too low, they might act in a very indifferent or ethnocentric manner. Likewise, when cognitive uncertainty is too high, cultural strangers would not be able to accurately interpret each other’s incoming verbal and nonverbal messages. When cognitive uncertainty is too low, cultural strangers might overrely on stereotypes to decode the intercultural interaction episode and make overgeneralized attributions.

The final version of the AUM-based effective communication theory has 47 axioms that deal with relationships among self-concept, motivation to interact, reaction to strangers, social categorization of strangers, situational processes, connections with strangers, ethical interactions, uncertainty management, anxiety management, mindfulness, and communication effectiveness. Two of the AUM axioms provide an illustration:

Axiom 5: An increase in perceived threats to our social identities when interacting with strangers will produce an increase in our anxiety and a decrease in our confidence in predicting their behavior.

Axiom 37: An increase in our mindfulness of the process of our communication with strangers will produce an increase in our ability to manage anxiety and an increase in our ability to manage our uncertainty.

According to the core thrust of the AUM theory, intercultural or intergroup communication is effective when individuals are able to maximize understandings and minimize misunderstandings. In order to achieve this meaning coordination process, individuals have to learn to be *mindful*. The characteristics of mindfulness are derived from the social psychology research work of Ellen Langer in 1989. To be mindful means being open to new information and multiple cultural perspectives, creating

more differentiated categories to understand cultural strangers' viewpoints, and being sensitive to the complex process of meaning negotiation between different identity groups. Mindfulness serves as the key moderating process between the two underlying causes (anxiety management and uncertainty management) and communication effectiveness.

For example, in applying the AUM theory to the intercultural adjustment process, strangers or sojourners need to keep their anxiety and uncertainty levels within the threshold ranges so that they can activate mindfulness. Mindfulness, in the stranger–host cultural context, can mean increasing cultural knowledge about and language skills of the unfamiliar culture or increasing the tendency to describe rather than evaluate negatively the host nationals' "bizarre" behaviors. In addition, members of the host culture can be mindful of such conditions as receptivity levels to strangers and how perceptions of discrimination can decrease or increase anxiety or stress in a new cultural milieu. Finally, cross-cultural value dimensions such as individualism–collectivism and weak–strong uncertainty avoidance are incorporated in the AUM theory to predict the influence of cultural values on strangers' cultural adjustment process. Based on the core tenets of the AUM theory, an intercultural adjustment training blueprint has been developed with the overall goal of helping sojourners to adjust effectively to a new and unfamiliar cultural landscape.

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See also Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory; Intercultural Communication Theories; Social and Communicative Anxiety; Social Identity Theory; Uncertainty Management Theories; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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ARCHEOLOGY AND GENEALOGY

Although the terms *archeology* and *genealogy* have established meanings in other disciplines, in the context of communication theory they are most often associated with methods for researching the past proposed by French theorist Michel Foucault. The goal of both archeological and genealogical approaches to history is to uncover how it is that certain ways of thinking and approaches to knowledge have become “common sense.” Archeologies of history tend to be directed toward uncovering the moments at which various ways of knowing come to be dominant and institutionalized, thus demonstrating how contingent the “taken for granted” has always been. Genealogies of history seek to tie these archeological shifts in knowledge and consciousness to broader historical transformations and the exercise of power behind those transformations. Both archeology and genealogy provide research approaches that question whether the development of communication theory and practice is the result of continual refinement and evolution or the result of historically contingent shifts in power.

Both of these methodologies spring from a fundamental skepticism about the nature of traditional histories. Foucault argues that most historical accounts suffer from a variety of interlinked but functional shortcomings. Stated simply, conventional accounts of the evolution of thought and historic events vastly oversimplify both those events and their causes. While this is an inherent quality of all histories, Foucault believed that the creation of

knowledge about the past serves as part of a broader project by which people and institutions determine what range of truths will be widely accepted. Thus, rather than simply reflecting what “really” happened in the past, histories document those ideas, institutions, and political actors who emerged victorious from highly contested struggles over truth, meaning, and power while excluding or marginalizing other ideas, institutions, and people. In the case of histories of knowledge and technology, presenting the past as an orderly unfolding of ever increasingly rational and accurate ideas about science, government, education, and society is not only an oversimplification but a distortion. Rather than simply tracing major refinements in ways of thinking, such histories conceal struggles over truth and meaning whose outcomes were never inherently more superior, accurate, or inevitable than other potential outcomes. Equally important, they silence those individuals, ideas, experiences, and ways of living that did not prevail, erasing their existence from the historical record. Similarly, Foucault argued that political, economic, and social histories similarly serve to legitimate the power and authority of the victors of past power struggles, while overlooking the real power relationships that impact people on a day-to-day basis.

The problem with traditional histories is not simply that they are dishonest or incomplete but that they establish a “commonsense” or “taken for granted” understanding of the past that serves to continue and reinforce the power of the winners of those distant struggles into the present. By defining the range of ideas and outcomes that are conceivable under our commonly held understandings of what truth is; what ideas, institutions, and technologies are legitimate; and what ways of living are healthy and moral, histories shape and foreclose possibilities in the present. Thus, Foucault saw the creation of knowledge—and especially historical knowledge—as inseparable from the exercise of power. And histories constitute a particularly effective and problematic form of “*knowledge/power*” in that they simultaneously reproduce the exercises of power that underlie our stories about the past, while cloaking those exercises of power by presenting contemporary understandings as largely uncontested and inevitable.

The first research approach Foucault developed in an effort to simultaneously expose and remedy

these tendencies was what he termed *archeology*. As with all his approaches to research methodology, archeology is premised on the belief that the exercise of mundane, localized, and bureaucratic authority and ideas is more important in shaping peoples’ lives than are the traditional big-picture events covered by conventional histories, such as the procession of governmental leaders or the conduct of wars. This premise has several important methodological ramifications. First, archeologies tend to focus on specific bodies of scientific or bureaucratic practice and knowledge in order to determine how they inform contemporary taken-for-granted understandings about such generally uncontested areas of “truth” as medicine, psychiatry, and the human sciences in general. Second, archeologies focus on what Foucault described as *discourses*—interrelated sets of statements that serve to convey, embody, and reinforce a range of valid claims about what is true and knowable by a given group of people at a given time. Foucault argued that these systems of truth claims by which certain knowledges are possible, or *discursive formations*, largely work below the consciousness of authors and actors but may be ascertained by examining the documents and statements by which knowledge is practiced and promulgated. Thus, while the term *archeology* suggests an effort to dig beneath the surface of conventional accounts of the past to uncover the “truth,” Foucault actually believed that the ideas, stories, experiences, and struggles that are otherwise excluded or marginalized by traditional histories are readily ascertainable by looking at the surface of texts and artifacts from the past, which then allow the researcher to dig beneath the consciousness of those who created those texts and artifacts. By focusing on the ways that contemporary understandings of such issues as mental illness and medical knowledge gained the status of common sense, archeology involves exploring discourses by which those systems of knowledge achieved dominance. In so doing, archeologies seek to demonstrate how such taken-for-granted truths are actually contingent and contestable products of specific exercises of power at specific times and in specific places.

Foucault’s subsequent *genealogies* were intended to build on the method of archeology while tracing the processes by which one set of discursive formations yields to another. Actively disputing histories

of thought that present the evolution of knowledge as the manifestation of increasingly rational or efficient ways of thinking, genealogies seek to expose the ways that transformations in knowledge are both driven by and inseparable from shifts in power. This involves a study, not only of such archeological sources as texts and artifacts for the discourses they reveal, but also of broader social power relations that actually help animate the emergence of certain discourses and the disappearance of others. Thus, genealogy involves the simultaneous analysis of discourses and of the ways those discourses are integrated into and reproduced by personal habits, social norms, institutional rules, governmental agencies, and the like. For example, Foucault's genealogies trace the ways that knowledge about sexual and criminal deviance is both reflected in and reproduced by individuals and institutions as part of broader projects to extend social control over bodies. In seeking to expose both the ways that knowledge and power are linked (as with archeologies) and the ways that shifts in commonsense knowledge result from specific power struggles and historical contingencies, genealogies seek to challenge simultaneously the grand narratives of traditional histories and the "taken for grantedness" of contemporary systems of knowledge and belief.

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See also Critical Discourse Analysis; Critical Rhetoric; Critical Theory; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Poststructuralism; Power and Power Relations

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ARGUMENTATION THEORIES

No single theory of argumentation exists. Instead, a constellation of features and concepts drawn

from philosophy, rhetoric, and social theories infuses different concepts and explanations of argumentation. Since ancient times, an emphasis on rationality and reasonable communication distinguished argumentation from other kinds of communication. Argumentation is a cooperative process in which communicators make inferences from various grounds and evidence; provide justifications for their conclusions or claims based on those starting points; choose among disputed options in controversies; and promote, defend, and amend positions and standpoints in response to other participants in the argumentative processes.

In contrast to formal logic, argumentation emphasizes *practical reasoning*, the everyday arguments that people use to solve disputes in interpersonal and public contexts. Examining products, processes, and procedures provides general perspectives for theorizing argumentation. Pragmatics, the new rhetoric, and narrative paradigms explain and offer prominent frameworks for theorizing about argumentation.

General Perspectives for Theorizing Argumentation

Joseph Wenzel conceptualized three perspectives for studying argumentation theory: *products* derived from logic, *processes* associated with rhetoric, and *procedures* connected with dialectic. These perspectives have been reconfigured by some theorists to take into account the different fields or *spheres* in which they occur.

Products From Logic

Argument *products* extend the concepts of *formal logic*, a correct form of reasoning based on the linguistic progression that moves from a certitude stated in a major premise to an assertion of conditions in the minor premise and ends with a claim solely derived from both premises. *Informal logic* emphasizes everyday reasoning in which people make inferences, draw conclusions, and reason from one set of options to another in order to resolve disagreements or solve public problems. A long tradition of pedagogy based on informal logic theorized about argument products as different types of evidence, reasoning, and methods for creating and evaluating arguments.

Evidence, the primary feature of argument products, consists of one or more grounds that arguers put forth as the basis for believing their claims. Naming and identifying adequate evidence is a common approach for teaching argumentation theory. Evidence consists of definitions, testimony, examples, personal experiences, history, and statistics located in complicated chains of reasoning found in speeches, essays, literary works, proposals, and other discourses. Pedagogical approaches to argumentation establish explicit norms and standards for evaluating a particular type of evidence. For example, a norm for assessing the quality of statistical evidence depends on the extent to which numerical measures derive from reliable and valid methods that are up-to-date and generalizable to populations other than those from which the statistical evidence originated.

Of equal importance are the *types of logical connections* that supply the *implicative structure* in arguments, including signs, examples, cause-effect, analogy, authority, and definition. Argumentation pedagogy explicates the different types of reasoning and the relevant implicative structure that links evidence to claims. If an argument fails to meet these standards, a *fallacy* may result. Fallacies are errors in reasoning that deceive an audience by seeming to prove a claim based on a faulty inference. A cause-effect argument, for example, should establish a relationship between two events so that the first brings about the second; that is, the high price of oil is the cause of inflation. A type of fallacy, *false cause (post hoc)*, results when two events or actions occur at the same time and the arguer infers that one event is the cause of the other without considering other possible causes. Errant logical connections lead to a variety of other fallacies resulting from appeals to authority, pity, fear, the majority, or tradition. Because fallacies are both common and interesting, teachers often engage students in diagnosing the errors in argument products and explaining how flawed arguments can be avoided.

Wayne Brockriede and Douglas Ehninger adapted a model developed by philosopher Stephen Toulmin for teaching argumentation that describes and evaluates a unit of proof as an argument product by creating a visual construction of its parts. Diagramming begins with a *claim*: the judgment or conclusion that the arguer wants someone to

accept. The diagram identifies the *evidence* (grounds or data) that serves as the basis for the claim and the *warrants* that make the connection between the evidence and claim. A *reservation* placed under the claim states the conditions under which the claim does not hold, and a *qualifier* acknowledges a limitation on the generalizability of the claim, using words like *most*, *many*, or *some*. *Backing* provides additional evidence to support the warrant. Although Toulmin diagrams proved to be a useful tool for teaching students about logical products, they have limited potential as a method for analyzing and evaluating complex argumentative processes.

Processes From Rhetoric

The conception of argument *processes* derives from rhetorical theory and concentrates on the ways people argue in interpersonal and public interactions. Processes of *practical reasoning* concentrate on reasoned and purposeful rhetorical interactions that seek to resolve disagreements and disputes.

One simple concept of practical reasoning is the *enthymeme*, a truncated syllogism in which one or more of the premises or the conclusion is unstated but supplied by the audience to complete the argument. Examples of condensed arguments of this type are abundant. Many advertisements use enthymemes that present a conclusion—buy this brand of cola or vote for this candidate—that rely on audiences to fill in the missing premise and thereby supply the logical principles on which the conclusion is based. Enthymemes appear in many argumentative processes because audiences commonly contribute to the meaning of the reasons.

Argumentation *processes* take into account the rhetorical resources used by arguers in interpersonal and public disputes. For example, theories about argumentation processes consider the uses and effects of multiple chains of reasoning of complex arguments and counterarguments that involve rhetorical concepts, such as arguers' character, stylistic features of the discourses and interactions, and exigencies of the situation that generated the argument. Other relational, ideological, or ideational concepts impact argumentation processes in substantive ways. Examining the intricacies of argumentation processes reveals how arguers find

and construe issues; what choices they make regarding evidence; what strategies they use to assert, modify, and refute arguments of others; and how arguments are first assembled and then altered in the process of resolving disagreements and making decisions. This process perspective applies to analyses of the development, use, and outcomes of argumentation in marital disputes, children's playground disagreements, and roommate conflicts and investigations of complex public policy disputes such as those involving women's rights, immigration, global warming, and stem cell research.

Procedures From Dialectic

Argument *procedures* include explicit and implicit rules and interactional protocols that influence disputes and reveal the situational constraints and cultural norms affecting argumentative processes. *Dialectic*, the art of arguing for or against an issue from a particular standpoint, proceeds according to rules and norms agreed on by disputants, such as searching for probable truths, avoiding fallacies, and resolving controversial issues. *Strategic dialectical processes* are planned interactions that arguers employ to test ideas by asserting and defending standpoints and by refining and reformulating evidence, claims, and inferential patterns in response to the reasoning of other disputants. Dialectic is a cooperative means of arriving at a reasoned decision according to specific procedures.

Dialectical procedures help to promote ethical argumentation and enable disputants to reason in a civil manner. Several features characterize dialectical procedures: (a) Arguers cooperate in obeying rules in order to achieve a common purpose; (b) arguers present complete and accurate content; (c) arguers are open about their positions and standpoints and clear about the ideas they offer to support them; (d) arguers apply rigorous standards for presenting their own arguments and evaluating those of other disputants; (e) arguers respect other disputants; and (f) arguers act as restrained partisans who retain a standpoint at the same time they show a willingness to accept the amendments and judgments of others toward that standpoint. Parliamentary procedure is an example of a procedure that regulates the structure, content, and ethical interaction during decision-making processes.

Spheres

Some theorists reconfigure products, processes, and procedures of arguments according to the different fields or spheres in which they occur. Thomas Goodnight and others elaborated this construct by examining contextual similarities among *spheres*—collections of people or groups, organizations, and professions—that interact with one another to make decisions or resolve disputes. The reasonableness of argumentation in a particular sphere depends on how arguers construct reasons; engage with others; and support, defend, and amend issues and standpoints according to the norms and rules of a sphere. For example, differences exist between personal, technical, and public spheres because arguers emphasize different procedures and processes in constructing and evaluating evidence, providing justifications, using language, and pursuing specific goals of a sphere. In *personal spheres*, arguers seek to resolve interpersonal disputes by identifying issues and negotiating outcomes according to mutually agreed-on rules. Friends and coworkers tend to resolve their disputes in personal spheres. Argumentation in *technical spheres*, however, adheres to explicit rules of evidence and modes of justification that direct reasoning processes toward specific goals and outcomes. The scientific and legal professions are exemplars of technical spheres. *Public spheres* are discursive arenas in which arguers take into account customs, traditions, and requirements of a polity and deal with the public business in deliberative forums, such as town meetings, legislative arenas, or the Internet. In *counterpublic spheres*, minority groups argue in ways that challenge and resist the standpoints defended by those holding positions of public power. Sphere theories construe argument products, processes, and procedures in innovative ways that bring attention to the importance of various contexts, goals, and procedures of argumentation theories.

Sample Theories

Various frameworks have been developed to theorize the argumentation process. Three sample theories will be discussed here: pragma-dialectics, the new rhetoric, and the narrative paradigm.

Pragma-Dialectics

Pragma-dialectics, an argumentation theory introduced and refined by theorists at the University of Amsterdam, relies on reasoned and orderly dialectical procedures and practical reasoning processes for resolving differences of opinion. This perspective emphasizes how particular speech acts used in social-reasoning processes increase or decrease the acceptability of arguers' controversial standpoints in disputes. This perspective stresses both the dialectical procedures and the instrumental and pragmatic goals that arguers pursue. One key procedural rule is that proponents of a *standpoint* must defend their positions when requested to do so, and another is that arguers must defend standpoints using correct *argumentative schemes* that address the patterns of inference underlying an argument. A scheme consists of types of arguments, such as appeal to authority, cause-effect reasoning, or analogy. Explicit standards exist for judging a particular scheme, such as determining whether an analogy shows sufficient similarity to another idea that it establishes a reasonable connection.

Argument analysis is the primary goal of pragma-dialectics. After categorizing a dispute according to sequential stages of confrontation, opening, argumentation, and conclusion, analysts then describe the disputed issues, identify standpoints of the arguers in relation to those issues, state the explicit and implicit arguments associated with disputants' standpoints, and explain the complex structures and standards that apply to the arguments. Specifically, analysts utilize pragma-dialectics to explain disputes according to the interplay of argumentative speech acts, instrumental goals, and dialectical procedures. *Speech acts* take the form of arguers' verbal claims—assertives, declaratives, and expressives—offered to support, defend, and amend specific standpoints. Instrumental actions consist of the *strategic maneuvers* that arguers employ to achieve their goals by accommodating their ideas to others. Strategic maneuvers demand consideration of the sufficiency of evidence, the commitments implicated in the speech acts, and the schemes utilized in relation to arguers' standpoints. Resolving disagreements also depends on how arguers meet their dialogical obligations of cooperation, thoroughness, and the presentation of appropriate evidence. Pragma-dialectic analysis

can be applied to resolutions of simple disagreements between a tenant and an apartment manager, for example, as well as complex disputes in legal forums and international negotiations.

The New Rhetoric

The new rhetoric emphasizes appeals to values as the primary means that arguers use to persuade others. Audiences consist of ensembles of people from whom arguers seek adherence to their claims. In order to make their claims acceptable to audiences, arguers construct reasons based on *premises* that come from facts (ideas that are of general knowledge and are verifiable), *presumptions* (shared and generally believed ideas about reality), and *values* (judgments about what is good or moral in society). Gaining audiences' adherence to arguments depends on how arguers make connections between their own values and those of their audiences. The particular audience consists of real and definable groups of people that arguers seek to persuade in a specific situation. Voters in a city election, for example, are the particular audience addressed by a city council candidate. The *universal audience* is not the real ensemble of people addressed but is instead an ideal of competent and reasonable people holding universal values of justice, fairness, and equality. In order for arguers to gain the adherence of audiences to the reasons they put forth, the arguers must explicitly address the values of their particular audience and implicitly invoke the values of the universal audience.

Argument types depend on values. The *quasi-logical argument*, for example, creates illusions about the connection between claims and the audience values on which those claims are based. These arguments are partially logical because they contain the structure of arguments, value associations, and connections, but not the logical content. For example, when legislators claim that new taxes hurt the middle class more than the upper class, they give the impression that the tax code is unfair although the taxes may in fact reduce the income of the upper class by a higher percentage than they do the income of the middle class. The persuasiveness of arguments about taxation policy depends on arguers' and audiences' sharing values of fairness rather than on causal logic based on facts. Another type, *arguments based on the structure of reality*, justifies

arguers' positions by linking them to audiences' opinions and experiences of reality. For example, when arguers claim that global warming is a threat to the future of the planet, arguers rely more on their audiences' opinions and experiences related to climate change than on their own ideas. This type of argumentation assumes that audiences already hold a view of reality, and so arguers create reasons directly aligned with audiences' preexisting knowledge of reality. In contrast, *arguments establishing the structure of reality* promote a view at odds with the reality familiar to audiences. In this type of reasoning, arguers utilize examples, analogies, and models to construct a reasonable view of reality that is not part of the audiences' knowledge. For example, to create a structure of reality for a criminal trial, defense attorneys may try to construe a criminal action as accidental rather than intentional based on the supposed reality in which it occurred. Although the jurors have no direct knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the crime, the defense attorney creates a reality (a description of circumstances) based on analogies of events familiar to jurors. The attorney's descriptions serve as the basis for arguments showing that an action was accidental, not intentional.

The new rhetoric explains arguers' strategic uses of reasoning based on associations and dissociations of ideas and issues in ways that gain audiences' adherence. The reasonableness of argumentation process is influenced, not by external rules or norms, but by arguers' explicit and implicit connections of their reasoning to the values of the particular and universal audience.

Narrative Paradigm

Narrative paradigm theory also conceptualizes rhetorical processes of argumentation influenced by values. Although stories are not the most common form for expressing arguments, they are a prominent kind of practical reasoning used by arguers to influence their audiences. Narratives convey specialized social knowledge that evokes reasoned responses from audiences but does not rely on the same kinds of evidence, modes of inference, and justifications typical of other products and processes of argumentation. Instead, narrative reasoning depends on how audiences make meaning from the values embedded in narratives

and how these values inform their judgments and actions. Narratives contain both a logic and a rationality derived from how audiences attribute coherence and fidelity, along with probability, or the likelihood that the events described could have happened, to the stories they hear, read, and see. *Coherence* refers to the internal fit of the narrative parts, that is, the consistency of characters, action, dialogue, and setting. *Fidelity* relates to the truth value of the story, whether the narrative fits with the experiences of the audiences and their notions about sound reasoning. Taken together, both create *narrative rationality*, a quality that enables people to understand the actions of others and judge narrative accounts as reasoned explanations of human choice and action. Values are the core of narratives because they supply good reasons that authorize, sanction, or justify certain kinds of beliefs and actions for audiences. Good narrative reasoning embodies characteristics similar to other argumentation processes; it includes facts, assumes relevance, contains inferential patterns, embodies coherence and consistency, and addresses transcendent issues.

Narrative paradigm theory de-emphasizes informal logical products and stresses argument processes as social constructions of values. Narrative rationality applies to argumentation in fictional literature, television and stage dramas, and biographies and autobiographies, as well as to processes of jury decision making, organizational advocacy, and many kinds of political discourse. Some communication theorists apply narrative paradigm theory so generally that they lose sight of the centrality of practical reasoning processes and values and instead concentrate on narrative as a general idea related to communication practices.

Conclusion

Argument theories examine practical reasoning products, processes, and procedures. Theorists are indebted to traditions of logic, rhetoric, and dialectic for the concepts they have appropriated, modified, and constructed to explain argumentation. Early theories of argumentation developed in response to pedagogical goals. Later theories of pragma-dialectics, the new rhetoric, and narrative paradigm responded to pragmatic, analytical, and interpretive goals pertinent to the use of reasoning

as a means of settling disagreements or disputes, making critical decisions, and socially constructing knowledge. In this way, argumentation theories are constellations of concepts that explain the centrality of reasoning to theories of communication.

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See also Conversation Analysis; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Narrative and Narratology; Public Sphere; Rhetorical Theory; Speech Act Theory

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ARGUMENTATIVENESS, ASSERTIVENESS, AND VERBAL AGGRESSIVENESS THEORY

Predispositions toward aggressive communication have been found to explain much of a person's

message-sending and message-receiving behavior. Understanding the role of aggressive communication in conflict provides valuable insight into communication behaviors people exhibit when disagreement exists. Individuals engaged in aggressive communication often adopt “attack” and “defend” modes of thinking and behavior. These behaviors can be employed destructively as well as constructively. This entry defines aggressive communication, distinguishes constructive from destructive symbolic aggressive communication, describes assertiveness, argumentativeness, hostility, and verbal aggressiveness, and explores consequences of constructive and destructive aggressiveness in relationships.

Symbolic Aggressive Communication

The first distinction made in categorizing aggression is physical versus symbolic. Aggression can take both physical and symbolic forms. Physical aggression involves the aggressor's forceful use of his or her body (roughly handling or striking objects or others). *Symbolic aggression* involves the aggressor's forceful use of his or her communication (words, gestures, facial expressions, vocal tone, etc.). It is this latter set of behaviors with which aggressive communication is concerned.

Symbolic aggression can be divided into two types: *constructive* and *destructive*. Aggressive communication is composed of not one, but several traits, including assertiveness, argumentativeness, hostility, and verbal aggressiveness. Each of these traits interacts with environmental factors to produce message behavior.

Constructive Aggressive Communication

Assertiveness is considered a constructive trait because it involves verbal and nonverbal symbols to exert control, obtain justified rewards, and stand up for one's rights. Individuals who are assertive can use symbols aggressively but tend to do so in socially acceptable ways. One facet of assertiveness is *argumentativeness*, defined as a stable trait that predisposes individuals involved in a conflict to defend positions on controversial issues and to verbally attack the positions of others. Argumentativeness is considered a subset of assertiveness as all arguing is assertive communication, but not all assertiveness involves arguing.

Individuals differ in their levels of trait argumentativeness and can be classified into three groups: high, low, and moderate. A person *high in argumentativeness* enjoys arguing and will eagerly and readily use arguments to attack others' positions and defend their own positions on issues. Highly argumentative individuals view arguing as an intellectual challenge and as an exciting competitive situation that allows them to display to others how communicatively skillful they are.

People *low in argumentativeness* often feel uncomfortable about arguing before, during, and after the event that calls for argument. They frequently lack the motivation, desire, and skill to argue across most situations and generally avoid talking about controversial issues because it makes them uncomfortable. Those low in argumentativeness can even hold negative beliefs about arguing. Individuals can also be *moderate in argumentativeness*. There are three types: conflicted, apathetic, and neutral.

Conflicted feelings often cause moderates to be highly emotional when it comes to arguing; they can feel compelled to argue due to their level of competitiveness yet be highly anxious about arguing due to their fear of failure. *Apathetic-moderate argumentatives* tend to be low in emotion when it comes to arguing yet feel little to no anxiety about engaging in an argument. *Neutral-moderate argumentatives* normally argue only when they see some good coming out of it and feel that they have a good chance of winning.

Destructive Aggressive Communication

There are two destructive forms of symbolic aggressive communication: hostility and verbal aggressiveness. *Hostility* is exhibited in interpersonal communication when people use messages to express irritability, negativity, resentment, and suspicion. *Irritable communicators* usually have quick tempers, show little patience, are moody, and appear exasperated when things go wrong for them. *Negative communicators* typically express a great deal of pessimism, display little cooperative effort, and often are antagonistic toward authority, rules, and social conventions. *Resentment* is expressed through jealousy and brooding about perceived slights, either real or imagined. *Suspicion* is communicated by distrust of others.

Verbal aggressiveness is defined as the tendency to attack the self-concept of individuals instead of, or in addition to, their positions on topics of communication. These attacks most commonly take the form of character attacks (e.g., "You're a liar and a cheater!"), competence attacks (e.g., "You can't do anything right" or "You're a lousy lover"), teasing, ridicule, profanity, maledictions (i.e., wishing someone harm, as when we say to someone, "Drop dead"), background attacks, attacks on physical appearance ("Your nose looks like a pig's nose"), threats, and nonverbal behaviors (e.g., raising the middle finger in the "up yours" gesture, sticking out the tongue, rolling the eyes).

The essential difference between argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness is in the locus of the attack. In argumentativeness, the attack is on the adversary's *position* on the controversial issue; in verbal aggressiveness, the attack is on the adversary's *self-concept*. For example, one spouse suggests purchasing a vehicle made by an American manufacturer. The other disagrees, stating "American cars depreciate much more quickly than Japanese vehicles." This constitutes an example of an argumentative response. Stating, "American cars stink, and you're an idiot for wanting to waste our money buying one" would constitute a verbally aggressive response and one that is potentially destructive to the relationship. Verbally aggressive behavior is more common in exchanges in which the consequences are very meaningful to those involved.

Causes of Verbal Aggressiveness

Several reasons have been offered for the development of the verbal aggressiveness trait: psychopathology (repressed hostility or neuroticism), disdain for the other person, social learning of aggression, and argumentative skill deficiency (i.e., not possessing the skill and ability to generate constructive arguments during a conflict). Communication scholars have suggested a fifth cause of verbal aggressiveness—the inherited trait explanation. This explanation suggests that verbal aggressiveness can be an expression of temperament. That is, some people are born with a set of biologically determined temperaments that are relatively consistent throughout their lives, of which verbal aggressiveness is one.

Individuals high in verbal aggressiveness have been found to view competence attacks, character attacks, maledictions, nonverbal emblems (i.e., gestures which take the place of words), ridicule, and threats as less hurtful than do those who are low in verbal aggressiveness. Many individuals high in verbal aggressiveness reported several reasons for being verbally aggressive, such as trying to appear tough, rational discussions' degenerating into verbal fights, wanting to be mean to the other person, and wanting to express disdain for the other. In another study, it was observed that highly verbally aggressive individuals often perceive that their verbal aggression is justified.

Consequences of Constructive and Destructive Aggressive Communication

The most fundamental conclusion that has been reached by the vast amount of research conducted on aggressive communication over the past quarter of a century is that most outcomes of argumentativeness are constructive, while most outcomes of verbal aggressiveness are destructive. Several benefits have been associated with argumentativeness. First, argumentativeness can enhance perceived credibility. Argumentativeness has been related to credibility because of the assumption that higher levels of the trait may indicate more skill in arguing and reasoning. Research has revealed that more skillful advocacy, refutation, and rebuttal behaviors frequently indicate greater competence in communication. High argumentatives are more likely than low argumentatives to be seen as leaders in groups. Argumentativeness has also been associated with higher levels of self-esteem, especially perceptions of personal power and competence.

Recall that a skill deficiency in argument has been suggested as one explanation for verbal aggressiveness. That is, when individuals are low in motivation to argue and lack the skill to generate arguments during conflict, these deficiencies can lead to verbal attacks being directed to another person's self-concept instead of his or her position on controversial issues. Verbal aggression has been suggested as a catalyst for physical aggression. Thus, being high in motivation and skill in argument may reduce the likelihood that this cycle will result because skilled and motivated arguers are better able to direct a verbal attack

toward their adversary's position, and not their self-concept.

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See also Conflict Communication Theories

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ASIAN COMMUNICATION THEORY

Asian communication theory refers to the body of literature covering concepts and theories derived from the rereading of Asian classical treatises, non-Eurocentric comparisons, East-West theoretical syntheses, explorations into Asian cultural concepts, and critical reflections on Western theory. This entry will begin with a definition of

Asian communication theory and then will examine Asian communication theory in relation to the seven communication traditions that Robert Craig elucidated in 1999: rhetorical, semiotic, phenomenological, cybernetic, sociopsychological, socio-cultural, and critical.

Definition

The three words constituting *Asian communication theory* need clarification because each word contains multiple meanings. Although geographically Asia includes the Middle East, Central Asia, and eastern Russia, *Asian* theory focuses primarily on the great philosophies of India and China and the cultures of the region between them. Asian communication theory adds to the different meanings of *communication*, and it conflicts with the positivist view of *theory*, which is an artifact of Western science. Asian theory emphasizes systems, groups, networks, and the macro approach and is therefore more akin to philosophy, which cannot be easily tested in the Western scientific manner.

These different approaches to communication and theory result in an Asian worldview that differs from the West's in its premises about self, nature, space and time, knowledge, and the transpersonal. Johan Galtung summarizes these differences as follows:

- The West emphasizes *individualism*; the East emphasizes the reciprocal responsibility between individual and society.
- The West emphasizes *control* of nature; the East emphasizes *harmony* with nature.
- The West looks at a world *divided* into center (West), periphery (West's allies), and outer periphery (all the rest); the East looks at the world and universe as a single unit (an interconnected and interdependent *whole*).
- The West sees *bounded time*; the East sees *infinite time*.
- The West sees knowledge in terms of atomism and deductivism (and uses these fragments to engender contradiction-free theoretical frameworks following Newtonian science); the East sees knowledge in terms akin to systems theory such that axiology (values), epistemology (knowledge), and ontology (metaphysics) all become essential parts of theorizing.

- The West subordinates humans to a supreme being; the East places faith in following the path of righteousness—*dharma* in Buddhism and Hinduism, *yi* in Confucianism, and the nondivine Supreme Reality in Daoism.

Asian Theories Within Western Traditions

Robert Craig divided the field of communication into seven traditions on the basis of underlying conceptions of communicative practice. Although designed to organize Western theories, these traditions can reflect East–West differences and are used in the following discussion to classify various Asian theories.

The Rhetorical Tradition

Rhetoric (study of principles and rules of composition formulated by ancient critics and of writing or speaking as a means of communication or persuasion) has a long history traceable to Greek sophists (c. 600 BCE). Communication scholar Robert T. Oliver failed to see any paradigmatic examples of Asian rhetoric that are compact enough to be subjected to a thorough analysis. However, Steven Combs was able to derive a unique model of Chinese rhetoric from a rereading of the ancient Daoist texts.

Chinese Rhetoric

Antonio S. Cua attempted to formulate a Confucian rhetoric on the lines of the Aristotelian model. Cua concluded that a society that values harmony and tolerance could not be expected to embrace the values of debate and persuasion. In his study of Xunzi's moral epistemology, Cua asserted that the ethics of a Confucian rhetoric arose from the background notions of *li* (propriety), *yi* (righteousness), and *jen* (benevolence).

Combs, however, contends that Daoism—as explicated in the classics *Dao de jing* (attributed to Laozi), *Zhuangzi* (by Zhuangzi), and *Art of War* (attributed to Sunzi)—offers no explicit definition of rhetoric or an inventory of rhetorical canons inasmuch as Daoists do not think of rhetoric as a distinct subject although their overall philosophy on language and communication (rhetoric) shows spontaneity and creativity. The concepts Dao (Way/Path/Supreme Reality), *de* (efficacy/virtuality),

yin–yang (passive energy–active energy) polarity, *ziran* (natural way), harmony, and *wu–wei* (actionless action) are key components of Daoist rhetoric.

Laozi thematizes the need to avoid contentiousness and unnatural verbosity. Laozi uses two negative methods (negation and paradox) and two positive methods (analogy/metaphor and vague expressions) for communicating Daoism. The outstanding rhetorical strategy that Zhuangzi uses is *evocativeness*, intended to draw others into interactive communication aimed at engendering self-persuasion. Evocativeness differs from Aristotle's *enthymeme* and Kenneth Burke's *identification* and adds a vital element to Western rhetorical theory. Zhuangzi uses parables creatively to go beyond the limitations of language; he introduces the readers to the essential unity of the Dao, the errors of making distinctions or passing judgments, *wu–wei*, and the natural way of things. Sunzi's underlying strategic principle in *Art of War*, when applied to persuasion, is the *rhetoric of parsimony*, which has three key attendant principles: *knowledge*, *strategy*, and *responsiveness*. Sunzi, who upholds the Daoist principle of avoiding conflict, says that justification for war must be made on the basis of harmony. Sunzi's rhetoric is also comparable at times with Western rhetorical concepts such as *presumption* and *identification*. Combs asserted that the genre of Daoist rhetoric has the potential to provide a lens for viewing the limitations of current Western rhetorical theorizing.

Indian Rhetoric

Western scholars have often used the term *Asian rhetoric* in a pejorative sense because of the alleged Indian preference for form (e.g., exaggeration, embellishment) over substance. However, communication scholars have yet to reread the 550 *Jataka* (*Rebecoming*) stories of the Buddha or the hymns of the four *Vedas* (sacred knowledge), the 108 *Upanishads* (philosophical commentaries on the Vedas), or even the *Bhagavadgita* (the Song of God extracted from the *Mahabharata* epic) to derive a genre of Indian rhetoric.

The rhetoric of India, in both its Hindu and its Buddhist forms, has an ethical basis. The Hindu rhetorician seeks *aretaic* qualities (virtues)—those by which the individual may fully represent the

traditions of family, community, and caste—while the Buddhist rhetorician values truthfulness, compassion, and conciliation.

Reasoning is an aspect of rhetoric. Bimal K. Matilal claims that India's *dharma* tradition evolved through an attempt of a rational criticism of itself. Stories in the epics and the *puranas* mention Carvaka's use of *tarka* or *hetusastra*, the science of reasoning, to ask questions and challenge the validity of Vedic rituals.

Nagarjuna, the 2nd-century Buddhist philosopher, used logic to show that nothing in the phenomenal world had full being and all was ultimately unreal. Therefore, every rational theory about the world would be a theory about something unreal evolved by an unreal thinker with unreal thoughts. Western communication theory has failed to examine communication through the critical lens of Nagarjuna because of the undercurrents of Orientalism and Eurocentrism.

The Semiotic Tradition

John Locke's language theory, explicated in *An Essay on Human Understanding*, published in 1690, is credited with setting off *semiotics* as a distinct tradition of communication theory. *Pragmaticism* and *linguistics*, reflected in the current theories of language, discourse, interpretation, nonverbal communication, culture, and media, are contemporary areas of study that rely on the semiotic tradition. Semiotics defines communication as intersubjective mediation by signs.

Chinese Semiotics

Asian communication scholars have yet to develop comparable semiotic theories. However, elements of a distinct theory of Chinese semiotics are reflected in the communication pattern of those who make use of the Chinese ideographic system of writing, which entails the interpretation of symbols—itsself a semiotic exercise. Despite the mutual unintelligibility of the spoken language systems and the very different language stocks in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, all of East Asia during the Tang dynasty adopted the Chinese ideographic system that the Japanese called *kanji* (*hanja* in Korean and *hanzi* in Chinese). Because kanji are inextricably tied to a particular set of ideas, unlike the letters of an alphabet, the use of kanji throughout East Asia created an “empire

of ideas”—a powerful glue that bound the region together.

Moreover, the *Yijing* (Book of Changes) system—with the basic yin and yang signs that make up bigrams, trigrams, and hexagrams (various word combinations)—could be considered a semiotic masterpiece. It dates back to the 12th century BCE. The Ten Commentaries for the understanding of the *Yijing* were written in the 3rd or 4th century BCE. The philosophy of Chinese semiotics is an explicit manifestation of the metaphysics implicit in the signs or forms (*xiang*). Chung-Ying Cheng points out that the *Yijing* incorporates four functions—interpretative, integrative, practical, and ingraining—that define a system of communication.

Indian Semiotics

Rhetoric can be looked at as the branch of semiotics that studies the structures of language and argument mediating between communicators and audiences. The Indian theories of syntax and semantics are clear Asian contributions to this tradition.

Panini, the author of *Astadhyayi* (probably written in the 5th century BCE), explicated the structure of a natural language (Sanskrit), which enabled the Nyaya-Vaisesika school of Indian philosophy to work out the theory that puts meanings closest to the syntactic form of words. Bhartrhari, the 5th-century Indian philosopher of language who wrote the treatise *Vakyapadiya*, described thought as a unitary thing that fractured and altered form as it passed into words, interacting with other factors in the mind and the speaker's environment to produce intricate displays of sound and fragmented meaning.

The Phenomenological Tradition

Phenomenology is the study of consciousness from first-person perspective. It views communication as dialogue or experience of otherness. Martin Buber explicates that dialogue is based on the experience of authentic, direct, and unmediated contact with others. The description of the phenomenon of consciousness is the objective of phenomenology as evident in the three main categories of phenomenological thinking—*essentialist* (Edmund Husserl), *ontological* (Martin Heidegger), and *existentialist* (Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty).

The phenomenological tradition has a degree of consonance with Asian communication philosophy. Buddha often adopted the dialogic form to experience otherness, as testified in *Jataka* stories. The phenomenologists' focus on the centrality of language in human interaction, not as a mere means for conveying thought, but as constituting thought itself, resonates with Indian philosophy. The concepts of the structure of consciousness and the communicative environment are central to Asian verbal or nonverbal communication (e.g., Japanese *kuuki* [atmosphere requiring compliance] and *ishin-denshin* [communication without language]).

In a reader edited by Alexander Macfie, Reinhard May has documented the East Asian influences on Martin Heidegger's work, and Irene Eber has documented dialogist Martin Buber's considerable interest in Daoism. Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* is believed to have been inspired by the Daoist concept of *das-in-dem-Welt-sein* (to be in the being of the world), used in *The Book of Tea* by Okakura Kakuzo to describe Zhuangzi's philosophy. Heidegger himself had contacts with some leading Japanese intellectuals of the Kyoto School. Moreover, convergent phenomenology has combined Husserl's phenomenological concept of *transcendental ego* with 8th-century Indian philosopher Sankara's concept of the primacy of self-consciousness. Thus, major aspects of phenomenology show links to Asian communication theory.

The Cybernetic Tradition

Modern communication theory emerged with the cybernetic tradition in the mid-20th century featuring the works of scholars like Claude Shannon, Norbert Wiener, John von Neumann, and Alan Turing. This tradition includes current theories as diverse as systems and information science, cognitive science and artificial intelligence, functionalist social theory, network analysis, and the Batesonian school of interpersonal communication.

Asian communication theory is remarkably congruent with the systems approach of the cybernetic tradition. First, both systems theory and Asian philosophy emphasize the whole because the whole has the attribute called *emergence*, which the parts lack (although sociologists and economists differ on this point). Second, both accept the epistemological/ontological phenomenon of

part-whole interconnection and interdependence, although postmodern systems theorists prefer to emphasize the system-environment interdependence. Third, both tend to agree on the inevitability of change in the light of the arrow of time, its direction toward infinity. Because of the dynamic behavior of every phenomenon, no predictions are possible; only probabilities can be worked out.

The Buddhist paradigm of *dependent co-arising* (*paticca samuppāda*) and the Chinese *Yijing* paradigm reflect these characteristics. The first illustrates the dynamic operation of all dependent co-arising factors to produce any given phenomenon. It rejects the linear independent-dependent dichotomy inherent in the Newtonian paradigm, which tends to imply the existence of permanent factors. The second illustrates how unity gives rise to a multiplicity of co-arising positive (yang) and negative (yin), interconnected and interdependent factors (bigrams, trigrams, and hexagrams) that evolve within the bounds of unity (system). It affirms the Chinese philosophical thesis that everything consists of the unity of opposites.

The Sociopsychological Tradition

This is the tradition dependent on social psychology, a development of the past century, that theorizes communication as a process of expression, interaction, and influence that may occur through face-to-face or through technological mediation from one to one, one to many, or many to many. Most of *communication science* falls into this tradition, as exemplified by the experimental persuasion studies of Carl Hovland, as well as the voting studies of Paul Lazarsfeld and Bernard Berelson.

Although much of Buddhist philosophy relates to psychological phenomena, endogenous Asian communication theories befitting this tradition are scarce except as appendages to Western theories, mainly because of the testability requirement of science as conceived by the West. However, principles of persuasion (discovered and synthesized through the Yale experimental studies) were used in China by lobbyists (e.g., Su Qin and Zhang Yi) during the chaotic half millennium from the 8th to the 3rd century BCE. The Asian contribution to the sociopsychological tradition needs more systematic investigation to enable East-West synthesis. This tradition in the West has come under

criticism for excessive individualism, inattention to macro social forces, and insensitivity to cultural differences.

The Sociocultural Tradition

This tradition, which owes its intellectual inheritance to sociology and anthropology, theorizes communication as a symbolic process that produces and reproduces shared sociocultural patterns. Media are explicated as environments. Although this tradition views the existing sociocultural order as largely a reproduction of our everyday interactions, it also recognizes the creative process that adds to those interactions. Two poles have emerged within this tradition: structural theories that explicate relative stability of macrolevel patterns and interactionist-interpretive theories that explicate microlevel patterns of social-order creation.

The sociocultural tradition agrees with the Asian and Buddhist view that individuals are products of their social environments; the Confucian view that groups develop particular norms, rituals, and worldviews and the idea that that social change can be difficult and disruptive; and the Daoist view that attempts to intervene actively in social processes often have unintended consequences. The Buddhist and Daoist philosophies also emphasize the inevitability of change. However, because this tradition is another Western creation, the endogenous Asian contribution has yet to be documented.

The Critical Tradition

Although this tradition has ancient historical roots, the modern Western tradition of critical social theory is claimed to run from Karl Marx through the Frankfurt School to Jürgen Habermas. Alternatively, one could also include other strands of late Marxism and post-Marxism, current theories of political economy, critical cultural studies, feminist theory, and related schools of theory associated with new social movements (such as postcolonial theory and queer theory).

Normative media theories, which facilitate the critique of existing media systems, can also fall within this tradition. Cultural and media imperialism theory, dependency theory, and world-systems analysis are exemplars of the contemporary critical tradition.

Daoism anticipates a great deal of the contemporary critical tradition, particularly postmodernism as reflected in the views of Jean Baudrillard, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and Michel Foucault, as well as of Jacques Derrida and other poststructuralists. Daoism, like postmodernism, denies objective foundations for knowledge, essential meanings of identities, and universal truths and deprivileges reason and rationality. For example, Daoist sage Laozi contends that universal statements are impossible because words, which are finite and temporal, cannot express what is infinite. Therefore, communicators must resign themselves to the conditionality of their discourse or try to express themselves by using means other than words.

Asian communication theory includes a substantial contribution to this tradition, as exemplified by the works of scholars such as, among others, Guo-ming Chen, Wimal Dissanayake, Shelton Gunaratne, Satoshi Ishii, and Yoshitaka Miike. They reflect the influence of critical metatheories of Edward Said (Orientalism), Samir Amin (Eurocentrism), Farid Alatas (academic dependency), and others.

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See also Buddhist Communication Theory; Chinese Harmony Theory; Confucian Communication Theory; Hindu Communication Theory; Indian *Rasa* Theory; Informatization; Japanese *Kuuki* Theory; Taoist Communication Theory; Traditions of Communication Theory

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ATTACHMENT THEORY

Early notions of attachment in close relationships were first proposed in 1969 and again throughout the 1970s in an attempt to give insight into the development of intimacy and closeness among humans across early stages of the life span. John Bowlby can be said to have initiated this area of study when he broadened his conceptualization of the bonding and attachment processes to extend beyond just those experiences of infants; his book, *Attachment Theory*, became one of the more widely used theories of intimacy in relationships. With Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver's 1987 extrapolation of Bowlby's original ideas to include romantic dyads, attachment is now one of the most often used variables in adult romantic relationship research. The major tenets of this theory include not only the explication of attachment across the life span but also the development of specific *attachment styles* with predictive and explanatory power. These attachment styles are seen as having specific utility in both relationship processes and outcomes.

Infant Attachment

Early attachment research focused on one's earliest interpersonal experiences. During infancy, humans begin to develop what may eventually become

lifelong patterns of interdependence with one another. This *interdependence* (typically described as an intertwining of lives, leading to mutual influence and reliance) is often seen as an interpersonal response that has evolved through natural selection processes. Indeed, the earliest attachments are enacted through proximity-seeking behaviors; the cries or grasping of infants are an adaptive response to an otherwise uncertain world, ensuring protection from a caregiver and the resulting survival that such security affords. Over time, the responsive caregiver becomes the object of the infant's primary *attachment bond* as the child relies on that person as a source of comfort or security. As a result of this attachment, infants will typically turn to the primary caregiver in times of distress or uncertainty. The amount of reliance on a caregiver is moderated by the individual experiences of the infant; a child who has experienced sensitive, warm, responsive, and/or consistent caregivers tends to have stronger attachment bonds with those caregivers. A child experiencing a distant, cold, unavailable, or inconsistent caregiver is believed to have weaker or unhealthier attachment bonds with that caregiver.

Adolescent and Adult Attachment

While early attachment figures are typically caregivers providing for the physical and/or safety needs of an infant or young child, attachment bonds are also formed throughout adolescence and adulthood. Just as infants turn to caregivers in times of distress or uncertainty, adolescents and adults tend to turn to a specific individual when they need affirmation related to security, closeness, or intimacy. This attachment bond is typically characterized by an enduring affiliation with an attachment figure through both good and bad episodes in the relationship; the bond is often so enduring that perceptions of grief and loss often occur if the affiliation is somehow severed. Obviously, adolescent and adult attachment bonds are not limited to caregivers, since those relationships likely occur with decreasing frequency throughout adolescence and early adulthood. Adult attachment bonds have been found to occur in close relationships such as close friendships, sibling relationships, parent-child relationships, and even the occasional patient-therapist relationship.

The strongest attachment bond that adults may experience, however, is the pairing between romantic

partners. Much like other attachment pairings, one's pattern of relating within adult romantic relationships is heavily influenced by one's early relational experiences. Scholars have long argued that the manner in which one forms an attachment bond with one's early caregivers sets up a style of interacting and relating within romantic relationships that continues over the course of the life span. These composite styles of interacting and relating comprise an attachment pattern that often predicts and explains one's relational style.

Attachment Patterns

While the study of attachment formation across the life span offers broad generalizations about the creation and maintenance of close relationships, there are many individual differences that may lead to a wide range of attachment-related behaviors. Scholars have distilled the broad range of individual attachment behaviors into four distinct patterns; while these four categories have great conceptual utility, it must be understood that attachment-related behaviors are not inherently categorical in nature.

Secure Attachment

The *secure* pattern of attachment is characterized by a strong sense of self-worth. Individuals displaying a *secure* pattern of attachment typically view others as worthy of trust, and these individuals are typically quite comfortable with both closeness and intimacy in their significant relationships. Because they often attribute positive character traits to attachment figures, *secure* individuals are confident in their relational status and are typically found to rate quite high on the four key relational characteristics of commitment, trust, interdependence, and satisfaction. The romantic experiences of a secure individual are generally characterized by positive emotional affect and mutual friendship. The secure pattern of attachment can be characterized by the useful memory tool that I am OK and you are OK too.

Preoccupied Attachment

As compared with the secure pattern of attachment, individuals displaying the *preoccupied*

pattern of attachment (occasionally referred to as the *anxious-ambivalent* pattern of attachment) are often characterized by a weak sense of self-worth. While preoccupied individuals do exhibit a comfort with closeness and intimacy in their significant relationships, an underlying theme of feeling unworthy of love or affection causes an excessive dependence on closeness or intimacy that can be taken to an often uncomfortable extreme. These preoccupied individuals fear abandonment from their attachment figures and typically overmonitor their relationships with these figures. The romantic experiences of a preoccupied individual are generally characterized by emotional extremes and have low levels of trust and satisfaction as a result of the fear of abandonment from their relational partner. The preoccupied pattern of attachment can be boiled down to the useful memory tool that I am not OK but you are OK.

Dismissive Attachment

The *dismissive* pattern of attachment is characterized by individuals with not only a high level of self-worth, but also an equally low level of trust for other individuals. While these individuals are not fearful of intimacy-related behaviors, they do tend to avoid making the significant attachments in which these intimacy-related behaviors are most likely to occur. Dismissive individuals often denigrate the importance of attachment and downplay their previous rejections or negative experiences with attachment figures. As a result, the preoccupation with avoiding intimacy often leads to romantic experiences characterized by a discomfort with closeness, minimal intimacy and intimacy-related behaviors, and displays of distancing behaviors toward their romantic partner. The dismissive pattern of attachment can be boiled down to the useful memory tool that I am OK but you are not.

Fearful Avoidant Attachment

The *fearful avoidant* pattern of attachment is characterized by both avoidance of intimacy and anxiety about forming attachments. Fearful avoidant individuals have the same weak sense of self-worth as do preoccupied individuals; the difference is that they avoid, rather than cling to, those individuals who serve as attachment figures. While

fearful avoidant individuals may actually crave intimacy and attachment, the overwhelming fear of rejection negates their willingness to form those bonds in which closeness may occur. As such, they have an aversion to behaviors associated with intimacy (e.g., disclosure, touch, and affection) except in those situations where rejection is unlikely to occur (e.g., in caring for older people). The fearful avoidant pattern of attachment can be described by the useful memory tool that I am not OK and you are not OK.

The bulk of attachment research focuses on the similarities and differences between the affective, cognitive, behavioral, and social attributes of individuals displaying each of the aforementioned four attachment patterns. Because one's attachment pattern is often determined through survey methods or observation techniques at a single point in time, or at multiple times during a particular stage of one's life, it must be noted that some scholars argue that the stability of one's particular attachment pattern over the course of the life span has not been sufficiently empirically demonstrated. As relationship experiences influence one's attachment behaviors, it is entirely possible that attachment patterns may shift in subtle ways throughout the course of one's life.

Attachment Patterns and Relational Attributes

Much research has been done on the relationship between one's attachment pattern and the relational attributes that one experiences in one's social world. While scholars often describe attachment patterns as causing many of the following specific relational outcomes, it must be noted that attachment patterns are typically studied using quasi-experimental methods and cannot empirically demonstrate causality with full confidence. Additionally, the attachment patterns of one's relational partner likely influence the expression of one's own attachment pattern; also, partner choice may be influenced by the intimacy-related behaviors of that partner and therefore depend on the partner's attachment pattern.

Relationship Quality

Much research has demonstrated the robust finding that secure individuals are generally more

likely to report higher quality relationships, with elements of trust and positive affect. For relationships that are not securely attached, men are often most dissatisfied with their relationships because of low comfort with closeness (dismissive and fearful avoidant men), while women are most dissatisfied with their relationships because of high anxiety (preoccupied and fearful avoidant women).

Relationship Stability

While individuals with a secure pattern of attachment often report the highest relationship quality, a secure pattern of attachment is not the only predictor of relationship stability. As expected, research tends to report relatively stable relationships for secure individuals; unexpectedly, the relationships of preoccupied women and fearful avoidant men have also been found to be quite enduring, despite ratings of low relationship quality and negative affect.

Disclosure

In research scrutinizing how personal communication within relationships is affected by one's attachment pattern, secure individuals are found to exhibit the most skilled communicative abilities; secure individuals report a high amount of disclosure and a wide variety of disclosure topics for both relational partners and relative strangers, a finding reified using observational research techniques. Dismissive and fearful avoidant individuals, however, have a low level of disclosure amount and demonstrate less flexibility of disclosure in similar situations. Preoccupied individuals exhibit a slightly more complex pattern of communication within their relationships; while typically disclosing at a high level, preoccupied individuals are relatively inflexible in disclosure topic across a wide range of situations. Both secure and preoccupied individuals consider themselves capable of eliciting disclosure from others within a conversation, while dismissive and fearful avoidant individuals are relatively unlikely to report that same ability to elicit disclosure from others.

In summary, attachment theory argues that one's early relational experiences have a significant impact on one's manner of navigating one's social world. Infant caregivers provide one of the earliest

forms of social interaction in the human experience and may help socialize individuals about how to manage their social and interpersonal relationships. Building on their early experiences, individuals develop their own relatively stable manner of interacting with significant others, including the development of conceptualizations about trust, affection, closeness, and other intimacy-related behaviors. The expressions of these individual differences often group into one of four general attachment patterns, which in turn may influence both process and outcome variables related to how one acts within many close or romantic relationships.

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See also Communication Across the Life Span; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Relational Development

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ATTITUDE ACCESSIBILITY THEORY

See Cognitive Theories

ATTITUDE THEORY

Attitude has been a difficult concept to define adequately, primarily because it has been defined

by so many, but also because of the word's differing lay uses and connotations. Since the early 1900s, a number of theories have been developed to provide a framework for the attitude–behavior relationship that would provide explanatory and predictive information. Research on attitudes has been consequently popular in many disciplines. A key historic root for the fascination with the term is found in psychology's interest in individual differences and the need for scientists to find a concept that could name and explain a consistency in individual behavior across a variety of situations.

More specifically, throughout the history of social psychology, the concept of attitude has played a major role in explaining human action, viewing attitudes as behavioral disposition. In fact, Gordon Allport, one of the founding figures of personality psychology, claimed 60 years ago that *attitude* probably is the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary American social psychology. One of the earliest definitions of attitude was proposed in 1918 by William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, who defined it as a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. A more recent definition by Philip Zimbardo and Michael Leippe proclaims attitude as an evaluative disposition toward some object, based on cognitions, affective reactions, behavioral intentions, and past behaviors, that can influence cognitions, affective responses, and future intentions and behaviors. In short, attitudes are learned predispositions to respond—they serve to provide direction to subsequent actions.

The key issue for theories and explanatory models is the notion of the origin of attitudes. In other words, why do people have attitudes? By and large, research has proposed four main reasons. First, attitudes help organize and simplify a complex environment and thus facilitate understanding of the world around us. Second, attitudes protect our self-esteem by helping us to avoid unpleasant truths because they direct us to come in contact with those who share our own worldviews. Third, attitudes make our environment more predictable as they trigger an existing repertory of reactions toward a set of attitude objects. This saves us from having to decide each time what the

proper reaction or behavior should be. Finally, attitudes allow us to express some aspects of our individual personality or fundamental values.

Early studies seemed to confirm the validity of unidimensional effects of attitudes on behavior. Findings, however, such as the one by the social scientist Richard LaPiere's classic study, raised doubts about this assumption as it provided some evidence that people's verbal reports of their attitudes might not be very good predictors of their actual behavior. By the late 1950s, a multicomponent view was adopted, and attitudes were viewed as a complex system comprising a person's beliefs about an object, feelings toward the object, and action tendencies with respect to the object.

Modern cognitive psychology maintains that attitudes are the result of four components: (1) affective responses, (2) cognitive responses, (3) experiences of past behavior, and (4) behavioral intentions. The latter two are sometimes combined into a single component called behavior. The first component consists of a person's emotional response to a situation, object, or person (e.g., pleasure, anxiety). The second one is conceptualized as a person's factual knowledge of a situation, object, or person. The third component is related to how often a person had engaged in a certain behavior or been exposed to a certain situation or person in the past; that is, what kind of experience the person had collected about a situation, object, or person. The fourth component involves a person's plans to behave in a certain way when faced with a particular situation, even if these ideas are never acted on. These four components of attitude produce an organizing framework of the attitude construct known as *cognitive schemata*, which guide the information processes related to attention, interpretation, and recreation of a stimulus.

Given that attitudes are composed from various forms of judgments, unlike personality, attitudes are expected to change as a function of experience. While the concept of attitudes played a central role in the development of attitude measurement and scaling techniques before World War II, postwar research was dedicated primarily to theoretical and empirical issues in attitude change as a result of army-sponsored research to study the persuasive effects of propaganda during the war. As a result of the celebrated work at Yale University in the 1950s and 1960s by Carl Hovland, who found

that attitudes can be changed through persuasion, a host of theories of attitude formation and attitude change emerged.

The most common classification of attitude theories into (a) behavioristic/learning theories, (b) consistency theories, (c) social judgment theory, and (d) functional theories will be used as an organizing framework here.

Behavioristic/Learning Theories

These theories were developed during the 1950s and 1960s, a time when learning theories reflected behavioral psychology. A major commonality of these theories was their emphasis on the stimulus characteristics of the communication situation. Leonard Doob, for instance, saw attitudes as an implicit, mediating process, an intervening variable between an objective stimulus and an overt response. As such, laws of attitude formation can be looked on in a parallel fashion to laws of classical conditioning. Furthermore, attitudes are learned through reinforcement or congruity. If an action has been highly regarded in the past, attitude toward it will likely be strengthened. Carl Hovland and his associates in the Yale Communication Research Program were a major driving force behind the emphasis on learning theories of attitude change. They proposed that opinions tend to persist unless an individual undergoes some new learning experience. The Yale researchers emphasized the role of incentives for change to occur. Incentives were broadly defined as ranging from direct financial or physical benefits to more abstract forms such as knowledge gain, social acceptance by respected others, or self-approval from the feeling that one is right.

Following the radical behaviorism ideas of B. F. Skinner, Daryl Bem developed a self-perception theory that attributed attitude change to an observation of one's own behaviors and conclusions about what attitudes must have caused them. The theory's main assumptions reflect the viewpoint that attitudes are learned as a result of previous experience with the environment since a person depends on outside cues to tell him or her how to feel internally.

Finally, Arthur Staats's work on attitude formation has the most immediate connection to behaviorist thinking, especially the ideas of classical

conditioning. According to his arguments, emotional responses in an individual are created by events in the environment. As new stimuli are consistently paired with old stimuli (events), the new stimuli develop the power to create an emotional response in the individual. For instance, since words and objects are often paired with particular events, those words and objects evoke affective responses.

Consistency Theories

The basic assumption of cognitive theories is the need of the individual for consistency. There must be consistency between one's various attitudes, one's various behaviors, and one's attitudes and behaviors. A lack of consistency causes discomfort, so an individual attempts to ease the tension by adjusting attitudes or behaviors in order to maintain homeostasis, that is, achieve balance or consistency again.

One of the earliest consistency theories was the *balance theory*, developed by the Austrian psychologist Fritz Heider, whose work has been related to the Gestalt school. This theory looks at the relationship among three things: the perceiver, another person, and an object. Relationships are either positive or negative, based on the cognitive perceptions of the perceiver; these result in four balanced and four unbalanced configurations. Since unbalanced states are recognized as being unstable, perceivers attempt to restore balance by changing their attitudes toward either the object or the other person. There have been a variety of extensions to Heider's balance theory.

One important extension was the *theory of cognitive consistency*, developed by Robert Abelson and colleagues. Cognitive consistency suggests that people will try to maintain consistency among their beliefs and make changes (i.e., accept or reject ideas) when this does not occur. In other words, if a liked object helps attain other liked objects, attitudes are consistent. However, if a liked object hinders attainment of other liked objects, there is inconsistency. When inconsistency exceeds a certain level of tolerance, attitudes will change to achieve consistency. For example, if a person who adheres to certain social values and also wants to vote for a particular candidate is presented with the fact that people who usually

vote for this candidate have opposite social values, the person will either reject this proposition or change his or her attitudes about voting for the candidate or about holding on to the social values. As such, the theory suggests four additional modes of restoring balance besides changing one's attitudes: (1) denial, (2) bolstering, (3) differentiation, and (4) transcendence.

In 1957, Leon Festinger developed his *cognitive dissonance theory*. This theory focuses on consequences of incompatibility between two related cognitions. Since dissonance occurs when elements are logically or psychologically inconsistent, it motivates the individual to reduce the dissonance and return to consonance by avoiding situations or information that may increase dissonance.

One of the major criticisms of consistency theories is that there are too many of them. Today, interest in consistency theories has diminished significantly as a result of the progress made in social psychology to better understand the processes that consistency theorists investigated, namely, the interactions between attitudes, beliefs, actions, and behavioral intentions.

Social Judgment Theory

Social judgment theory, developed by Muzafer Sherif and colleagues, is different from other consistency theories for two reasons: First, it argues that a receiver interprets or judges how much a message agrees or disagrees with his or her own attitude. In other words, it is an attempt to apply the principles of judgment to the study of attitude change. Second, the theory maintains that a message receiver's involvement in the topic of the persuasive message, that is, how important a topic is to a listener, is an important factor in attitude change.

Social judgment theory has been called by some more of an approach to studying attitudes, not a complete theory. Overall, it is based on the use of analogy, whereby an individual's initial attitude serves as an anchor for the judgment of related attitude communications. An advocated position is evaluated against this point of reference and is placed on an attitudinal continuum from acceptance via noncommitment to rejection. The amount of attitude change or whether change occurs at all depends on the discrepancy within the self—only

after a communicated opinion falls within the limits of the range of acceptance will it affect attitude change. Thus, the greater the difference between the initial opinion and the communicated opinion, the greater the attitude change will be. This theory further argues that the level of ego involvement in a topic depends on whether the issue arouses an intense attitude; that is, individuals who are highly involved in an issue are more likely to evaluate all possible positions, therefore increasing the anchoring property of their initial attitudes and broadening their range of rejection of a communicated opinion. Thus, a persuader facing a highly involved receiver may be able to advocate safely only a small change.

Since most other approaches deal only marginally with previous attitudes, social judgment theory has obtained an important place in the research literature. Recently, however, researchers have questioned the basic principles of social judgment theory and how the theory's principles relate to one another.

Functional Theories

Functional theories of attitude entered the literature in the 1950s when researchers developed the idea that attitudes served varying psychological needs and thus had variable motivational bases. A common and central theme of these early efforts was the listing of the specific personality functions that attitudes served for individuals. The idea is that people strive for goals and will adjust their attitudes to meet those goals. By and large, these theories are expanded argumentations of the original question about why individuals hold attitudes, discussed above. The most basic assumption of functional theories is that the key factors for attitude change are the relationships between events and information in the environment, on one hand, and the individual's values pattern and motives, on the other. It is the match or mismatch of those two forces that leads either to assimilation of the incoming information (i.e., attitude change) or to rejection of it.

The American psychologist Daniel Katz discussed four functions that attitudes perform for the personality: instrumental/utilitarian (the maximization of rewards and minimization of penalty from the environment), ego defensive (a protection

from uncomplimentary truths about the self), value expressive (the expression of pleasure derived from basic values), and knowledge function (a need to understand and predict the environment). He argued that in order for attitude change to occur, there must be an inconsistency between the need being met by the attitude and the attitude itself. Changing an attitude, then, requires knowledge of what function an attitude performs for a person since the function that attitudes perform provides a frame of reference for comprehending and categorizing objects, persons, and events.

A related theory—Herbert Kelman’s *functional analysis*—looked at social relationships that occur in social influence situations. He looked at three processes of opinion change: compliance, identification, and internalization. Those processes are closely related to the three roles or relational reasons of attitude change: power, attractiveness, and credibility of the source. *Compliance* results in only a surface-level attitude change in order to receive a favorable reaction from another powerful person or group. This attitude is usually expressed only when the other person is present. For instance, members of a group headed by a strong leader usually openly agree with that leader’s choices regardless of whether they hold the same attitude toward a topic. The attitude change resulting from *identification* occurs both publicly and privately but does not become part of the person’s value system. The change is dependent on the relationship with the source but not with the source’s presence. An example would be the asserted identification with an attractive celebrity that can wane quickly once more important events overshadow this relationship. Attitudes that are *internalized* become part of an individual’s value system. This usually occurs when a believable sender of a message convinces a receiver of the legitimacy of an idea to the extent that it becomes the receiver’s idea henceforth.

Inoculation theory, developed by social psychologist William McGuire in 1961, is primarily concerned with the function of resistance to change; that is, it aims to explain how to keep original attitudes and beliefs consistent in the face of persuasion attempts. The main argument of the theory is that most attitudes are established in an environment that does not expose the individual to counterarguments and attack on the new attitude.

Therefore, the individual has little chance to develop resistance to possible future attacks. The theory argues that to prevent attitude change from occurring, it is necessary to strengthen preexisting attitudes. There are two key components to successful inoculation. The first is *threat*, which provides motivation to protect one’s attitudes. The second component is known as *refutational preemption*, which is the cognitive part of the process. It is the ability to activate one’s own argument for future defense and strengthen existing attitudes through counterarguing. This theory is loosely related to conflict theories, in which new information also presents a challenge to existing attitudes, and individuals are forced to seek alternative actions.

Many assessments of attitude theories argue that functional theories are in the mainstream of attitude research, and their theoretical approaches remain conceptually relevant to investigators because of their breadth and unique focus on the functional bases for attitudes. Functional theories are uniquely qualified to provide a link between the behavioral theories proposed during the 1950s (consistency theories, behavioral/learning theories, and social judgment theories) and the processing and cognitive themes of more recent theorizing (e.g., theory of reasoned action, social learning theory, transtheoretical model).

Summary

Attitude research is a major area in which theory building has been characteristic of the research. These theories, especially the functional theories discussed last, have provided guidance for many applied areas in communication. As an example, these theories have been invaluable for research on media effects and strategic communication as they led to the development of recommendations for the design of persuasive messages delivered by media and commercial advertisers.

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See also Advertising Theories; Cognitive Dissonance Theory; Cognitive Theories; Co-Orientation Theory; Inoculation Theory; Learning and Communication; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Reasoned Action Theory; Social Judgment Theory

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ATTRIBUTION THEORY

To make sense of the world, people develop explanations about what is happening and why people are acting certain ways. When people are interacting with others, communication decisions are influenced by the implicit theories, or attributions, of the participants. Ineffective communication may be partly a consequence of the parties' idiosyncratic inferences and incompatible interpretations. Attribution theory provides a framework for understanding how people explain their own and others' behavior. This entry reviews the attribution

process and examines the importance of attributions for determining success or failure, for managing conflict in interpersonal relationships, and for determining people's stigmatizing attitudes and discriminatory behaviors. It ends with information about the fundamental attribution error and the self-perception theory.

An important basis of attribution theory is that people behave the way they do for a reason. In other words, people have reasons for developing their impressions of others. Fritz Heider, one of the first researchers to write about the attribution process, was interested in how one person develops an impression of another. These impressions, he argued, are developed through a three-step process: (1) observation of behavior, (2) determination of whether the behavior is deliberate, and (3) categorization of the behavior as internally or externally motivated.

Attribution Process

When a person encounters someone, how he or she interacts with that person is, in part, determined by his or her interpretation of the other person's behavior. Internal attributions, which are also called *dispositional* attributions, occur when an observer infers that another's behavior was caused by something about the person, such as personality, attitude, or upbringing. External attributions, or *situational* attributions, occur when the observer ascribes the cause of the behavior to the situation or outside circumstances. For example, Daniel's roommate Tom rushes into the house, slams the door, throws his books on the table, and runs upstairs. Tom does not say a word to Daniel, and Daniel wonders about what is happening. Daniel can develop different explanations for Tom's behavior. If he attributes Tom's behavior to an internal factor, he might think that Tom is rude and inconsiderate. If he attributes Tom's behavior to external factors, he might conclude that Tom is late for an appointment and rushing to get things done. Daniel's attributions will affect how he interacts with Tom when they next encounter each other. Based on Daniel's internal attribution, he may ignore Tom when Tom comes down the stairs. However, if Daniel selects an external attribution, then when Tom walks down the stairs, Daniel may ask whether Tom needs anything. Daniel's attribution affects his

actions, and his actions can affect how the roommates manage their interaction and relationship.

Before Daniel decides whether to attribute Tom's behavior to dispositional or to situational factors, he needs to examine a few other factors. Harold Kelley, a social psychologist specializing in personal relationships, proposed that there are three general guidelines that influence people's attributions: consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness.

Consensus describes how other people, in the same circumstances, would behave. If all Daniel's roommates tend to rush into the house and run upstairs, then Tom's behavior is likely determined by the situation, leading Daniel to make an external attribution. If Tom is the only one who behaves this way, Daniel is more likely to make an internal attribution.

Consistency refers to whether the person being observed behaves the same way, in the same situation, over time. If every time Tom entered the house he behaved this way, Daniel would likely make an internal attribution. However, if this was an unusual way for Tom to behave, Daniel would likely look for an external explanation.

Distinctiveness refers to the variations in the observed person's behavior across situations. If, for example, Tom rushed through the door at work and ran through the hallways at school, his behavior on entering his house would not be distinct from his normal behavior. In that case, Daniel would likely attribute it to internal, dispositional causes. Conversely, if in most situations, Tom was mellow and slow moving, Daniel might attribute his rushing behavior to external, situational causes.

Although each of these three factors is important for attributing cause to either internal or external factors, when an observer can combine these factors, patterns can emerge. For example, when a person behaves a certain way over time and across situations, but others do not behave the same way, people tend to make dispositional attributions (That's just the way she is). However, when someone's behavior is not typical of that person or expected in the situation, observers have a difficult time attributing cause to the person or the situation. In these cases, the observer tends to assume that something peculiar is happening (I don't know what's going on; something must be wrong).

In addition to the three factors Kelley originally identified, two more guidelines influence whether

an observer makes an internal or external attribution. If a person violates a *social norm*, behavior that is typical or expected for a situation, others tend to make internal attributions. Additionally, in the absence of situational cues, observers tend to make dispositional attributions.

Attribution theory provides a framework for understanding both our own and others' behaviors. It provides guidelines for interpreting actions, so it is useful for examining motivations for achievement and conflict in interpersonal relationships. This theory has also been used to examine stigmatizing behavior and discrimination.

Attribution and Achievement

Bernard Weiner extended attribution theory to how people explain their own and others' success and failure. He contends that interpretations of achievement can be explained with three dimensions of behavior: *locus of control* (Whose fault is it?), *stability* (Is it ongoing?), and *controllability* (Can I change it?). First, a person's success or failure is attributable to either internal factors (I am a smart person) or to external factors (My computer crashed). Second, the cause of the success or failure can be either stable (It's always going to be like this) or unstable (This is a one-time event). Finally, the event may be perceived as controllable (I can change this if I want to) or uncontrollable (Nothing I do can change this situation).

These three dimensions, together, create eight scenarios that people use to explain their own achievements and disappointments:

1. Internal-stable-uncontrollable (I'm not very smart)
2. Internal-stable-controllable (I always wait until the last minute)
3. Internal-unstable-uncontrollable (I felt ill)
4. Internal-unstable-controllable (I forgot about the assignment)
5. External-stable-uncontrollable (The teacher's expectations are unrealistic)
6. External-stable-controllable (The teacher hates me)
7. External-unstable-uncontrollable (I was in a car accident)
8. External-unstable-controllable (The dog ate my homework)

Understanding how to motivate students to achieve academically requires an understanding of their attributions. People's explanations for their own success or failure will help determine how hard they work in similar situations. Students who perceive that their successes and failures are controllable are more likely to continue to work hard academically. When people perceive that they have no control over a situation, believe that the situation is permanent, and think that the outcomes are due to their own characteristics, they are likely to stop working and may exhibit signs of *learned helplessness*.

Attributions and Interpersonal Conflict

People tend to choose conflict styles based on their attributions about their partner's intent to cooperate, the locus of responsibility for the conflict, and the stability of the conflict. Their attributions about these issues influence the strategies they adopt; specifically, they tend to adopt *conflict management strategies* they believe are congruent with their partner's projected responses. The attribution process causes people to see others as more competitive, more responsible for the conflict, and more stable and traitlike than they perceive themselves to be. They underestimate the role of unstable situation factors and overestimate the extent to which behavior is caused by stable personality traits. The bias in this process often discourages *integrative* modes of conflict resolution. The choice of conflict strategies affects the likelihood of conflict resolution and the degree of satisfaction in the relationship.

Attributions and Stigmatizing Behavior

Attribution theory is an important framework for understanding why people endorse *stigmatizing* attitudes and engage in discriminatory behaviors. A person's attributions about the cause and controllability of another's illness or situation can lead to emotional reactions that affect their willingness to help and their likelihood of punishing the other. If you assume that another person's difficult situation is that person's fault and could have been prevented, you may be less likely to offer assistance and more likely to react with anger. For example, Sue is an office manager and Terry is a

new employee. If Sue thinks that Terry's unorthodox and unpredictable behavior is caused by injuries he suffered when he was a child, she may be tolerant and understanding. If, however, Sue thinks Terry's unorthodox behavior is the result of years of illegal drug use, she may be more likely to get angry with him and take punitive actions. People's attributions about the causes of another's illness can lead to prejudice and discrimination.

Fundamental Attribution Error

The *fundamental attribution error* is a common attribution error in which people overemphasize personality or dispositional (internal) causes of others' negative behavior or bad outcomes and underestimate the situational (external) factors. When interpreting another's positive actions or outcomes, however, people overemphasize the situational causes and underestimate the dispositional causes. For example, Alicia is a server in a restaurant, and one of her coworkers, Julia, just got a really big tip. Alicia thinks to herself, "Wow, Julia keeps getting lucky because the hostess keeps giving her the good customers." An hour later, another coworker complains that he got a bad tip, and Alicia thinks, "Well, if you weren't such a crappy server, you would get good tips." Alicia just committed the fundamental attribution error. She assumed that when something bad happened to one coworker, it was the coworker's fault and that when something good happened to another coworker, it was the situation that brought about the positive result.

Conversely, the *self-serving bias* (or *actor-observer bias*) is an error in which individuals attribute their own success and failure to different factors. One's own success and positive outcomes are attributed to internal, dispositional characteristics whereas one's failures or negative outcomes are ascribed to external, situational causes. To continue the restaurant example, Alicia gets a really big tip and thinks, "I worked really hard for that group and gave great service," but when another group leaves a bad tip, she thinks, "They are cheapskates."

In sum, attribution errors work in the following ways:

- When good things happen to me, I deserve it (*I worked hard or I am a special person*).

- When good things happen to you, you don't deserve it (*the teacher likes you or you just got lucky*).
- When bad things happen to me, it's not my fault (*the teacher doesn't like me or he started it*).
- When bad things happen to you, it's your fault (*you should work harder or you should be more careful*).

Self-Perception Theory

Daryl Bem's self-perception theory, like attribution theory, relies on internal and external attributions to explain behavior. However, instead of observing others, we use the same process to interpret our own behavior. Bem argues that we come to know our own thoughts and beliefs by observing our actions and interpreting what caused our behaviors. Our explanation for our behavior is determined by the presence or absence of situational cues. For example, if Debbie earns \$100 campaigning for 3 hours for a politician, she can attribute her behavior to external causes ("I did it for the money"). If, however, Debbie earns only \$5 for her 3 hours of campaigning, she will likely attribute her behavior to internal causes ("I did it because I like the candidate"). Self-perception theory is important in persuasion research because people who are internally motivated are more likely to maintain behaviors.

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See also Cognitive Theories; Conflict Communication Theories; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Learning and Communication; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories

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AUDIENCE THEORIES

Audience theories have been of crucial importance for the way mediated communication has been understood since the first modern communication theories were formulated almost a century ago. They have followed the changing scientific climates and successive intellectual fashions in the social sciences and humanities, affecting both the different ways in which communication processes have been conceptualized and the ways in which succeeding scholarly traditions have researched them. In recent years, the concept of audience has been put into question as the emerging digital, interactive media appear to be blurring the deep-rooted distinction between media production and media consumption that has characterized the era of mass media.

The main theoretical difficulty with the concept of *audience* is that it is a single term applied to an increasingly diverse and complex reality. The term has thus come to comprise many shades of meaning gathered around a common core. This core denotes a group of people being addressed by and paying attention to a communication message that someone is producing and intending for them to perceive, experience, and respond to in one way or another.

The range of meanings for *audience* includes, on one hand, the idea of a group of spectators gathered in the same physical location for a performance of some kind on which their attention is focused. On the other hand, an audience can be the dispersed, anonymous individuals who in the privacy of their home attend simultaneously or with a time delay to the content offered by a particular mass medium.

Another distinction within the concept of audience has to do with the power distribution between the content producers and the users of mediated content. Media can be divided into three types, according to Jan Bordewijk and Ben Van Kaam. Until the 1980s, the audiences of classic *transmission media* such as radio and television had control over neither content production nor reception: They could be reached only when the broadcasters chose to transmit centrally produced messages to them, which they then passively consumed. The audiences of *consultation media* such as print, on the other hand, actively choose when to access the centrally provided content and what content to access. Finally, *conversational media* rely on a communicative relationship characterized by the genuine, dialogical coproduction of meaning in which the roles of sender and recipient alternate.

Another definitional question is whether audiences are a politically active public or a more passive and private group. A *public* in this connection has been defined as a collectivity mobilized by independently existing cultural or political forces (such as a political party or a cultural interest group) and being served by media provided by this public for itself. More traditionally, audiences have been regarded as a domestic, passive, and politically impotent collectivity, totally defined by and dependent on media provisions, often of an entertainment-oriented nature. However, as a consequence of the increasing “mediatization” of all aspects of modern life and the undeniable participatory qualities of the culture of media convergence, the American scholar Henry Jenkins and many others have proposed that the binary opposition of audiences and publics should give way to a conceptualization that recognizes their potential interdependence.

These identifiable audience definitions have been identified with various successive scientific paradigms in the social sciences and humanities.

This entry summarizes several of the most important of these.

The Hypodermic Needle Theory

The first audience theory that gained large-scale importance was metaphorically labeled the theory of media as a *hypodermic needle*. It not only was a product of the ruling behaviorist scientific climate in the 1920s and 1930s but also sprang from contemporary political and cultural concerns. According to the hypodermic theory, a mediated message could be seen as something injected under the skin of the recipient. Media effects were thus seen as direct, immediate, and strong. The emergence of this theory was a direct consequence of the emergence of the new broadcasting technology of radio, which made it possible for the first time to simultaneously reach the ears of all consumers and citizens in a nation. The Nazi leaders’ use of radio for blatant propaganda purposes, as well as the more democratically motivated use by U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt of radio addresses to the nation, gave rise to widespread concern that it would become possible for those in power to transform the citizens into mere puppets.

At the same time, the hypodermic needle theory was inspired by influential sociological theories that the modern mass-society individual was lonely, vulnerable, and easily manipulated. The critical/cultural theories of the Frankfurt School were also influential; these scholars argued that the new cultural industries were functioning under a capitalist logic that would ideologically seduce and deceive the subordinate classes, through fascinating but mindless entertainment, into accepting conditions that would impoverish their life opportunities.

This notion of *defenseless audiences* has continued, though in less crude form, to influence the understanding of processes of mediated persuasion as many advertising and public information campaigns are still based on a strategy that seeks to change the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals by exposing them repeatedly to mass-communicated stimuli. Similarly, this understanding of audiences also continues to frame widespread concerns over the effects of violent visual representations in television and computer game fictions on the vulnerable minds of children and young people. While the label *hypodermic needle* is

extremely evocative, Everett Rogers and Roger Storey have admonished us that it is actually a label applied after the fact to capture the widely shared understanding of audience processes to which scholars were constructing an alternative. This alternative has become known as the two-step model of communication.

The Two-Step Flow Theory

The *two-step flow theory* arose out of some large-scale empirical studies in the United States in the 1940s, conducted by a team of researchers directed by the exiled Austrian scholar Paul Lazarsfeld, who found that both consumers' choice of products and voters' choice of politicians depended more on their interpersonal relations to significant others in their networks of family and friends than on their direct exposure to mass-mediated commercial or political messages. A campaign was thus found to influence its audiences as a result of the complex interrelations between a mass-mediated endeavor and the subsequent interpersonal process in which the campaign message got talked about in human networks. The label *two-step flow* was adopted because the studies found that the mass-mediated message would, as a first step, reach individuals with above-average prominence in their community—so-called *opinion leaders*. If the message succeeded in passing these *gatekeepers'* filters of relevance and importance, they would then spread the message to more dependent individuals in their immediate surroundings (second step). This theory was supported by the fact that mass-mediated campaigns often were found to have minimal and indirect effects.

The two-step flow theory, while encapsulating a fundamental truth about the communicative conditions of processes of social change, has been criticized for conceptualizing these processes in a much too mechanistic manner. Sven Windahl and Benno Signitzer have argued that we should rather see mediated processes of influence in terms of a *multistep model* of communication. It is possible to see Everett Rogers's immensely influential theory of the diffusion of innovations to different groups of audiences (divided into innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards, depending on the speed with which they are likely to adopt innovations, both in the form of

new products and in the form of new ideas) as such a more developed theory.

Another alternative suggests the emergence of *viral communication*, in which the overly mechanistic idea of steps is abandoned altogether. Here, the channels through which communication spreads will have to be represented in a sophisticated model of intersecting personal networks, existing in the sea of discourses of the "mediatized" society.

Uses-and-Gratifications Theory

The next milestone theory of audiences, *uses-and-gratifications theory*, takes audience empowerment one step further by exploring what people do with the media. The key idea of uses-and-gratifications theory is that the *uses* that audiences make of the media and the *gratifications* produced by those uses can be traced back to a constellation of individual psychological and social needs. Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch, three of the founding fathers of the theory, described how its 7-point platform wishes to account for how (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of exposure to the media, resulting in (6) need gratification and (7) other consequences.

The media-oriented needs were typically described as the needs for information, relaxation, companionship, diversion, and escape, and the gratifications were characterized in identical terms—a practice that some uses-and-gratifications practitioners themselves acknowledge to be somewhat circular. Among the basic assumptions of the theory was the idea that both media and content choice are consciously and rationally made and directed toward quite specific goals and satisfactions and that individual utility is more important for media consumption than are values springing from familial or peer group rituals.

Audience Reception Theories

Reception research focuses on the ways in which audience members make sense of mediated meanings. It thus deviates from the mechanistic notion that media messages are merely transmitted to an audience whose understanding of those messages is unproblematic, and it insists that

the audience's actualization of mediated meanings must be the object of empirical investigation. Methodologically, reception research has, until recently, adhered rather strongly to the doctrinaire view that only qualitative methods such as depth interviews and ethnographic observation are suitable tools for such exploration.

Reception research is explicitly interdisciplinary and—unlike the previous theories, which are based exclusively in the social sciences—attempts to cross-fertilize scholarship from the social sciences and the humanities. In a catchphrase, it has been claimed that reception research takes its theory from the humanities and its method from the social sciences.

The theoretical platform thus comprises meaning-oriented theories with hermeneutic origins, such as semiotics and discourse theories, whereas the methodological platform is constituted by fieldwork methods developed within the social sciences. The pioneering practitioners can be characterized as renegades from these two backgrounds who were dissatisfied with the prescribed practices of the parent disciplines: Researchers from the humanities were revolting against analyses in which claims about ideological effects on audiences were made on the basis of inferences drawn from textual analysis. Social science scholars were escaping from the straitjacket of quantitative methodologies and the way in which those methodologies had narrowed notions of what aspects of the audience were researchable at all.

More specifically, in its early years, reception theory was trying to demonstrate that audiences were semiotically *active* in their encounter with mediated meanings, as opposed to the widely held view that media consumption, especially television viewing, was a passive, almost soporific condition. Reception theory's fundamental reconceptualization of audiences was strongly indebted to the British cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall's seminal theory of the meaning-making complementarity of the *encoding* and *decoding* moments of media production and the notion that there was no natural fit between these two moments. In other words, audience members had a relative freedom to interpret the encoded meanings offered to them in the media text, which was consequently regarded as polysemous (i.e., carrying many potential meanings).

Among the handful of inspiring, lasting concepts proposed by Hall were also the notion of the text's *preferred meaning*, or reading, and the three basic ways in which audiences could actualize this preferred meaning. Hall suggested that in the midst of textual polysemy, one meaning would nevertheless hold a privileged position. Since the mass media were firmly lodged within the capitalist social order and therefore logically served the hegemonic interest of the ruling classes, the preferred meaning would be one that conformed to this ideological interest.

Continuing this logic of Marxist cultural theory, the class-divided audiences could actualize the encoded preferred meaning from one of three decoding positions: They could follow a *dominant reading*, in which they conformed to and took over, so to speak, the preferred meaning (for example, agreeing with a news report in which the government urged workers to show wage restraint for the sake of the country); alternatively, they could follow an *oppositional reading*, in which they would contest the ideological implications of the preferred meaning (for example, refusing to comply with the news report about the need for wage restraint); or they could follow the third option of applying a *negotiated reading*, which would lie somewhere between the two extremes (e.g., agreeing in overall terms with the news report's recommended wage restraint but seeing many good reasons to divert from wage restraint in the case of specific social groups).

The particular reading chosen by different audiences would depend on their life circumstances, often corresponding to social class position, and on the specific socioculturally anchored *interpretive repertoires* at their disposal for decoding the media. The specific interpretive repertoires mobilized would also depend on the situational context in which decoding took place. For example, the specific decoding of a Hollywood movie by a teenage youngster would depend heavily on whether the movie was watched in the cinema with a group of peers or in front of the family screen with Mom and Dad. The need to explore such *social uses of the media* empirically was especially pioneered by the American audience ethnographer James Lull in a series of studies of family television.

Finally, empirical fieldwork on audience meaning-making would also lean on the notion of *interpretive communities*, a concept originating in

German and American reception aesthetics based in literary studies. The concept serves to express two different phenomena: first, the idea that the readings of media messages are likely to some extent to follow sociodemographic boundaries of age, gender, ethnicity, and so forth, which may thus be seen as a community in a loose sense of the term (e.g., a music video being read differently by White and African American youth); second, the phenomenon of fan cultures, in which members have a strong sense of cultural belonging to a cultural public, with something approaching membership.

The concepts described here have been heavily discussed and contested in the reception theory literature since the 1980s. Therefore today they have become to some extent divested of some of their original, often Marxist, shades of meaning and have assumed the role of more general stock of the trade. This reinterpretation of theoretical concepts has been inspired by a move toward a more holistic conceptualization of audiences within the larger context of the communication process as a whole and away from the compartmentalized research endeavors of the 20th century. The drive toward *holism in audience research* (as defined by British sociologist David Deacon and his colleagues) is theoretically anchored in the social-constructionist turn in the human sciences, according to which the interdiscursive dimensions of media production and consumption have become a key condition of the mediatized culture. This theoretical development precedes the emergence of the culture of convergence, which in turn has served to corroborate the view that the distinction between media production and consumption is being elided.

Theories of Collective Creativity

The new digital media enable participation on an unprecedented scale. Individuals may participate in the digital, interactive media proper (the Internet, the World Wide Web, Web 2.0), but because all the old media, such as television and newspapers, have been transformed by digitalization into the complex of convergence culture, media users now have opportunities for participating in almost any encounter with any media. This participation includes all three modes of engagement with the media listed at the beginning of this entry: transmission, consultation, and conversation.

As yet there is no full-fledged theory of the participating audience; we have only a rich array of promising theoretical fragments that together make up an incomplete mosaic of this audience. It has been proposed that we may be moving into the age of “disappearing audience,” but as U.S. scholar Henry Jenkins, one of the key analysts of convergence culture, warns, it is important that convergence raptures do not mislead us into believing that soon there will be no audiences, only participants.

What we have to take into account in our thinking about audiences of the future is that convergence has to do with the following transformations:

1. The flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences
2. The emergence of a participatory culture, in which media producers and consumers no longer occupy separate roles but become participants who interact with each other according to a new set of logics
3. The development of collective intelligence, when consumer-participants pool their resources and combine their skills in realms where no traditional expertise exists

Since, as Jenkins has admonished us, convergence refers to a process, not an end point, scholars interested in audiences must continue to devote their energies and resources to the building of new theoretical frameworks that enable us to grasp the thoroughly transformed conditions of audiences.

The Scholar's Life in the Habitat of Audience Theories

When the history of audience theories is seen in an evolutionary perspective, as has been done here, it is important to realize that the Darwinian metaphor has its limits: It is not the case that the theories that first appeared in the habitat of audience theories have now become obsolete or even extinct. They continue to live their life, but not “as usual.” Time and again, as new animals have appeared, the older inhabitants have had to adapt to the influence of the newcomers, and they may have moved down in the struggle for dominance. Therefore, in

audience theory today, all the traditions outlined above are still with us, although in mutually modified forms, and they offer themselves for the qualified judgment of new scholars entering the field.

Kim Christian Schröder

See also Computer-Mediated Communication; Critical Theory; Cultivation Theory; Cultural Studies; Fans, Fandom, and Fan Studies; Frankfurt School; Interpretive Communities Theory; Journalism and Theories of the Press; Marxist Theory; Media Effects Theories; Network Society; Popular Culture Theories; Public Opinion Theories; Public Sphere; Semiotics and Semiology; Sense-Making; Social Action Media Studies; Spectatorship; Two-Step and Multi-Step Flow; Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency; Violence and Nonviolence in Media Studies

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AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

The intellectual value of the personal in academic research has long been a debate in communication. From whether to use first person narration in scholarship to the impact of researchers on that which they study, the question of the subjective researching self continues to excite members of

the field as an issue of great significance and consequence. At stake for communication theory lies the very worth of the scholarship that researchers publish. On one side of the debate, the inclusion of the personal means giving up the principle and value of objective research, reducing produced knowledge to opinion and hearsay. On the other, the exclusion of the personal perpetuates myths of objectivity that continue to erase the impact of researchers on the knowledge they produce, which obscures the way all knowledge is embedded in cultural and social value systems.

Deeply entrenched in this debate is the narrative-based method of *autoethnography*, a methodology of academic investigation that not only acknowledges the speaking, theorizing researcher but also centers him or her in an effort to illuminate how the experiences of that self are representative of (and in some cases constitutive of) larger social systems. Autoethnographers argue that some questions in communication can be answered only by careful, critical analysis of life experiences. To this end, they take their own self as an entry into culture. Such investigations inform communication theory as a method of *theorizing*, using the self as the location for that communicative work.

Autoethnography can be described best by considering the two central terms that make up the ground of the method: *auto* and *ethnography*. *Auto* speaks most centrally to the subject (as in the site or location) of the scholarship. As an automethod (like autoperformance or autobiography), the data and evidence one uses in order to theorize communication lie in the authorial self. Autoethnography examines the lived experiences of the self in order to question and open up one's experiences to communicative analysis. Stemming from a belief that new knowledge can be gained by communication scholars' investigating their own communicative lives, autoethnography becomes a mode of scholarship that answers unique questions that deal with the mundane qualities of an individual's life. Questions such as how one experiences racism or sexism, how minute moments of communication done by a self build larger systems of power, or how privilege or domination is experienced can be answered through autoethnography. It is important that they are self-asked and -answered because only the critically reflexive self can probe deeply into the textures of its life to see

the everyday, ongoing repetitions in communication that produce cultural configurations.

The *ethnography* in autoethnography is, perhaps, the most significant diversion from other automethods. Ethnography is, most fundamentally, the storying of culture. Autoethnography shares this analytical focus. Thus, any life story may, on some level, count as autobiographical; however, autoethnography requires the link, either directly or implicitly, to the production of cultural systems. A story of how a cultural member experiences his or her disability functions as autoethnography only if the singular story builds an understanding of how disability is understood on a larger cultural level.

Autoethnography's paradigmatic roots are most closely related to *critical theory* as often the narratives circulate around culture and power, asking how the speaking self is constrained or enabled by its participation in society. As a critical methodology, autoethnography "stories" the self in order to resist dominant narratives, complicate taken-for-granted ways of thinking, and disrupt normative communication patterns.

Often, autoethnography seeks to see how everyday communication produces cultural norms. That is, autoethnography is a productive way of investigating how a self is implicated in maintaining the very structures that we live within (often systems of race, gender, sexuality, and/or class). Of course, autoethnography also understands that the self is a product of culture, as well; in this way, self and culture are *co-constructed*, each building and sustaining the other. While other methods can also investigate this phenomenon, autoethnography is a method that allows for a single voice to craft a reflexively textured experience of culture.

Autoethnography, as mentioned in the opening paragraph, often encounters resistance from scholars who advocate a more positivistic approach to research. A key point of contention is the role of truth as a goal of research. That is, if the purpose of research is to determine the truth of communicative interaction, autoethnography, because it is so narratively constructed, can be critiqued for fictionalizing aspects of lived experience to fit the story the storyteller wishes to tell. In other words, if an autoethnographer tells a story of his or her life, how are we to determine the truthfulness of the claims and experiences being narrated? An autoethnographer seeks not to capture some truth,

but to expose one's experiences in order to investigate how they are produced by (while producing) culture. In this way, the goal of truth as an outcome of research is secondary to tracing, in a reflexive manner, one's cultural experiences in order to understand how they illuminate communication working in a particular setting.

As a method in communication research, autoethnography is a process of theorizing from one's personal experiences. Whether an addition to more traditional ethnography or a project composed solely in self-narrative, autoethnography works from personal experience to spin a story of culture that examines how an individual's communicative experiences are representative (or constitutive) of culture.

John T. Warren

See also Critical Theory; Ethnography of Communication; Narrative and Narratology; Performative Writing; Phenomenology

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AUTOPOIESIS

See Cybernetics

AXIOLOGY

Axiology is the branch of philosophy that considers the nature of value and what kinds of things

have value. The term derives from the Greek language: *axios* (worth or value) and *logos* (study of the nature and properties of, or logic or theory of). Axiologists are broadly concerned with all forms of value, including aesthetic values, ethical values, and epistemic values. In a narrow sense, axiologists are concerned with what is intrinsically valuable or worthwhile—what is desirable for its own sake. All axiological issues are necessarily connected to ontological and epistemological assumptions. With respect to human communication theory, every researcher makes decisions in the theoretical process that reflect his or her axiological position. Axiological decisions guide all facets of research, including the selection of one's topic and the approach one takes toward research.

History of Axiology

The philosophical study of values dates back to the 6th and 5th centuries BCE. In the democracy developed in Athens, Greece, people sought to acquire knowledge for the purpose of building a successful life. Philosophers recognized that the laws and morality of human society differ from country to country and across historical periods. This awareness led the Sophists to take a relativistic, skeptical position on values; they held that one's values can change rapidly without consistency across situations and circumstances. In contrast, Socrates sought to save Athens from the social disorder purportedly created by Sophists by establishing absolute, universal virtues. Socrates taught that there is an important connection between virtue and knowledge. He held that virtue is an attitude of seeking knowledge and that knowledge is necessary for virtuous conduct. Socrates' student Plato asserted that there is an unchangeable world of essence behind the changing world of phenomena. Plato identified four virtues—wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice—as characteristics that everyone in the polis should develop. During the Hellenistic–Roman period, the fall of the city–state (polis) rendered useless Greek theories of value that were centered on the state. Philosophers began to emphasize individualistic ways of living under increasingly unstable social conditions. Individuals became preoccupied with seeking personal safety and peace of mind. During this time, cosmopolitanism, transcending

the bounds of nationality, was enhanced. The Stoic, the Epicurean, and the Skeptic schools of thought dominated this era. The philosophy of the Hellenistic–Roman period culminated in Neoplatonism, a pagan philosophy, which greatly shaped the Christian philosophy that prominently emerged in the medieval period.

During medieval times, Thomas Aquinas argued for the division of religious and natural virtues. He identified as religious virtues the three primary virtues of Christianity—faith, hope, and love. For Aquinas, natural virtues were the four primary virtues of Greek philosophy drawn from Plato—wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. In the modern period, views of value can be seen as extensions or transformations of both Greek philosophy and Christian virtues. Philosophers began to distinguish judgments of fact from judgments of value. The task of natural science was to provide judgments of fact (objective propositions). The task of philosophy was to address judgments of value (propositions in which a subjective appraisal of a fact is made). Following that shift, fact and value became recognized as separate issues. The 20th century saw the rise of pragmatism. The significance of value theory was partially eclipsed with the rise of evolutionary psychology, the dominance of rationalism, advancing skepticism about the place of values in the world, and changes in the modern view of morality. Values came to be regarded as tools for the effective processing of ideas and things. The intellectual division between natural science and philosophy parallels separations that emerged in the study of ontology and epistemology—all of which are interconnected in the development of communication theory.

Axiological Issues in Communication Scholarship

Axiology is often thought to provide ground for the study of ethics and aesthetics; these philosophical fields depend on particular understandings of value. Ethics is the branch of axiology that attempts to understand the nature of morality. Richard Johannesen notes that ethical issues arise whenever one's behavior could significantly impact another person, when one's behavior involves a conscious choice of means and ends, and when one's behavior can be judged by standards of right

and wrong. To develop sound theory, ethical practices must inform one's choices in all aspects of conducting communication research. In these ways, axiological considerations inform the generation and testing of human communication theory.

Communication theorists strive to contribute to shared knowledge about the nature and functioning of human communication. Two axiological issues are significant for the development of communication theory: first, whether research can be value free, and second, the desired purpose or end for conducting research. For communication theorists, a fundamental concern is with the philosophical stability of the research approach. Thinking about axiology at a general level emphasizes the diversity and incommensurability of the variety of scholarly approaches that have value for us in articulating communication theory.

Values in Inquiry

The first axiological issue for communication theorists addresses the extent to which value-free research is possible. Scholars choose to view a research problem through the lens that they believe most accurately describes the world. Thus, some researchers choose theoretical frameworks that are consistent with a realist ontology, whereas others select to work from a nominalist ontology. An ongoing value debate exists between scholars who adhere to the traditional scientific position and those who take an interpretivist approach to communication phenomena.

The *traditional* scientific position (consistent with realist ontology, empiricist epistemology) on axiology is that good science must be value free. This position asserts that scholarship is neutral and that research and theories are value free. The scholar attempts to uncover the facts as they are without biasing the research by imposing personal beliefs. Scientists carefully observe their object of study without the interference of values. This stance enables researchers to represent accurately the phenomena they are studying. Scholars who work from this paradigm generally use quantitative social science protocol to describe and infer regular patterns characterizing a communication phenomenon—whether the theorist is, for example, studying interpersonal affinity-seeking behaviors, conducting a content analysis of political

advertisements, or examining small-group cohesiveness. Most contemporary communication researchers accept that some values inform the research process.

The *interpretivist* approach (consistent with nominalist ontology, rationalist epistemology) asserts that science cannot be value free and maintains that values cannot be avoided in conducting research. A researcher's work is always guided by his or her preferences about what to study and how best to conduct the inquiry. Further, research may be influenced by institutional values as well as political and economic ideologies. These influences make value-free inquiry impossible. Some values are so embedded in a researcher's culture that he or she may not be aware of them (e.g., a European American Christian patriarchal capitalist perspective). Interpretivist researchers assert that since no method of investigation is completely free of distortion, some groups can provide greater insight into different aspects of the social world than others can, due to their position within society. Scholars who work from this paradigm may use qualitative social science methods, rhetorical inquiry, or philosophic ideas as a way to gain insight about communication phenomena, regardless of domain (i.e., interpersonal, small group, organizational, public, or mediated communication) and the specific topic (e.g., conflict management, social control, group socialization, speaker credibility) under consideration.

Purpose of Inquiry

The second axiological issue for communication theorists addresses the purpose or ends for which scholarship is conducted—whether scholarship should be designed to reveal knowledge (basic research) or achieve social change (applied research). The community of scholars who conduct communication research is not homogeneous, and arguments persist over the value of different methods for providing insight about knowledge claims.

The primary consideration in all research is identifying the purpose for which the inquiry is conducted. All decisions related to research flow from a researcher's purpose(s). There are different standards for judging the quality of different types of research. Various types of research have different expectations, audiences, means of reporting, and

processes for disseminating conclusions. Because of these differences, the researcher must be clear at the beginning about the purpose of the inquiry.

Basic research seeks to advance knowledge. For basic researchers, the urge to explain the world emerges from their basic human curiosity. Researchers investigate a phenomenon to understand the nature of reality with regard to that phenomenon. The purpose of basic research is to understand and explain, to generate knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Basic researchers work to generate new theories or test existing theories. As we find answers to satisfy our curiosity, our knowledge continues to grow, and further questions emerge. For example, answers about interpersonal conflict management may lead to questions about relationship development and dissolution, which may then lead to questions about symbolic integration in long-term relationships, and so forth. Basic research contributes to the fundamental knowledge and theory in each domain and facet of the communication discipline. Basic researchers see their role as producing knowledge about communication, whether they are examining how power is communicated and responded to via technology in global organizations or whether they are considering the rhetorical features of a speech. Basic researchers do not hold themselves responsible for the ways knowledge is used—their findings can be used for constructive or destructive purposes. Communication knowledge thus becomes a tool for technicians and politicians to use as they will. Academicians in a university community are often basic researchers, free to select their research topics and pursue investigations without being constrained by outside forces.

Applied researchers are driven to solve experiential problems. They conduct research to identify solutions; their findings are directed toward improving the conditions of an organization or the whole of humankind. Applied research contributes to the knowledge of a discipline by helping people make informed choices about how best to respond to a problem. Applied research is value laden in a variety of ways, including subjectivity and researcher bias in solving problems. For example, research problems may be posed by a company or sponsoring agency and require a communication consultant or marketing researcher with the best skills to offer a response to the issue. When a researcher is

hired to solve a specific problem, the sponsor usually provides value-laden direction, often identifying the research topic, collaborating to assess the problem, and potentially assisting in conducting the investigation. Research problems may also emerge in response to one's lived experience: A researcher may examine intercultural differences among members in a small group to ensure that productivity is not diminished because of the employees' communication with one another.

The distinctions between basic and applied research are most often reflected in the motives and conditions under which researchers pursue their investigations. For example, the interpretive-critical debate in cultural communication studies centers around whether scholars should simply describe features of a culture they observe or whether they have an obligation to expose oppressive arrangements within the culture. Research should be judged according to the norms of protocol for conducting research as identified by the scholarly community, regardless of the stance the scholar takes toward values in inquiry or the purpose of inquiry. The quality of a research project does not necessarily depend on whether the investigation is commissioned to solve a problem or whether the investigation is conducted by an individual researcher who seeks to advance knowledge. In general, the functions of research—advancing knowledge and solving problems—are not mutually exclusive.

Regardless of whether one holds a value-laden or value-free approach to research or is conducting basic or applied research, researchers have an axiological responsibility to conduct ethical inquiry. Any information to be shared with an audience must reflect professional properties of competent research. Researchers also have a personal responsibility to all stakeholders involved in the research, including subjects. In contributing to the advancement of human knowledge, a researcher must adhere to ethical principles of research.

Axiology is an important consideration in the development of communication theory. Tracing back to antiquity, philosophers have struggled to identify the nature of value and what kinds of things have value. In general, communication theorists face two axiological issues: what scholarship is worth pursuing and how best to conduct research to gain that knowledge. In basic research, scholars conduct inquiry to expand what we know

about human communication. In applied research, scholars seek to (re-)solve human problems. Both forms of research co-inform one another and extend our understanding about communication. Operating from varying axiological grounds, ethical scholars enrich our understanding about the value of communication research and theory.

Pat Arneson

See also Critical Theory; Epistemology; Ethics Theories; Inquiry Processes; Metatheory; Ontology; Philosophy of Communication; Realism and the Received View; Social Construction of Reality

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B

BALANCE THEORY

See Attitude Theory; Co-Orientation Theory; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories

BARGAINING

See Conflict Communication Theories; Negotiation Theory

BEHAVIORISM

See Communication Skills Theories; Humanistic Perspective; Learning and Communication

BIOLOGICAL APPROACHES

See Communibiology

BLACK FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY

Black feminist epistemology characterizes U.S. Black women's ways of knowing as distinctive and

significant for developing theories of the social world and for attaining social justice for all oppressed groups. This perspective stresses the importance of Black women's social locations for how they create and validate knowledge, claiming that their shared experiences can foster group knowledge that can inform political action. It emphasizes the fact that Black women can face multiple, interlocking oppressions of gender and race as well as classism and heterosexism. Moreover, Black feminist epistemology is a type of critical theory because it aims to empower the oppressed to improve their situation. This theory has implications for communication scholarship because it suggests approaches for theorizing ways that members of nondominant groups construct and disseminate knowledge and provides insights into how communication can effect social change.

Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins grounds Black feminist epistemology in broad goals of Black feminism. Black feminism is a political-social movement that arose from feelings of discontent among Black women and their allies due to frustration with both the civil rights movement and the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The former neglected gender issues in favor of race, while the latter focused mainly on White, middle-class women's concerns. Consequently, Black women began to develop theory and initiate political action related to their struggles with various oppressions, including sexism, racism, classism, and heterosexism. Based on a commitment to social justice for Black women and other oppressed groups, they, along with other women of color,

began to propose alternative feminisms. Black feminist epistemology details one of those alternative perspectives.

Black feminist epistemology contends that although Black women have varying experiences due to differences in age, social class, sexuality, or ethnicity, they are subject to the legacy of struggle against racism and sexism. It argues further that experiencing shared challenges fosters similar angles of vision based on distinctive themes of African American women's experiences, such as work, family, sexual politics, motherhood, and political activism. These common, collective experiences help develop group knowledge and ways of knowing that Black women share with one another.

Collins asserts that Black women have been socialized to create, sustain, and legitimate knowledge in four distinct ways. The first dimension of Black feminist epistemology is *lived experience as a criterion of meaning*. Collins explains that Black women tend to rely on subjective examples as legitimate sources of knowledge. This criterion refers to the use of narratives and practical images to describe experience as a valid form of knowledge or wisdom. For instance, in a famous speech titled *Ain't I a Woman*, to the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851, emancipated slave Sojourner Truth substantiated her claim to an alternative version of White womanhood with a vivid account of her personal experiences.

The second dimension refers to the *use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims*. It claims that Black women tend to engage in dialogue with others to develop and legitimate knowledge. A principal assumption of this criterion is that connectedness, not isolation and independent thought, is essential for validating knowledge. Collins traces this dimension to African-based oral traditions, noting that this assumption also undergirds some feminist epistemological theories. For example, Mary Belenky and her coauthors contend that women are socialized to seek connectedness.

The third dimension is the *ethic of caring*, which consists of three components: valuing individual uniqueness, viewing emotionality as appropriate, and developing the capacity for empathy. This criterion counters the mainstream ideology of rationality and objectivity as pivotal to creating and validating knowledge. Collins notes that the ethic of caring also resembles both African-based oral

traditions and feminist perspectives on ways of knowing. For example, the latter refers to women's tendency to value individual personality rather than to seek impersonal sources of knowledge.

The fourth dimension of Black feminist epistemology is the *ethic of personal accountability*. As individuals construct knowledge through experience, dialogue, and an ethic of caring, they also must be accountable for their knowledge claims. Thus, this criterion socializes Black women to validate a knowledge claim based on the perceived credibility of the source of that claim. Collins notes that Black women expect individuals not only to have clear positions on issues that they present but also to assume responsibility for substantiating their validity. She states that Black women are more likely to believe knowledge claims of speakers whom they respect for their moral character and ethical stance.

Collins observes that when Black women politicize these four dimensions and apply them to social projects, they provide a viable framework for Black feminist theorizing and practice. However, she notes that a Black woman's standpoint and its respective epistemology provide but one heuristic approach for analyzing intersections of multiple oppressions. She rejects theories that declare that Black women have a more accurate perspective on oppression because of their race and gender. Rather, she asserts that members of any groups that embody multiply oppressed identities (e.g., other women of color, men of color, poor White women, and lesbians of color) can provide epistemological insights. She concludes that the ultimate value of these types of epistemologies is to challenge enduring processes that persons and groups in power employ to produce and validate knowledge in order to substantiate their right to rule.

Brenda J. Allen

See also Chicana Feminism; Epistemology; Feminist Standpoint Theory; Postcolonial Feminism; Womanism

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BONA FIDE GROUP THEORY

The bona fide group theory, originally developed by Linda Putnam and Cynthia Stohl, identifies a set of theoretical concepts that enable researchers to move away from studying small groups as if they were isolated, decontextualized, and without history and study groups in context. This perspective was first articulated in a special 1990 issue of the journal *Communication Studies*, in which several well-known communication scholars called for the discipline to pay greater attention to groups within their natural environments. These scholars argued that groups form the foundation of our social lives, our work endeavors, and our cultural and political experiences. Group communication facilitates or hinders a society's ability to thrive. After decades of studying small groups as if they were completely distinct from contexts, it was time for communication researchers to move beyond "container models" of group communication. Collectively, they agreed there was a need to have theories and constructs that enable an understanding of the multilevel, embedded, interpretive, emotional, and rational processes of groups.

Since the early 1990s, several theoretical perspectives have emerged that provide richer, deeper, and more nuanced understandings of groups in context. Going beyond functional approaches, researchers have incorporated structural, interpretive, feminist, critical, and bona fide theories into small-group studies. Bona fide theory has been used to explore communication processes in contexts such as juries, surgical and health teams, environmental collaborations, management boards, community theater, fund-raising, online support, and adolescent peer groups. Research methodologies have also become more diverse. Discourse analyses, ethnographic studies, quasi-experimental designs, surveys,

and laboratory experiments all have been used to study groups from a bona fide perspective.

Bona fide group theory posits that all groups manifest *permeable boundaries* and *interdependence with context*. The theory provides a set of concepts and relationships to explore these essential characteristics regardless of whether groups are experimentally created and manipulated, occur naturally in face-to-face environments, or are computer mediated. The bona fide group theory is a nascent theory insofar as a standard set of postulates and theorems have yet to be developed. However, over the past 18 years, numerous theoretical papers and empirical studies have illustrated the ways in which it is a useful and vibrant framework for the study of group processes as they emerge and are embedded in larger contexts.

In bona fide group theory, group processes (e.g., decision making, conflict management, socialization of members, information processing) are viewed as shaping and being shaped by these two essential characteristics: permeable boundaries and interdependence with immediate context. A third characteristic, *unstable and ambiguous borders*, emerges from the dynamic interplay between the first two distinguishing features. This characteristic focuses on group identities, especially how they emerge and evolve through the ways that members alter their group's boundaries and contexts.

By taking these characteristics into account, bona fide group theory enables scholars to understand the nature of *groupness* as constituted across time and space. The theory posits that the generative mechanism of group dynamics is the continuous communicative interplay between internal and external environments. These dynamics come together through the negotiation of group boundaries, the creation of group identities, and the shaping of the essential nature of the group. By focusing on the two essential characteristics, group scholarship is able to detect associations among contexts, group deliberations, and message systems that remained obscured in traditional laboratory and field research.

The first characteristic, permeable boundaries, challenges the assumption that a group has a fixed location, an existence apart from its environment, and a boundary formed by static, unchanging borders. In traditional studies of groups, boundaries are regarded as given or preexisting structures, and

hence the social context is seen as separate from the group. Bona fide group theory is premised on the notion that boundaries are neither previously determined or permanent, nor are they defined by goals, tasks, physical location, or presence of group members. Rather, boundaries are conceived of as socially constructed through interactions that shape group identity; create, reproduce, or sever connections with internal and external environments; live out members' histories; and reflexively define group process.

Theoretically, the ways in which group members change, define, experience, and negotiate boundaries are found in the interactive nexus among (a) multiple group memberships and conflicting role identities, (b) representative roles, (c) fluctuations in membership, and (d) group identity formation. Empirical research suggests a strong association between the ways in which groups manage multiple memberships and overlapping identities and the effectiveness of the group. If boundaries are too volatile and indistinct, the group risks becoming overwhelmed and losing its identity and focus; if boundaries are too stable and exclusionary, the group often becomes isolated, information deprived, and ineffective.

The second major characteristic of bona fide groups is interdependence with immediate context. *Group context* refers to the dynamic ways in which groups depend on and contribute to their physical, social, and task environments. In most group studies of the past (whether in the field or in the laboratory), context was assigned to the group, controlled by the experimenter through laboratory manipulations, or treated as and/or assumed to be a constant. But in bona fide group theory, interdependence is a dynamic variable that is reciprocally negotiated as contexts are socially constructed through (a) intergroup and intragroup communication, (b) coordinated actions among groups, (c) negotiations of jurisdiction or autonomy, and (d) ongoing interpretations in which individuals make sense of current and past intergroup relationships.

Interdependence with immediate context considers the degree to which a particular group depends on other individuals and groups to accomplish its tasks and the degree to which other individuals and groups depend on the focal group. Rather than seeing task dimensions such as complexity, urgency, and accountability as static structural variables that

influence the internal dynamics of a group, bona fide group theory treats these task dimensions as socially constructed activities. Groups may deviate from assigned tasks and actively define what they do and how they do it with little reliance on outside influences whereas other groups may have strong external dependencies. The context shapes and is shaped by a group's ability to control the decisions the group makes, define its priorities, or develop criteria and alternatives to address the issues it faces. Strong as well as weak external linkages may create communicative dilemmas for the group as it struggles to represent adequately what are interpreted as relevant stakeholder positions.

Overall, bona fide group theory privileges neither external nor internal relations. Bona fide group theory posits that all groups, whether found in the laboratory or the field, manifest permeable boundaries and interdependence with context. The theory addresses the complex network of communicative processes that influence group action. From the very conceptualization of what a group is to the methods used to study the groups, the theory requires researchers to explore the production and reproduction of social contexts, social boundaries, and personal and collective identities.

Cynthia Stohl

See also Functional Group Communication Theory; Group and Organizational Structuration Theory; Group Communication Theories; Organizational Communication Theories; Organizational Culture; Organizational Identity Theory; Social Exchange Theory; Symbolic Convergence Theory; System Theory; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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BROADCASTING THEORIES

Broadcasting was undoubtedly the most important media development of the 20th century. First radio and then television developed into mass media that could command the attention of virtually the entire nation at times. Interestingly, however, communication theorists have—with some notable exceptions—developed relatively few theories that are specifically about broadcasting. Rather, most theories deal with *media effects*. Many of these theories are quite relevant to broadcasting but also deal with effects of other media, such as newspapers. Thus, to review broadcasting theories, one must first understand theories of media effects in relation to broadcasting as a medium; then one can examine some of the more specialized theories that are specific to broadcasting.

Theories of Media Effects and Broadcasting

Theories of media effects are predominantly a product of the 20th century. While some isolated studies on the effects of newspapers emerged around the turn of the 20th century, most theories were developed and tested as broadcasting emerged and spread as the dominant form of mass media. Traditionally, scholars consider that the first theories of media effects were working with the *powerful effects* hypothesis. Briefly, the hypothesis held that mass media had relatively powerful effects in terms of forming and changing beliefs and that the audience was relatively passive in terms of processing messages and accepting them. These concepts became prominent after World War I, when the *propaganda* used by all sides was eventually seen as a negative phenomenon; Americans began to question whether mass media such as newspapers could be too powerful, convincing people to engage in risky foreign ventures that they might not have undertaken. Harold Lasswell was an influential early figure who also developed the well-known

model of communication: “Who says what to whom in what channel with what effect?” He was the first to study propaganda techniques and thus greatly influenced the study of media in general. Other influential figures on the early powerful effects theories were Edward Bernays (considered the “father” of *public relations*), Gustave Le Bon (a French theorist of *crowd psychology*), and John Watson (an important figure in *behaviorism*).

While we may now overestimate the extent to which early scholars viewed the media as having powerful effects, developments in broadcasting began to raise questions along the lines that the media might be too powerful. The rise of Fascism and Communism both relied heavily on propaganda. Hitler used radio and film as key elements of his propaganda policy. For U.S. Americans, the apparently all-too-easy submission of masses of people to totalitarian ideologies brought up queasy feelings about the “dark side” of mass media, especially broadcasting. The famous case of Orson Welles’s radio adaptation of H. G. Wells’s *War of the Worlds*, in which many Americans thought that a fictional account of an invasion from Mars was real, further heightened concerns. However, Hadley Cantril, in his study of the event—another milestone in mass communication research and one of the first to deal with broadcasting—showed that only a relatively small portion of people panicked; moreover, he was able to show that certain personality characteristics and other conditions predicted a panic reaction, which ran counter to the notion of powerful effects. However, it cannot be denied that developments in radio throughout the 1930s contributed to fears that broadcast mass media might have become too powerful. On the positive side, Franklin Roosevelt’s use of radio in his fireside chats was an example of the use of broadcasting to unite people around important issues and causes.

The powerful effects model was effectively struck down in the 1940s. Studies conducted by Paul Lazarsfeld and colleagues showed that people’s decisions about political candidates were not much affected by media; rather, people seemed to rely on those closest to them in forming their judgments. This model came to be known as *personal influence*, and it has also been described as a *limited effects* paradigm. By this time, radio was in ascendance as a broadcast mass medium, used widely for both entertainment and information. Thus,

Lazarsfeld's studies were seen by some as confirming that media—even broadcasting—were not so powerful that people could not make their own decisions or that democratic pluralism could not survive in an era of mass broadcasting. However, Lazarsfeld also introduced the notion of the *two-step flow*, in which *opinion leaders* would be more attentive to messages from the media and would use such information within their own primary social networks. Also, studies of the use of films to motivate soldiers during World War II seemed to show little effect. By the end of the 1950s, some scholars were pronouncing the end of communication research. In sum, while radio had been a dominant medium from the 1930s through the 1950s, few scholars had produced research that resulted in radio-specific theories; there was no unified theory of broadcasting. From today's vantage point, however, we can see that broadcast radio was one of the most important developments of the 20th century, playing a role in all the important political, social, and cultural movements of its time.

Critical Theories and Broadcasting

Before examining theories of broadcasting and media effects as they evolved in the United States after the 1950s, it is instructive to look at critical theories of media, most of which came out of Europe from the 1930s onward. Much European research on media is grounded in or is a response to Marxism. Orthodox *Marxist theory* held that all cultural phenomena were formed by economic conditions (the so-called *base-superstructure argument*). However, European scholars, most prominently those from the *Frankfurt School*, found these formulations too simplistic. Theodor Adorno, a prominent member of the school, did research on radio. He thought that it could induce states near brainwashing. Adorno and others in the Frankfurt School, influenced by their experiences with radio, conceived of mass media—especially broadcasting—as a *culture industry*, in which art had been transformed from expression into a mass-produced product with exchange value. Adorno was most insistent in his belief that mass-produced broadcast radio culture devalued the experience of listening to music.

Other critical theorists continued this line of thinking that broadcasting transforms the

production of stories, art, and culture into a mass-produced commodity. Herbert Marcuse found that media inculcated patterns of one-dimensional thought. However, other Marxist media scholars saw the media as a potential site for ideological struggle. Gramsci's notion of *hegemony* permitted such a conception. Later scholars such as Stuart Hall and the Birmingham School continued this line of reasoning as the possibility of differing readings of media were accepted. All in all, these critical approaches were in large part responses to both the technological and the economic structures of broadcasting as institutionalized in the capitalist West. As such, they are theories of broadcasting in the broader sense. Todd Gitlin, an American sociologist, underlined the differences between the American limited effects school and the critical research by pointing out that much American research was done under an *administrative model*, serving the needs of the broadcast media, which in turn served the needs of corporate and political elites. However, American research moved beyond the simple polarity between powerful and limited effects, and broadcasting played an important role.

Later Theories of Media Effects and Broadcasting

After the pronouncement of the death of communication research (by Bernard Berelson), media scholars began to offer new theories that addressed concepts of media power that lay somewhere between limited and powerful effects. The theory most directly connected to television (and thus broadcasting) was *cultivation*, developed by George Gerbner and colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania beginning in the late 1960s. Gerbner felt that the many studies of television *violence* were too focused on trying to show that viewers would imitate violence that they had seen on television. While the hundreds of violence studies that have been conducted are also highly relevant to broadcasting, Gerbner conceived of television primarily as a storytelling medium. Thus, his theory was that viewers of television would be more likely to hold conceptions of the world that were congruent with what they had seen on television. Most famously, because heavy viewers of television would see many instances of violence, Gerbner hypothesized that

they would also see the world as a more violent place. He called this phenomenon the *mean world syndrome*. Cultivation examined many other concepts in relation to television. For Gerbner, the importance of television was that it was a broadcast medium, dominating the storytelling industry from the 1950s onward. While other media could potentially have had cultivating effects, television was the most important because of its massive reach, a direct result of its broadcast nature.

Another theory that offered a perspective on the effects of media was *agenda setting*. This theory, also developed in the late 1960s, argued that media might tell people, not what to think, but what to think about. Maxwell McCombs and colleagues showed that the agendas of news organizations (including broadcast news) influenced the agenda of the public. Later developments in agenda setting found that exposure to news could *prime* audiences to receive information in certain ways, and that news *frames* are also important in influencing how audiences receive and interpret news. While agenda setting can apply to any journalistic medium, many of the studies within this theory have included television news. The power of television to set political agendas has been recognized since at least the 1960s, and research on agenda setting has confirmed this power time and again.

A third prominent theory of media effects developed after the emergence of television was the *spiral of silence*. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann argued that public opinion was not just the sum of people's individual beliefs. Rather, public opinion was also characterized by people's beliefs about what others thought. Thus, she argued, people would be less likely to express opinions if they felt that others did not share that opinion. More important, she argued that people would derive their feelings of whether others shared their beliefs from the media; she called this the *media tenor*. Since spiral of silence theory was developed from the 1970s onward, naturally the power of television played a role in terms of its ability to portray opinions as normative to large, heterogeneous audiences.

Indeed, most current theories of media effects have been shaped by television's power to distribute messages to large, heterogeneous audiences. From the 1950s to the 1990s, television's dominance of the mass consciousness was virtually uncontested. Thus, for theories of media effects

that were in one way or another informed by conceptions of mass society—a society of disconnected, anonymous individuals—television as a medium represented the apex of mass mediation. In this sense, almost any theory of media effects developed after the 1950s can be seen as a response to television and thus a theory of broadcasting. Not surprisingly, television was seen as a factor in relation to a number of social questions and issues.

Television Research

Most media attract the attention of social critics as the media develop and become important aspects of the culture. This was true of radio, film, popular music, comic books, and most other mass media at various times. However, television seemed to many to be so powerful that it attracted more than its share of criticism and thus the attention of researchers.

Without question, the dominant issue of concern has been television violence. In the 1960s, competition among the three broadcast networks resulted in television lineups that were increasingly filled with action-adventures, Westerns, and crime dramas. While such fare would probably seem tame by today's standards, in comparison with the so-called Golden Age of television (which was characterized by live dramas, quiz shows, variety shows, and similar fare), the new action-oriented lineup was disconcerting to many. The Surgeon General of the United States issued a report in 1972 on television violence, concluding that exposure to television violence does result in a number of deleterious outcomes. The government expanded and updated these findings in 1982. Since then, the dominant view has been that television violence does result in negative outcomes such as desensitization to violence, imitation of violence seen, and acceptance of violence as a way to solve problems. While violence has always been a part of the storytelling landscape, the advent of television as a broadcast medium meant that violent images could now be seen by everyone at virtually any time, in increased vividness and realism. While the government considered regulating violence, not much has been done besides the establishment of a voluntary rating system by television broadcasters and the introduction in 1996 of the V-chip, which allows parents to block programs that they might deem too violent for their children.

Another concern can be found in television's portrayal of minorities and other marginalized groups. Of most concern was the fact that television, especially in its early years, stereotyped groups such as African Americans and women. Research showed that African Americans were much less likely to appear on television programs when compared with their population percentages, and when shown, they were most often portrayed in stereotypical roles, often as either servants or criminals. Women were also shown less frequently, and mostly in "traditional roles," such as mother, secretary, nurse, and so on. When not shown in those roles, they were shown as objects of desire. Much research from a variety of theoretical perspectives has shown that these portrayals did matter in terms of how people viewed the marginalized groups. However, television has proven able to adapt, at least partially, to social change. Blacks and women are now shown more frequently, and the range of roles they can inhabit has also broadened. A similar phenomenon can be seen in the portrayal of gay men and lesbians. Nevertheless, even with some improvements, there are other groups—such as Latinos and Asians—that remain underrepresented on television, and even the groups that have seen their portrayals increase can still make an argument that the dominant—even hegemonic—White male culture of television still has effects at the societal level.

Despite the demise of the powerful effects view of media, television has been blamed at one point or another for almost every social problem: drug abuse, unhealthy behaviors such as smoking or unhealthy eating habits, poor educational performance of children, lack of interest or knowledge in political matters, failure to practice safe sex, and so on. In all, thousands of studies have been conducted linking television viewing to a variety of negative effects. Most studies do show effects for the given variables studied, although effects directly attributable to television are almost always small to moderate when demographic and other factors are controlled for. Still, the simple frequency with which investigators have looked at television as a cause or symptom of social ills is evidence of the enormous power ascribed to television in everyday discourse. While researchers may have bypassed the notion of a *hypodermic needle* or *magic bullet* that could inject passive

viewers with any desired message, there is little doubt that television has been viewed within society as the most powerful mass medium ever devised, at least since the 1960s.

Technological Theories of Broadcasting

It is interesting to note that television's dominance as a mass medium has been challenged—beginning in the 1980s with the rise of cable television and VCRs and more recently with the rise of the Internet. Traditional broadcasting (epitomized by over-the-air broadcasts of television) has lost much of its share to *new media*. At the same time, watching television—in a variety of forms—is still the most common media activity in which people engage. But the rise of new media points to the fact that the form of a technology, in this case broadcasting, can also have important effects.

Modernization theory, popular in the 1960s and 1970s, argued that developing societies could pass more quickly from traditionalism into a modern state with the infusion of mass-mediated communication. Access to information from mass media would help the Third World bypass stages of development by replacing traditional outlooks with those characteristic of "advanced" capitalist democracies. The theory of *diffusion of innovations* also focused on technologies and their adoption as markers of modernity, although this theory also included interpersonal and community-level communication as important determinants of a society's move toward modernization. Broadcasting's technological features—especially its ability to reach illiterate audiences across wide distances—made it a logical candidate for experiments in technological innovation for modernization. The advent of satellite broadcasting made the power of broadcasting as a technology seem even more alluring. Experiments were conducted with the use of television in remote underdeveloped countries, and a variety of nations undertook broadcasting projects—either in radio or television—to advance economic, social, and cultural development. While there were some successes, critics argued that broadcasting would merely serve to transmit the values of dominant, Western capitalist powers. Fears of neo-imperialism or neocolonialism muted much of the hope for broadcasting's power as a tool for positive social change. In any

case, by the 1980s and 1990s, broadcasting was reaching more people, and local production was stepping up its output. For many countries where state-sponsored television had been the norm, new commercial outlets were springing up, often through cable and satellite. The fact that local media industries in countries such as India became very large and commercial seemed to confirm some aspects of both advocates of the modernization approach and its opponents. The technology was indeed powerful as countries' economies changed, but broadcasting's quality as the preeminent medium for carrying advertising also meant that the economic model of free-market capitalism was often part and parcel of the technological package. These trends have led to what we now call *globalization*.

Perhaps the most important, though controversial, theory of broadcasting as a technology was that of Marshall McLuhan. He saw media as extensions of human sense faculties, and he was far less concerned with the content of the medium than with its form. He famously said that the medium was the message, by which he meant that use of certain media tended to reorganize the way humans think. Most important for McLuhan was the transition from a literary or written culture (a culture of the "eye") to a mediated, aural culture (a culture of the "ear"). While McLuhan was not the first to point out the importance of the development of writing as the advent of the very essence of modern, rational, scientific, Western thought, he popularized these notions to a very wide audience. Indeed, he became something of a media phenomenon in the 1960s. While McLuhan's ideas were widely circulated, they did not gain much traction among communication theorists. Most commonly, his thoughts have been attacked with the critique of *technological determinism*—the idea that all the effects of a technology can be deduced from its form. Raymond Williams (*Television: Technology and Cultural Form*) is a prominent opponent of technological determinism, arguing that cultural, social, and political decisions affect how a technology will be used. In any case, as we have seen, most theories of broadcasting have been linked with theories of media effect, and thus content and form are inextricably linked.

James Shanahan

See also Agenda-Setting Theory; Computer-Mediated Communication; Diffusion of Innovations; Frankfurt School; Marxist Theory; Media Effects Theories; Medium Theory; New Media Theory; Spiral of Silence; Theory; Two-Step and Multi-Step Flow; Violence and Nonviolence in Media Studies

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BUDDHIST COMMUNICATION THEORY

Implicit in all great religions of the world are distinct models of communication. In this regard, Buddhism is no exception. Buddhism refers to a body of doctrines and religious practices expounded by the Buddha—literally, the Enlightened One. The Buddha was born in India in 563 BCE and died 85 years later. There are two main schools of

Buddhism—the *Theravada* and *Mahayana*. The Theravada form of Buddhism, which is the earlier school, is practiced in countries such as Thailand, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos, while the Mahayana form is practiced in countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Tibet. There are a number of differences between the two, although both have much in common, and both offer important implications for communication theory.

The Buddha himself was a supremely persuasive communicator. He preached to the people in an idiom and vocabulary that were readily understandable. He paid close attention to the psychological makeup of his interlocutors and listeners. He designed his messages in a way that would appeal to ordinary people. In terms of models of communication, he placed the receiver at the center of his communication model—unlike most Western models, which, until recently, focused on the sender. Furthermore, the Buddha always conceptualized communication in terms of a specific context; the act of communication constituted an event, and the context was an integral part of the meaning. Finally, he placed great emphasis on the rhetorical strategies deployed by the communicator. The distinct ways in which he pressed into service allegories, parables, tropes, and stories bear testimony to this fact. Communication, then, is central to Buddhist thought.

Buddhist Phenomenology

Buddhists posit three basic characteristics as defining worldly existence. They are impermanence, suffering, and nonself. The notions of flux and suffering are central to Buddhist phenomenology. The way out of a world of suffering, according to the Buddha, is by pursuing the *Noble Eightfold Path*, consisting of (1) right view, (2) right conception, (3) right speech, (4) right action, (5) right livelihood, (6) right effort, (7) right mindfulness, and (8) right concentration. In addition, there is no permanent personal entity that can be called the self or ego. These three characteristics color the Buddhist approach to communication. In general terms, what is distinctive about the Buddhist understanding of language and verbal communication is that it signifies the middle path—it avoids extremes.

A social aspect is also important to Buddhist thought. There are five main presuppositions

associated with the ideal social order, and these have implications for communication theory: (1) The human being is supreme, (2) reason and compassionate understanding rather than blind dogma should guide human action, (3) human beings need to be pragmatic in their behavior, (4) all forms of violence should be eliminated, and (5) peace and harmony are the ideals that underwrite society.

Dimensions of Buddhist Communication Theory

At the foundation of Buddhist views of communication is the Buddhist view of language. Language is seen as always evolving in relation to social contexts and conditions. In the famous discourse on the origins (*agganna sutta*), the Buddha informs the two Brahmins, Vasettha and Bhadravaja, that human society is a product of evolution. Social institutions, including language, were not fashioned by some divine creator but evolve through processes of social growth. Language, then, is a social practice shaped by convention and agreed on by the people who employ it. In the Buddhist writings, there are copious references to agreement among users (*sammuti*) and the practices of users (*vohara*), evidence of the idea of language as a product of social evolution.

The Buddhist emphasis on language as a social practice also calls attention to the world shared by senders and receivers and how it constitutes a very important facet of the communicated meaning. A communicative event is more than the sending of a message by a solitary sender to a solitary receiver; it takes place within a linguistic context in which both are embedded. The idea of linguistic *embeddedness* constitutes an integral part of the meaning of the communication act and gives it added focus and depth. Embeddedness is present in another way, as well. According to the Buddhist way of thinking, individual consciousness is nurtured on signs and reflects their logic and imperatives. Indeed, consciousness is dependent on the semiotic interactions associated with a given communicative event. Consciousness, then, is forged in the linguistic signs produced and exchanged by the participants; it is not just the subjective experience of the individual but takes into account the social dimensions of context as well.

In fact, theories of interpersonal communication and intrapersonal communication intersect in interesting ways in Buddhist thought. According to Buddhism, language and communication ultimately should pave the way to liberation. Hence, *self-reflexivity* and *critical introspection*—the essence of intrapersonal communication—assume a great importance. For Buddhists, this self-reflexivity is built into the very process of verbal communication. In communicating, one is not merely stringing together a cluster of words but also reflecting on them and evaluating them; to communicate, to use language to interact with others, is to adopt a moral stance. From this flows the notion that linguistic communication involves the imparting of not only information but also feelings and moral assessments. Therefore, to communicate through language is to reflect on how one is constituted as a human being. This is an important area that has been relatively neglected by communication scholars.

Buddhism also contains a well-developed model of interpersonal communication itself, hardly surprising in view of the fact that the aim of Buddhism is to lead people away from worldly suffering; how to live productively and harmoniously with others in society is addressed by Buddhism as a way of alleviating suffering. Furthermore, the concepts of suffering, happiness, rights, duties, goodness, evil, virtues, vices, well-being, truthfulness, and authenticity are discussed in ways that illuminate issues of interpersonal communication. The Buddhist model of interpersonal communication that lies behind moral injunctions, for example, focuses attention on the following components: the sensitive use of language, truthfulness and verifiability of communication, the achievement of consensus and harmony through interaction, the frames of intelligibility we bring to the communicative event, symmetrical relationships in communication, the importance of contexts of interface,

and clarification and justification of moral principles underlying social intercourse.

Buddhist communication theory is complex and many sided. The Buddhist approach to language and implications of Buddhism for intrapersonal and interpersonal communication have been presented here as examples of the many implications of Buddhism for communication. Buddhist understandings of communication as a social and moral act have much to offer contemporary communication theorists.

Wimal Dissanayake

See also Asian Communication Theory; Constitutive View of Communication; Epistemology; Ethics Theories; Hindu Communication Theory; Language and Communication

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C

CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Communication campaigns are intended to generate specific outcomes in a relatively large number of individuals, within a specified time, and through an organized set of communication activities. In other words, campaigns employ communication strategies and theories to influence large audiences in some measurable way. Perhaps the objective is to persuade consumers to purchase a particular product, as is the case with commercial marketing campaigns, or to influence an attitude, increase knowledge, promote awareness, or even change a behavior, as is more common in prosocial campaigns. Campaigns can be school- or community-based or regional, national, or international in their reach. Mass media campaigns, frequently used for their large reach, are most successful in increasing awareness and knowledge, while smaller school- or community-based campaigns are more likely to generate higher level changes in attitudes and behavior. Integration of mass media and interpersonal strategies creates the greatest likelihood for behavior change.

Campaigns are complex in that they are an art as well as a science. In other words, high-quality graphics and creative ideas are necessary to attract and maintain attention, but so is a fundamental understanding of communication theory to maximize understanding of audiences, message content, and evaluation strategies. A clear understanding of how theory can inform the campaign process will

improve the likelihood of obtaining successful campaign outcomes.

The three major phases of a campaign are planning, implementation, and evaluation. While there are many potential theories that can be used to inform campaigns across the three phases, those theories that are highlighted in this entry are wide in scope and applicable to a broad range of campaign topics. This entry will discuss how theory can be integrated into formative research, message design, and evaluation procedures throughout a campaign's planning, implementation, and evaluation stages.

Theory in Formative Research

The planning stage of formative research is commonly divided into preproduction and production phases. During the *preproduction phase*, research on target audiences is conducted to understand their beliefs, values, knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions about the campaign topic. Preproduction research informs how audiences may be segmented so that campaign messages can be tailored appropriately to an audience's demographics, geographics, and psychographics. During the *production phase*, message concepts are designed on the basis of preproduction findings and then are evaluated by target audience members to determine how they may be revised for the larger campaign. Primary research strategies used in formative research include focus groups, theater testing, surveys, and intercept interviews.

To begin the formative research process, campaigners will first identify relevant literature

related to the campaign topic. The relevant literature assists in the identification of a theoretical framework so that campaign researchers can identify factors that might contribute to individuals' willingness to attend to, identify with, process, and ultimately comply with campaign recommendations. Specifically, during the preproduction stage, theory helps inform the questions asked in a moderator guide, survey tool, or interview protocol, and during the production stage, theory provides ideas for message design. Two theories often employed during the formative research phase are the transtheoretical model (TTM) and the theory of planned behavior (TPB).

Stages of Change/Transtheoretical Model

According to James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente, the TTM is based on the idea that individuals are at different stages of readiness to engage in a recommended behavior, which provides useful information for prioritizing audience segments and identifying who is most likely to be influenced. According to the TTM, people can be in either precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, or maintenance stages in terms of their readiness to change a behavior. People who do not believe a problem exists in their current behavior or situation would be in the *precontemplation* stage. Individuals in the *contemplation* stage are aware that a problem exists but have made no serious commitment to change. Individuals in the *preparation* stage intend to take action to change and may seek information about how to facilitate a change. In the *action* stage, people have begun to address the problem behavior by adopting a recommended behavior. When they continue to engage in the recommended behavior over time, individuals have entered the *maintenance* stage. As part of the formative research process, it can be helpful to identify individuals' readiness to change as a strategy to segment audiences. The types of messages that influence people are likely to differ depending on individuals' stage of readiness to make a change.

Associated with each of the TTM stages are activities that help move people through the behavior change process, including consciousness raising, dramatic relief, self-reevaluation, environmental reevaluation, self-liberation, social liberation, counterconditioning, stimulus control,

contingency management, and helping relationships. These processes of change provide campaigners with a toolbox of strategies to incorporate as part of their campaign messages. For example, if a target audience was comprised of individuals in the precontemplation stage (e.g., I did not know anything about blood donation), campaign messages might focus on consciousness raising to increase awareness of the campaign topic (e.g. blood donations are at an extreme low), or if a target audience included individuals in the maintenance phase, campaign messages might focus on helping relationships (e.g., continue to donate blood with a partner) to ensure continued maintenance of the behavior. According to the TTM, people continually go through a *decisional balance*, examining the pros and cons associated with a particular behavior, which should be assessed at the formative research phase (e.g., what are the perceived benefits and barriers to blood donation). Additionally, the TTM notes that *self-efficacy*, one's confidence that he or she can perform a behavior, influences behavior change, which indicates a need to assess factors that may impact self-efficacy (e.g., how confident are you that you are able to donate blood). In sum, the TTM provides information that allows campaigners to segment audiences on the basis of their readiness to change and design messages to test during the formative research phase of campaign development.

Theory of Planned Behavior

Icek Ajzen's TPB provides a useful framework for conducting formative research in campaigns. According to the TPB, three conceptually independent variables contribute to the formation of behavioral intentions that predict actual behavior: individual attitudes, subjective norms, and perceptions of behavioral control. *Attitude* is comprised of behavioral beliefs that have outcome evaluations associated with them (e.g., wearing a seatbelt is a good thing to do); *subjective norm* is defined as a person's beliefs that certain individuals or groups believe he or she should or should not perform a given behavior (e.g., my parents would approve of my wearing a seatbelt); *perceived behavioral control* is the perception that performance of a specific behavior is within a person's control (e.g., it is easy for me to use my seatbelt), and there is a direct link

between perceived behavioral control and behavior. The TPB is useful in the formative research phase because it indicates that campaigners need to investigate potential audience members' attitudes about the campaign topic, normative influences that might affect their adoption of campaign recommendations, and perceptions of control, which can identify perceived barriers to adopting campaign recommendations. For example, formative research for a campaign to promote seatbelt use among pregnant women might find that women have a positive attitude toward seatbelt use, as do their significant others, but it might also find that women report discomfort during the later stages of pregnancy. In the production phase of formative research, message concepts can be designed that support positive audience beliefs and address barriers. For example, in the seatbelt scenario, pregnant women might be reminded about keeping their unborn baby safe and be encouraged to purchase a seatbelt extension to improve their comfort level. Thus, while the TTM provides guidance for understanding audience readiness to engage in behavior, the TPB provides insight regarding known predictors of behavior so that campaigners can engage in appropriate research that addresses those predictors in final campaign messages.

Theory in Message Design

The previous section discussed how theory can be used to understand audiences and create message concepts for testing in formative research. This section will elaborate further on the use of theory in message design as a strategy to improve the potential impact of campaign messages. Campaign messages need to be memorable, of high quality, and communicated via a channel appropriate to the audience. While creative messages are essential for society's savvy information consumers, so is the theoretical contribution to message development, because theory provides campaigners with information regarding message structure, argument type, selection of appeals, and repetition, as well as source and channel choices. Many theories can inform message design, but to extend the discussion to other frequently used theories, social cognitive theory (SCT) and the extended parallel process model (EPPM) are discussed as they relate to campaign message design.

Social Cognitive Theory

SCT, a theory by Albert Bandura, is based on the same body of research as social learning theory but focuses more on human thought processes. The central idea of SCT is that people learn from observation and that the reinforcement or punishment of behavior impacts their behavior and subsequent outcome expectancies in similar situations. Also, learning is more likely to occur if a person identifies greatly with the role model and has high self-efficacy. SCT is fundamental to campaign message design because it explicates the idea that people learn and are influenced when they make observations, which includes observation of campaign messages. SCT notes that people are more likely to be influenced by models or message sources with whom they identify; thus, formative research can identify these models for subsequent use in campaign messages. SCT also discusses the importance of rewards and punishments: Campaign messages can promote the positive outcomes associated with adherence to campaign recommendations or highlight the punishments associated with low adherence to a recommended action or belief. For example, a campaign message that encourages individuals to vote on election day may point out that they will feel patriotic and proud to be an American if they exercise their right to do so. And a campaign that encourages individuals to drive the speed limit may also indicate a punishment, such as "If you don't, law enforcement will ticket you."

The theory supports message-design strategies that promote message sources with whom audience members identify, new information for audience members to learn, demonstrations of recommended actions through appropriate channels, and reinforcement or punishment as motivators to comply with message recommendations. SCT is particularly useful when a campaign aims to demonstrate how to engage in a new behavior. For example, health brochures that demonstrate how to appropriately conduct a breast self-exam, a public service announcement that shows how to "click" your seatbelt to avoid a ticket, or a radio message providing directions on how to apply sunscreen appropriately all provide observable examples of SCT. In sum, SCT provides guidelines about observational learning that can translate directly into message design strategies for campaigns.

The Extended Parallel Process Model

The EPPM, a theory developed by Kim Witte, describes conditions when fear appeals will or will not be effective as a campaign message. *Fear appeals* are persuasive messages designed to scare people by describing the terrible things that will happen to them if they do not do what the message recommends. Fear appeals typically use vivid language, personal language, and gory details or pictures, and they are a popular strategy in both health and political campaigns. Everyone can recall health messages that warn of terrible things that will happen if people do not exercise regularly, eat right, get regular checkups, wear safety gear, or take preventive action of some sort. For example, public service announcements about drunk driving that show a crushed car and warn of imminent death if you drink and drive would be considered a fear appeal. And during political campaign seasons, it is easy to recall messages sponsored by a political party that threaten negative consequences and policies should the opposing candidate be elected.

The EPPM describes three components of a fear appeal that predict whether message exposure leads to acceptance, avoidance, or reactance: fear, threat, and perceived efficacy. *Fear* is the emotional part of the message, while *threat* refers to the *perceived severity* (e.g., drinking and driving results in death) and *perceived susceptibility* (e.g., I or my friends could be hit by a drunk driver) of the message. *Perceived efficacy* is comprised of *response efficacy* (e.g., designated drivers reduce drunk driving), as well as the previously discussed construct of *self-efficacy* (e.g., I am confident that I could easily be or use a designated driver). The EPPM states that when threat is high and perceived efficacy is high, target audience members will accept the message because they see there is a problem and feel as though they can do something about it. However, if they perceive a threat to be high and their efficacy to be low, they will not accept the message and engage in avoidance or perhaps reactance, in which they respectively choose to not address the message or do the opposite of what the message recommends. If a fear appeal is the message appeal of choice, this theory identifies message components that need to be present in a campaign message for the fear appeal to be successful. Specifically, a fear

appeal needs to promote a threat that is not too intense or scary, but still threatening, and it also needs to recommend an action that people believe will work and is easily done to address the threat. Essentially, the theory provides instructions for campaign messages that aim to scare people into action; however, the theory cautions that those messages should contain both a threat as well as an efficacy component to be successful. For example, campaigners may decide they want to use fear appeals as an antismoking prevention strategy. Messages may include narrative evidence that shows a woman on her deathbed with an oxygen tank and a vivid picture of her tarred, black lung. To be effective, the message would also have to have a strong efficacy component that encourages audience members to remain smoke free by recommending certain actions. While there is much controversy over the use of fear appeals in the campaign literature, they are commonly used in campaigns to illustrate undesirable outcomes for individuals. Campaigners have an ethical imperative to include an efficacy component, and if they do not include an efficacy component, they decrease their likelihood of successfully influencing audience members.

Theory in Evaluating Campaign Effects

In addition to formative research and message design, theory informs the process and summative evaluations of campaigns. *Process evaluation* occurs during the implementation phase of a campaign to ensure that all facets of the campaign are moving along as planned, while *summative evaluation* occurs at the completion of a campaign to determine its effectiveness. During process evaluation, theory provides a map for what variables are critical to monitor during the implementation process. For example, the EPPM would indicate a designated driver message that incorporates a fear appeal should result in acceptance of a message. However, if the message is seen as humorous rather than threatening or if the message does not have as strong an efficacy impact as expected, it would be critical during the implementation phase to assess the message and adjust it accordingly to avoid campaign failure. Process evaluation is often not done despite its importance for accurate evaluation of summative effects.

Social Norms Approach

Summative evaluation to assess the success of a campaign is based minimally on stated campaign objectives, which are informed by theory. At the outset of a campaign, campaigners look to theory to identify what variables (e.g., attitude, personal norms, knowledge) can be impacted by campaign messages and then develop measures that evaluate whether any changes occurred across those variables. Campaign evaluation is difficult as it is not a controlled experiment, but quasi-experimental designs often are used to compare different schools, communities, or regions exposed to a campaign to other equivalent, unexposed groups. Theory plays an integral role in determining campaign objectives, which direct what type of measurement needs to occur to assess effectiveness. *Social norms* campaigns, for example, aim to correct audience misperceptions about a social norm by providing evidence that a perceived norm is different from the actual norm. Social norms campaigns, an approach developed by Alan Berkowitz, are often used on college campuses to address binge drinking, typically providing evidence that most students do not binge drink and only drink a few alcoholic beverages when they do—which is contrary to the common perception that the majority of college students binge drink. Prior to the start of the campaign, campaigners collect baseline data based on the constructs of the theory (e.g., how much each student actually drinks, how much each student thinks other college students at the campus drink). They will then set measurable objectives for the campaign based on the theory (e.g., the campaign will increase student knowledge of campus drinking behavior, increase communication about drinking moderately, decrease drinking by one alcoholic beverage per social activity). During and after implementation, campaigners measure those same constructs to determine whether any changes have occurred within the target group, and they perhaps compare the findings with those from a control campus. In sum, theory identifies important constructs, provides measurement guidance, and contributes to the evaluation of campaign effects.

Kami J. Silk

See also Advertising Theories; Cognitive Theories; Entertainment–Education; Media Effects Theories; Reasoned Action Theory

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CHICANA FEMINISM

Chicana feminism is a movement that developed in response to the inability of the *Chicano movement* of the 1960s and 1970s and the *Anglo feminist movement* to incorporate the specific experience and social justice issues confronting women of Mexican ancestry in the United States. The experience of Chicanas is rooted historically in the colonization of Mexico and subsequently in the attainment and annexation of most of what was northern Mexico in the 1800s by the United States. Additionally, the Chicana experience is deeply informed by continued *neocolonialist* economic migration and immigration of Mexicans, both temporarily and permanently, to live and work in the United States.

This colonialist past and neocolonialist present combine to create a complex matrix of religion,

ethnicity, culture, race, class, sexuality, and gender that characterizes the hybrid and complicated nature of Chicana feminism. Although there has been a history of Mexican women feminists in various forms since colonial times, what sets apart the Chicana feminist who evolved in the 20th century is a focus on political praxis combined with the creation of what Chicana writer Cherríe Moraga calls a *theory in the flesh*—theory that is inherently political in drawing on the contradictions and real-life experiences of Chicana women.

Influence of the Chicano and Feminist Movements

The Chicano movement grew out of a history and experience of labor inequalities and oppression and the efforts of activists and community leaders to correct them. While these efforts had begun as early as the first decades of the 20th century and throughout the southwest United States (chiefly Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and California), the Chicano movement was most strongly influenced by the efforts of the United Farm Workers (UFW), led by César Chávez. This activism was the Chicano counterpart to the civil rights movement in the United States. Chicano university students in the 1960s became involved in supporting the UFW, as well as in questioning the general absence of Chicano experience from university curricula. In response, a Chicano Plan for Higher Education was published—*El Plan de Santa Bárbara*—calling for what would eventually result in the field of Chicano studies and the birth of Chicano studies scholarship. The U.S. feminist movement similarly responded to the fervor around civil rights. Inspired by the history of the women's suffrage movement in the 1920s, this movement worked to secure equality between the sexes in social, economic, and political contexts.

Chicana feminists responded to the ways in which they found themselves essentially absent from these two movements, despite the fact that they were in solidarity with the fundamental goals and purposes of both. The *women's movement*, as the feminist movement was often called, was largely a movement centered around White, Anglo (English-speaking) women, often of higher socioeconomic status than most Chicanas and influenced by very different root experiences and ways of life. Although women shared in the experience

of *sexism*, the experience of race and class generally was not reflected in the feminism of the women's movement.

Similarly, although the Chicano movement was making great strides for the Chicano community, even its very name—the masculine form *Chicano*—reflected the taken-for-granted invisibility of Chicana women and of their rights to equal participation with men in the privileges being gained. The emphasis on the family, or *familia*, as the unifying concept or metaphor for Chicanos, like Mexicans, assumed the role of the woman as unquestioning child bearer and mother, sexual partner to the dominant man, and self-sacrificing—as Mary was in the “holy family.” The roles of women in Mexican history and in the Chicano movement were largely invisible and unacknowledged; Chicana feminists found themselves bringing the awareness of the history of Mexican feminism to the attention of Chicanos as part of their claim of relevance.

Also absent in the formal rhetoric of the Chicano movement were the tensions between men and women and the influence of *machismo*, or the emphasis on defending and exemplifying male strength, in the domination and subordination of women. While Chicano men were enjoying the prospect of broader horizons and opportunity, Chicanas did not feel included.

Chicana Organizing

In response to these voids, Chicanas began to organize around their specific concerns. In 1971, in Texas, where the Chicano movement had led to the creation of the *Raza Unida* party, women organized a caucus within the party called *Mujeres por la Raza* [literally, Women for the Race]. *La Raza* is a Spanish colloquial term used by Chicanos to refer to themselves as a community united by race. This caucus succeeded in incorporating women's issues into the party's platform, and throughout the early 1970s, Chicanas held repeated conferences, focusing on developing organizational skills and coalition building for women. They also worked against the race and class biases present in Anglo women's politics and officially withdrew from the Texas Women's Political Caucus, endorsing a series of Chicana candidates for various state and local political offices. Although *Mujeres* ceased to exist when the *Raza Unida* party ended, the types of

issues and activism that had begun did not. Similar efforts existed in other states, including the formation of a national organization for Chicanas—the *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional* (National Mexican Women’s Commission).

Chicana efforts to organize themselves were met with much criticism from within the Chicano community. Often they were accused of hurting the overall Chicano cause by emphasizing their own issues. However, the Chicana response was a strategy that recognized the significance of women’s roles within the community. It sought to address *all* issues of inequity and to change the overall power dynamics operating: If domination of women within the Chicano community existed, it was not just women but the entire community that was affected by these imbalances of power.

Chicana Theorizing

The dynamics of these efforts would come to influence the nature of the social theories and literature developed by Chicana scholars and activists. Particularly influential was the late Gloria Anzaldúa, a Chicana scholar activist who addressed the tensions experienced by Chicanas by creating a theory of *borderlands* about Chicana experience. Anzaldúa, along with other Chicana feminists, suggested that what a dominant academic audience would consider important might not be similarly significant to Chicana women and their communities. This is a central issue for Chicana feminists: to create theory that can impact academic scholarship while remaining relevant to Chicana women’s lives.

Whether traditional academic theory can capture and address the core issues of importance to Chicanas has implications, not just for the content of the theory, but also for the ways in which the theory is written. As such, the style and form of Chicana feminist writing in its purist forms are best described as *multigenre*; Chicana feminist writing includes a combination of different forms, such as poetry, performative writing, autobiography, narrative, and code switching (alternating in a text from one language or linguistic code to another). As a result, the theories and writings produced by Chicana scholars and activists do not often fit neatly into existing academic categories or disciplinary boundaries. This is seen as evidence of its validity rather than as a shortcoming.

Political Nature of Chicana Feminist Theory

Most significant to Chicana theories, and reflecting the political origins of Chicana feminism, is the embedded and explicitly political nature of the work. Chicana feminism seeks to avoid relying on Western theories and forms of thought in order to avoid the risk of reflecting colonialist assumptions present in traditional academic theories. Since Chicanas themselves are the product of colonialist processes of history, one of the more innovative aspects of Chicana feminist theory is that of imagining realities that might counter or resist the colonial.

This is apparent in the use of language, references to history, and narratives in nontraditional and surprising ways in order to move away from dominant modes of representation. The work of lesbian Chicana writers has been exceptionally powerful in challenging many of the colonialist issues embedded in the society they are resisting, calling into question the roles gender and patriarchy play in maintaining existing power relations. Similarly, works that question traditional representations of religious experience and Catholicism, as well as those that utilize indigenous traditions and symbolism to express theoretical concepts, force colonialist assumptions to be laid aside.

Reliance on Lived Experience as Basis for Authority

By drawing on lived experience as the basis for concepts and ideas that are developed in their work, Chicana feminists reflect the early intention of Chicanas not to be made invisible in the light of dominant movements or ideas. Chicana feminists employ a test of real-life validity to their work, where the evaluation must come not only from a scholarly community but from within the cultural *standpoint* the theory is representing. Much Chicana feminist work is *self-reflexive*, applying within itself tests of its own validity by applying cultural knowledge to the ideas as they are expressed.

Attention to Complexity in Chicana Feminism

Chicana feminist scholarship includes the awareness that a good theory will unsettle the dominant

order in one or more of the dimensions that Chicanas address in their work. Chicana feminist theories acknowledge that race/ethnicity, religion, sexuality/gender, and social class do not exist separately but in complicated interaction with each other. A good Chicana feminist theory, therefore, is rarely unidimensional, instead focusing on the multiple dimensions that are contested and resisted in Chicanas' work. Their writing attempts to situate the various dimensions together, rather than separately, and the use of a combination of genres is one way of demonstrating the complexity of their arguments.

An example of this is the fact that a commitment to the inclusion of race/ethnicity as an inherent women's issue for Chicanas ultimately implicates the inclusion of Chicano men and Chicano and Chicana youth, along with adult women. The issues affecting the women are part of the social fiber of the communities that birth and nurture the growth of Chicanas. This motivates the historical separation from Anglo women's movements, as well as the view of male-female and other gender-related issues as part of the communication phenomena that must be explored for sound Chicana feminist communication theory.

Gender and complexity of self-representation are thus issues visible within the work of Chicana feminist communication scholars. Rhetorical and performance scholars have been particularly well suited to explore these issues of self-representation in work in keeping with the spirit of Chicana feminism. The work of Jacqueline Martinez utilizes a phenomenological approach to study themes of gender and sexual preference as a Chicana of mixed-race family history within the *habitus* or situated experience of her own life history. Michelle Holling explores the representation of women in Chicana literature, as well as the rhetorical strategies in 20th-century activist efforts that were, and continue to be, issues complicated by race, gender, and politics.

In addition to issues of extended family and historical background, the roles of religion and ritual are included as necessary aspects of Chicana feminist theory. Interdependence and solidarity within multiple Hispanic groups is implicit in theorizing about religion, with communication scholars particularly well suited to approach these interactional dynamics. An example is Sarah Amira De la Garza's book *Maria Speaks*, exploring the

topic of self-expression and spiritual-cultural identity as a woman attempting to reconcile issues of patriarchy within a patriarchal, religiously Roman Catholic Chicana upbringing. Her book uses poetry, autobiography, and performative and creative writing as the forms for her ethnographic report, typical of Chicana writing.

In the work of Bernadette Calafell, interdependence and complexity are shown to be an inherent feature of the *gaze*, or perspective, that Chicana communication scholars utilize as part of their standpoint. Calafell explores Chicana and Chicano performance as part of the larger field of Latina and Latino performance but as also distinctly affected by race, gender, and politics.

These dimensions furthermore do not exist in the same patterns or with the same relevance for all Chicanas. Stories of migration, varieties of experience in the labor market, religiosity, and sexual mores and preferences all combine in unpredictable fashion to create what is united by the experience of oppression and domination. Linguistic variation and preferences further complicate the subject of Chicana feminist theory. The struggle to remain united despite the wide range of experiences that create the identities of Chicanas will continue to be a hallmark of Chicana feminist theorizing.

Sarah Amira De la Garza

See also Autoethnography; Critical Race Theory; Feminist Communication Theories; Feminist Rhetorical Criticism; Feminist Standpoint Theory; Latino Perspectives; Muted Group Theory; Narrative and Narratology; Performance Theories; Performative Writing; Power and Power Relations; Social Justice

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CHINESE HARMONY THEORY

Harmony is the cardinal value of Chinese culture. Chinese believe that the universe is in a process of constant change and transformation caused by the dialectical and dialogical interaction between yin and yang, the two opposite but complementary forces; harmony is the key to bringing continuity into this cycle of transformation. Thus, Chinese consider harmony as the end of human communication, in which interactants try to adapt to each other in order to reach a state of interdependence and cooperation.

Based on this Chinese belief, Guo-Ming Chen developed a harmony theory of Chinese communication in 2001, from which a total of four propositions, 23 axioms, and 23 theorems were generated. The theory has been applied to different aspects of Chinese communication behaviors, especially the process of Chinese conflict management.

The theory indicates that the ability to reach a harmonious state of human relationship is the main criterion Chinese use to evaluate communication competence. In other words, from a Chinese perspective, an increase in one’s ability to achieve harmony will increase the degree of communication competence. Three principles should be followed to achieve harmony: (1) intrinsically internalize *jen*

(humanism), *yi* (righteousness), and *li* (rite); (2) extrinsically accommodate *shi* (temporal contingencies), *wei* (spatial contingencies), and *ji* (the first imperceptible beginning of movement); and (3) strategically exercise *guanxi* (interrelation), *mientz* (face), and power in the behavioral level.

Jen, Yi, and Li

Jen, embedded in the principle of reciprocity and empathy, is a collective virtue of showing love in interactions. Through a mutually and empathically dependent process, the essence of jen is emitted to sustain the harmonious interaction. Yi, as the internal criterion of appropriate communication behaviors, provides individuals with the capacity to exhibit flexibility and adaptability in a specific context dictated by social norms to reach harmony. Li symbolizes the formality of human interaction and connects an individual’s character and social duties by following the rules of conduct and speech in communication. Only through following li can an individual actively adjust to the harmonious and hierarchical order of society, avoid embarrassing confrontations, and handle socially ambiguous situations to uphold the group control over ego-centric tendencies. These three intrinsic concepts form the foundation of the inner structure of interactants in creating harmonious Chinese communication.

Shi, Wei, and Ji

Shi requires the ability of knowing the temporal relations to appropriately perform what one ought to in different stages of human interaction. Unable to recognize the change of temporal contingencies in interactions is detrimental to the achievement of harmony and therefore leads to a failure of communication. The spatial contingencies of wei consist of social context and communication environment. Knowing wei refers to the realization and distinctions of who, what, and where in the process of interaction, which is typically reflected in the hierarchical structure of human relationships. Thus, an increase in knowing wei will increase the development of harmony in Chinese communication. Ji is the hidden sign of the beginning of a movement that shows the trace of possible consequences of an ongoing interaction. Being

competent to the Chinese means developing a harmonious state by knowing what is hidden and what is evident during the interaction. The way to foster the capacity of knowing *ji* is based on sensitivity and sincerity.

The intrinsic elements of *jen*, *yi*, and *li* form the latitude of Chinese communication, and the extrinsic elements of *shi*, *wei*, and *ji* form the longitude of Chinese communication; together they weave the contextual network of Chinese communication. This contextual network provides a field in which Chinese exercise various strategic skills to deal with their daily interactions. Chen's Chinese harmony theory stipulates *guanxi*, *mientz*, and *power* as the most fundamental communication strategies employed by the Chinese, which will ultimately decide whether harmony is achieved.

Guanxi, Mientz, and Power

Guanxi dictates the particularistic ties of interactants in the hierarchical structure of Chinese social network. It is treated as a social resource Chinese use to persuade, influence, and control the interaction in order to reach harmony or competence. The ability to distinguish the levels of hierarchical relationships in a social interaction then functions to develop a supportive and harmonious communication climate.

Mientz is the self-esteem or social prestige gained from the respect of one's counterpart in the interaction. A competent Chinese always knows how to make or give face to avoid causing emotional uneasiness of others, which may lead to damage to one's own image as well. In other words, to maintain the face of one's counterpart means to maintain harmonious friendship in the network of *guanxi*.

Power in Chinese society is embedded in the hierarchical structure of the social network, which ascribes power to the seniority one holds and authority one possesses. The elder and higher-social-status individuals are the locus of power, not only in personal and social interactions, but also in the workplace. These three elements reflect the strategic skills Chinese exercise in the web woven by *jen*, *yi*, *li*, *shi*, *wei*, and *ji* to achieve harmonious and competent communication.

Taken together, harmony is the axis of Chinese communication that is sustained by nine spokes:

jen, *yi*, *li*, *shi*, *wei*, *ji*, *guanxi*, *mientz*, and *power*. The functions and interrelationships of these concepts form a holistic system of the ideal Chinese communication. The interaction and integration of these nine elements bring continuity into the endless transforming process of Chinese communication. Based on this theory, we understand that, to the Chinese, harmony is a state of equilibrium representing the fulfillment of competent communication by which four ultimate goals of human communication can be reached: a feeling of security, a feeling of togetherness, a joyful feeling of interacting, and a feeling of benefiting from the interaction.

Guo-Ming Chen

See also Confucian Communication Theory; Taoist Communication Theory

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CHRONEMICS

Chronemics is the study of the concepts and processes of human temporality, or connections with time, as they are bound to human communication interactions. Chronemics concerns the study and uses of various kinds of objective time involved in our daily timing and habits associated with our formal and informal obligations. However,

chronemics also concerns subjective or personal temporalities. Combinations of subjective and objective time concern our own everyday *personal time*. It is this personal time, a combination of technical timekeeping and personal times and tempos, that is centrally and highly related to human communication. This entry is intended to explain how human temporalities comprise a nonverbal chronemics of human behaviors.

Chronemics is the newest area of nonverbal communication studies, and this new focus seems to link and bind together, for the first time, all other systems of nonverbal communication. All forms of nonverbal communication messages have their own temporalities, beginnings and endings, startings and stoppings, zeros and ones, before and after, faster and slower, and so forth. Verbal messages, too, have major temporal features. We could not possibly communicate without human temporality.

Chronemics should provide for a more dynamic study of emotional interactions between people. We are *Homo temporalis*; we all have a complex temporal identity, a composite of personal levels of time experiencing, to be discussed later in this entry. Chronemic studies developed from interdisciplinary time literature and research reports in biology, anthropology, sociology, and psychology.

Objective Time

Objective time concerns behaviors linked to our clocks, timekeeping devices, and calendars. These all deal with our comings and goings, the organization of communication events, and timing our everyday pursuits. Objective time concerns how most people reference time, times, and rates of change. Human attempts to develop timekeeping have been occurring for thousands of years. Marshall McLuhan noted that timekeeping devices are media that transform tasks and create new work and wealth by accelerating the pace of human associations or communication events. Most people do not understand that these devices have not dropped out of the sky; they developed from assumptions made long ago. The single most persistent and ongoing diffusion of innovation continuing its spread on a global scale is objective time.

Clock time was developed for use to standardize needed or valued shared experience, to regularize

our meetings, our hellos and goodbyes, our work schedules, our everyday comings and goings. The first characteristic of a developed society is its temporal regularity. Without temporal signposts or objective time markers, our communication meetings would be far less in number. Without calendrical markers, days, dates, weeks, months, and years, made up of seconds, minutes, hours, and other objective markers or intervals, our lives would be very different. We often become somewhat objective in our own repetitive actions, routines, habits, and various forms of redundancies. Most of us are creatures of routine and regularity in our habitual daily schedules. We often seem to create objective *time pacers* to manage our daily behaviors.

Timing devices were created to produce lineally assumed equal intervals in a cyclic sequentiality. This helps people regularize and coordinate divergent personal and sociocultural time, timings, tempos, and rhythms, discussed later. Communication studies have been anchored in an objective time behaviorism that often neglects relativity theory and variable kinds of time. Many people reluctantly perform daily what Lawrence Wright has called a *chronarchy*, or the thoughtless regimentation of people by timekeeping. It should be understood that those who control local clocks control space or proxemics, as well as movements or kinesics though spaces. We develop many kinds of *timetables* and *schedules* in our social and work groups. Most of them have to do with expectancies, due dates, repeat activities, and how we order and structure our communication contacts.

Scientific and Technological Time

Scientific time and technological time are precise kinds of objective time. Unlike subjective or personal time, scientific and technological time, timing, and tempo concern consistent measures reflected in some kind of clock time. Unitizations of processes are critical for any kind of scientific or technological time. Science could not exist without an objective time, clocks, calendars, and other structural features that equally mark off assumed temporal intervals. Seriality and unitized sequentiality are important tools for scientific investigations. More convenient and faster contact speeds seem to parallel more and faster communication contacts. Communication between people is

becoming more and more immediate and simultaneous; personally carried media are bringing people into immediate 24/7 contacts not possible before.

Technological time concerns our many kinds of media and their central forms. We often refer to media as channels of communication, not understanding that the brain is the channel of all other media channels. Today's communication media increase exposure to others. Objective time usage is balanced with subjective or personal time use.

Subjective or Personal Time

Genetic and Biological Time

Human genetics concerns a time and tempo, or what has been described as *chronogenetics*. Chronogenetic studies have shown that every gene has a timing structure, with control clocks that supply stabilities and transient clocks that indicate changes. Genetic temporalities interact with any infant's basal endocrinic and metabolic capacities and potentialities. Each of us has a unique biological time because we have inherited biological time from our ancestors. Genetic time concerns the study of the interactions of states and processes of human genes. States are stabilities in the chronogenetic codes, while processes concern transiencies or changes in the genetic codes. The stabilities of a gene are called *ergons*, and the transiencies or changes of a gene are called *chronons*. The study of *biostationarity* (stabilities) and *bioperiodicity* (rhythmicities) is called *chronobiology*. It is important to understand that genetic timing is what sets our biological clocks and explains why people seem to have widely ranging variations or differences in their biological tempos. Biological variations are always present, but often unconsciously so, and affect our communication processing as senders and receivers of communication throughout our lives.

Biological time involves biological rate variations or biological rhythms, biological drives, and the management of our biologic need tensions. The study of biological time began in 1937, when Pierre Lecomte du Nouy published his book *Biological Time*. While some communication scholars have recently introduced the idea of a communibiology, it should be understood that sociobiology studies are often communication based and have been developing for many decades.

If two people's biological processes are very different, their interactive attention and perceptions become affected. We can then become dysrhythmic in our interactions. When our hormonal, metabolic, and biological rhythms are out of sync during interactions, we personally have problems communicating with others. Whenever biological rhythms, especially daily or circadian rhythms, are involved in mutual contacts, the chances are that we are experiencing communicative entrainment. *Entrainment*, or attempting to become synchronized in interactions between people, is extremely important because it can often result in many communication difficulties or failures.

Our developmental processes and aging are connected to our genetic and biological clocks. The Law of Janet was described by Josef Holubar in his work *The Sense of Time: An Electrophysiological Study of Its Mechanisms in Man*. This law states that the length of a subjective duration of a sensation is inversely proportional to the length of life already lived. H. Hoagland, in his essay "Some Biochemical Considerations of Time," concurs in explaining that the slowing of oxygen consumption in the brain makes time appear to pass faster and faster as one ages, and in children rich in brain oxygen, time passes more slowly.

In short, time seems to crawl when we are young children and appears to rapidly fly when we get older. Time estimations are affected. The amount of oxygen to the cerebral cortex is very high in early developmental stages but decreases as we age and brain temperature drops. Our biological clocks slow down, and clock time seems to speed up as we increasingly age. Also, the acuity of all our sensory systems deteriorates.

Many pharmacological and psychotropic drugs and substances that are ingested in every sociocultural collective affect biological tempos and time estimates. Both illegal and medicinal drugs are often psychotropic stimulants or tranquilizers, and they affect our biological tempos. We also can be hyperaroused or hypoaroused naturally, being alert or not, being active or passive, being extroverted or introverted, and so forth, depending on our inherited biological time. Biological time periodicities help us to regularize and set the characteristics of our perceptual time, timing, and tempos.

Perceptual Time

Perceptual time concerns our processing of nonverbal cues or signals. *Signalic*, or perceptual, communication concerns how we induct the communication of others into our brains. This kind of communication is often called *semiotics*, or how we induct the nonverbal communication signals generated in our various natural, physical, technic, and social environments into our brains. This inducting-of-information process was proposed by Paul Fraisse long ago and concerns rhythmic induction. This requires us to see the world not as objects or spaces, as in objectivity, but as full of rhythmic waves and energy fields of tremendous complexity. We process light waves (seeing), sound waves (hearing), pressure waves (touching), molecular waves (smelling), biochemical waves (tasting), and other rhythmic inputs of stimuli. These waves are converted and channeled in sensory-specific ways into signalic impulses to our brains. The information is converted again when the signals are slowed and the information is spread in thermodynamic lakes of formation within, or information. These lakes of expanding and contracting energy fields are called *holoscapes* or *holograms* in *holonomic brain theory*.

Information that we have already stored in the main cortex of our brains, or old information, is called *déjà vu* (already seen) information. Our brains usually do not process much of this kind of information as it already represents our current, automatic, and familiar realities. When there is new information, it is called *jamais vu* information (never seen, new, novelty). The hippocampus of the human brain acts as a mapping function to screen out *déjà vu* formations and/or select *jamais vu*, incoming semiotics for processing. In a top-down fashion, we project our cortical holoscapes, or internal formations, on incoming stimuli, called bottom-up processes. Information processing is recursive and cyclic rather than a simple, in-or-out, linear process, as in older stimulus-response models of human communication. Information processing is an in-and-out-simultaneous process. We project these internal formations on what is received through the senses more and more as we age. This is due to the accumulation of more and more brain memories and the increasing development of the top-down brain axis, discussed later.

This projection on receptions is called *semiosis*, or perceptual time.

When we infer or intend meanings, we are dealing with a psychology of time, not a perceptual time. Meanings are not directly transmitted; only signals or nonverbal messages, perceptual times, timings, and tempos are transmitted. When the nonverbal or signalic world of messages is interpreted and made re-presentable, we are then concerned with meanings and psychological time.

Psychological Time

Psychological time concerns both objective and subjective temporalities, depending on what kinds or modes of consciousness are operative. The human brain not only concerns biological and chemical codes, semiotic or nonverbal communication; it also and basically concerns memories (what we call the past), attention and perception (the present), and anticipation/expectation (future), a time system. The human brain is a temporal organ that extends throughout our bodies and is projected by our senses onto our various environments. Our nowness expands and contacts; time must be variable in order for human brains to function as they do.

Karl Pribram, one of the world's leading brain experts and founder of holonomic brain theory, has posited three credible kinds of human consciousness. These three kinds of consciousness are related to how psychological time varies: objective consciousness, narrative consciousness, and transcendental consciousness.

Objective consciousness concerns linearities, serialities, sequences, unitizations, logistics, and ordinary or ordinal thinking. It is left-brained timing and sequentiality, connecting parietal lobe objective, reference memories with frontal lobe anticipations and expectations. This brain connection is called the *back-front brain axis*. Language is objectively ordered linearities and sequentialities. Consequentiality concerns objectively structured goal orientations as to where our objective sequences might lead us.

Narrative consciousness encompasses right-brained, quasi-linear processes: music, aesthetics, stories, poetics, metaphors, plotting, daydreaming, fantasies, and so forth. It concerns human emotions and feelings, as well as the practice of intuitive

kinds of empathy, or “feeling into another,” or interactions between the objective brain (left hemisphere) and the subjective brain (right hemisphere). This brain connection is called the *left-right axis*. Edward Hall’s distinction between monochronic and polychronic time differences seems to be related to this objective–narrative difference. Hall’s conclusion was that monochronic time concerns what is here called objective consciousness, and polychronic time concerns the functions of narrative consciousness. Hall was advocating a comparative chronemics to study sociocultural time differences and not merely talking about doing one “thing” at a time as opposed to multitasking.

Transcendental consciousness concerns nonlinear brain processes, including contemplation and meditational states, in which our everyday realities, our objective consciousness, is blocked. Any kind of linear or straight-lined sequential information disappears. We often have no recollection or remembrance of our transcendental journeys. However, many times, upon reentering our objective or everyday consciousness, we are puzzled as to where we have been. Sometimes we can experience insights, new ideas, and uplifting spirituality. Certain individuals and their social groups operate with different systems of psychological time, making for problems during sociocultural interactions.

Sociocultural Time

The manner in which a social group develops a temporal identity concerns how individuals are expected to act and behave in interactions with others. Some sociocultural groupings are focused on a past orientation, some are more present oriented, and some are future oriented. Supposedly, more developed groups are more involved in linear progression and future oriented. Most organizational and work groups of people are purposively bound to objective time, as progress and production are their main concerns. There are groups that are much more into narrative time than Western societies are. Much of the global population is anchored in a narrative time and not an objective temporality. Objective time, when introduced into many narrative-time groupings within nations, tends to significantly alter their cultural temporalities, changing the culture. It is important

for diffusion-of-innovation and intercultural-communication scholars to recognize their own objective-time biases. Some sociocultural groupings, too, are primarily concerned with the spiritual and nonlinear aspects of transcendental consciousness. The rhythms of particular natural environments and particular people-built environments and the communication rhythms in various social environments are all involved in sociocultural time.

The Advent of Chronemics

A number of scholars are responsible for the early development of time and communication studies before the word *chronemics* was coined. George H. Mead was a leading developer of the study of human acts and presentness. Harold Innis, a Canadian communication scholar, produced a work entitled *Changing Concepts of Time* in 1952. Also in 1952, Edward T. Hall, under the auspices of the U.S. State Department’s Foreign Service Institute, wrote an early work entitled *The Process of Change*. Hall was to write periodically about time and sociocultural relations over the next four decades. Marshall McLuhan, in several works, discussed time and human communication. Kenneth Burke, a rhetorical scholar, produced two early books, *A Grammar of Motives* in 1945 and *Permanence and Change* in 1965. Many other scholars in biology, anthropology, psychology, and sociology wrote about time and human relations.

The actual term *chronemics* was coined in 1972 by Fernando Poyatos, a Canadian linguist and semiotician. Poyatos, in dealing with the communication system of the speaker–actor, briefly discussed a chronemics that concerned conceptions and the handling of time as a biopsychological and cultural element of social interactions. Tom Bruneau developed the first article on time and nonverbal communication in 1974 and attempted to define a chronemics and outline its characteristics in 1977. Since these early works, a number of texts on nonverbal communication have increased commentary about chronemics.

Judee Burgoon, a researcher and theorist in nonverbal communication, outlined a new theory of communication concerning futurity, *Expectancy Violations Theory*, in 1978. In 1983, Edward T. Hall attempted to describe time as *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time*. Allen Merriam,

in 1983, launched one of the first *comparative chronemics* studies, comparing Iranian–American differences in international communication. His work stands as a model that can be used to compare cultural time perspectives. The psychological theory of *planned behavior* has been introduced in communication studies in the area of organizing persuasion tactics.

The works of Joseph McGrath and Janice Kelly were important to the social psychology of time and to a communicatively based temporality. The writings of Eviatar Zerubavel on hidden rhythms and patterns of time in organizational communication are important. The research of John Honeycutt did much to develop the idea of *imagined interactions* in intrapersonal communication, with some futurity perspectives. Another perspective on futurity is the idea of the *consequentiality of communication*. Of course, all communication has some kind of an anticipated, expected, or eventual result, however fleeting. In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in communication publications dealing with *strategic planning*. A model of *organizational time* has been developed in an article by Dawna Ballard, “The Experience of Time at Work.”

Chronemic studies need to include more interdisciplinary perspectives in their future developments.

Tom Bruneau

See also Cognitive Theories; Communibiology; Expectancy Violations Theory; Nonverbal Communication Theories

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CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship theory explains the cultural, social, political, economic, and legal processes that regulate national membership and belonging. Citizenship’s influence in communication theory has been growing for the past two decades because citizenship theory makes manifest the specific ways in which legal and material systems of society shape cultural processes of basic social participation and enfranchisement. Although the term has been used to address quite a diverse set of questions, the most significant strands of citizenship theory in communication studies treat citizenship as civic practices, as an identity, and as a space for the exercise of political rights.

Civic Practice

Contemporary notions of citizenship began in the 1950s with the work of T. H. Marshall, who understood citizenship as full membership in a community. Marshall proposed three types of citizenship,

including *civil citizenship*, which regulates basic liberal rights (e.g., property, liberty of movement, legal representation); *political citizenship*, which influences the individual's participation in the political system (e.g., voting, holding office); and *social citizenship*, which he understood as a person's right to economic and social security (e.g., unemployment insurance, public education). Since Marshall, these three types of citizenship have been used to scrutinize national political realities, including the unequal ways in which civic, political, and social rights are distributed among populations.

Although Marshall clarified the types of rights, responsibilities, and expectations attached to citizenship in modern nations, his emphasis on politics legitimized a most common use of citizenship as political work—as *civics*—here understood as the exercise of the political duties and obligations of individuals. This traditional use of citizenship implies that civics and activism can do the job of assuring substantive justice within and among communities, thus improving democratic structures.

The notion that democracy relies for its functioning on the ongoing civic work of citizens is rooted in particular versions of the political philosophy of *liberalism*. In these versions, liberalism is the path toward having a society that balances personal independence and justice. Often in such theorizing about liberalism, citizenship is understood as an ideal identity that individuals must embrace for the health of the nation and to which the political system should be responsive. Here, the citizen is a civic worker who produces the best conditions for democracy and liberalism.

In communication studies, this understanding of liberalism and citizenship informs work on performance and media activism, broadcasting policy, political communication, liberal feminism, and some versions of critical race theory. Though widely done, understanding citizenship only as civics has theoretical limitations. While perfectly suited for envisioning a more energized civil society and public sphere, this notion of citizenship is less suited for radical critiques of liberalism and democracy, thus limiting its critical uses.

Identity

Some radical critiques were already suggested in Marshall's work. Marshall defined citizenship as

membership, thus underscoring the need to challenge the way citizenship defines who can and who cannot be a member of the nation. At this level, citizenship is an identity that has legal roots. Simply, our original definitions of national citizenship allowed some and precluded others from having access to this legal identity and thus to the portfolio of civic, political, and social rights that Marshall references. Women, children, prisoners, and racial, ethnic, and national minorities, people without property, could not have access to full citizenship. Since, activism and wars have expanded legal definitions of citizenship, but even today full citizenship is not legally accessible to some. Felons, children, homosexuals, women, disabled people, and immigrants have legally downgraded forms of citizenship.

Although legal definitions of citizenship are at the roots of citizenship understood as an identity, cultural notions of citizenship have some life of their own. This has been the lesson of radical feminism, postcolonial theory, poststructuralism, and critical race theory. Culture does the job of furthering the legal logic by which some people are better suited to embody citizenship than others, and thus culture sets the conditions for belonging. Wealthy, White, heterosexual, able adult males have been traditional icons of citizenship, and although this tradition is changing, these characteristics still play an undue role in limiting the social and political participation of anyone not embodying them.

For instance, cultural forms shaping the public sphere, such as print journalism, political blogging, television news, and political talk shows, are still dominated by the voices of White, heterosexual, able adult males whose perspectives tend to reconstitute political discourses that, within the liberal tradition, naturalize their own existence as the voices of politics. Meanwhile, women, racial minorities, homosexuals, disabled people, and immigrants are relegated to marginal areas of the public sphere (e.g., ethnic and soft news) or relatively trivial cultural forms such as entertainment news, "chick flicks," and "gangsta rap." Not surprisingly, these communities' sense of national belonging can be conflicted.

Political Rights

Narrow cultural and legal definitions of citizenship have had an effect on formal political and economic

structures and have given way to the formal marginalization of minority cultural forms. Theorists argue that this marginalization significantly limits the cultural freedom of nonpowerful communities and call for understanding culture as a substantive category of citizenship rights. Often referred to as *cultural citizenship*, this perspective on rights argues that racial, ethnic, sexual, and other minorities are incapable of experiencing basic liberal freedoms if they do not have cultural spaces for expression. Thus, cultural citizenship calls for the creation and maintenance of a broad range of everyday activities such as festivals, ethnic media, theatre, and language preservation that together can function to energize minority expression. In addition, cultural citizenship scholars argue that these cultural spaces eventually can be used to claim civic, political, and social rights and thus improve the workings of democracy.

Hector Amaya

See also Critical Race Theory; Critical Theory; Deliberative Democratic Theories; Feminist Communication Theories; Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Theories; Identity Theories; Ordinary Democracy; Political Communication Theories; Postcolonial Theory; Poststructuralism; Whiteness Theory

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CLASSICAL RHETORICAL THEORY

Aristotle defined rhetoric as finding all the available means of persuasion. Rhetoric was divided into five parts: *invention*, *arrangement*, *style*, *memory*, and *delivery*. Classical rhetoric can be defined as the period of rhetorical developments from Corax (470–? BCE), author of the first work on rhetoric, *The Art of Rhetoric*, or Socrates (469–399 BCE) to Augustine (354–430). Thomas Benson and Michael Prosser define the period of classical rhetoric generally from Socrates to Augustine; Joseph Miller, Michael Prosser, and Thomas Benson argue that the medieval period began approximately with Augustine and extended to about 1400 and the rediscoveries of classical works.

Plato submitted rhetoric to its first philosophical dissection in his Socratic dialogues. The major Greek classical rhetorical treatise was Aristotle's *The Rhetoric*, followed in Rome by Cicero, Quintilian, and Augustine. Five major classical rhetoricians include Plato (429– or 428–347 BCE or 420–348 BCE), Aristotle (384–322 BCE), Cicero (106–43 BCE), Quintilian (35–95 CE or 40–118 CE), and Augustine.

Plato

Plato, the most significant Western philosopher, articulated Western moral leadership of the universe and developed metaphysical and scientific thinking. In *The Republic*, he proposed the true lover of knowledge as naturally striving for truth and not content with common opinion but understanding the essential nature of things. His protagonist Socrates dialogically searched for truth, justice, high ethics, and goodness. Plato considered the *absolute idea of the good* as the highest form of perfect and invisible *ideas* or *forms* that are developed by inner meditation, in contrast with concrete objects, which he rejected as constituting real knowledge.

For Plato, the ideal republic included a philosopher-king to support virtue, justice, and wisdom; soldiers to protect and control the citizens in acquiring the society's honor; and the civilian members of the society to provide the material needs of the society. He believed that people would

act in accordance with virtue if they knew what formed the basis of virtue. Plato excluded poets in his ideal republic since they dealt with illusion rather than reality.

Gorgias

One of Plato's early dialogues, the *Gorgias*, deals with truth, goodness, justice, and ethics but also contrasts monological rhetoric, which he considered like cooking or flattery, and interactive *dialectic*, or discussion, which leads intelligent individuals to reach the truth, perhaps by a kind of authoritarian consensus. Socrates implies that he knows what he doesn't know, while those who think that they are wise often know nothing. The old illustrious teacher of rhetoric, Gorgias, and his followers discuss with Socrates the meaning of a rhetorician and rhetoric. It appears that Socrates leads Gorgias into dialectical traps as Socrates believes that the unknowing rhetorician or orator can persuade crowds or mobs better than the experts in health, medicine, and legislation.

Socrates asks Gorgias what he considers his art to be. Gorgias answers that it is rhetoric. Essentially, Socrates and Gorgias discuss reality as found in philosophical dialectic versus the semblance or pretense of reality as found in rhetorical culture and thus generally untruthful discourse. In ending the dialogue, Socrates makes a geometrical equation that as self-adornment is to gymnastic, so is sophistry to legislation, and as cookery is to medicine, so is rhetoric to justice.

Phaedrus

Plato's later dialogue about rhetoric and love has Socrates and Phaedrus discussing a speech by the famous Greek orator Lysias about love. Socrates praises the speech for its eloquence but critiques its lack of adequate definitions. He offers and then disclaims his own speech but finally gives still another, better speech praising the madness of love. Socrates proposes that if a speech is good, the speaker knows the truth about the matters he speaks about. Socrates indicates that speeches must contrast justice and injustice, good and evil, and reality and the semblance of reality.

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato introduces a noble rhetoric, based on truth, justice, virtue, and goodness.

Socrates discusses both oral and written rhetoric, saying that as speech must lead souls by persuasion, a rhetorician must know the various forms of soul. The speaker or writer must also know the different classes of speech and also proper and improper words. Additionally, like Aristotle later, Socrates proposes that one should speak or write about things that are probable, based on first principles of goodness, justice, truth, virtue, and wisdom.

Plato calls on poets, persuasive orators or writers, and legislators to consider the importance of real knowledge, which leads to truth, supporting it by dialectic. Then, by that serious pursuit he might well be called a philosopher, or a lover of wisdom. Plato ends the dialogue by wishing that his own soul might be beautiful and that all his external possessions would be in harmony with his inner soul.

Aristotle

Aristotle was the Western world's first great encyclopedist, writing many treatises including ones on metaphysics, politics, analytics, logic, physics or natural philosophy, rhetoric, poetry or dramatic arts, music, mathematics, geometry, biology or zoology, and psychology. He called himself a *midwife of ideas*.

Unlike Plato, who saw the soul as a separate nonphysical entity imprisoned in the body, Aristotle viewed the soul as relative and integral to the body. He described psychology as the study of the soul. Through the soul, Aristotle believed that humans develop the moral and intellectual aspects of humanity; thus the orator has the responsibility to lead audiences not only to truth, justice, and goodness but also toward happiness and human perfection.

Aristotle separated the study of logic into *dialectic*, as reasoned and intelligent discussion, and *analytic discourse*, which tests opinions for logical consistency, proceeding through deduction to individual cases. This logic established a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. Logic also includes the process of induction, or individual cases to general principles. Aristotle did not see politics as an abstract idea, as Plato did, but as principles moving toward actual cases with the goal of leading humans toward truth, justice, goodness, and happiness.

Nichomachean Ethics

This treatise by Aristotle dealt with ethics, truth, justice, goodness, and happiness, emphasizing the link between happiness and honor. He identified the causes of human happiness as having a good family, spouse, children, friends, community, education, health, and sufficient wealth for one's station in life, patriotism, and possibly dying gloriously on the battlefield for one's country. In this context, Aristotle argued that life has to be seen in completeness. His concept of happiness was essential in his development of metaphysics, psychology, politics, rhetoric, and poetry, in which he expanded Plato's views on ethics and happiness as being the proper topics of those lines of inquiry and thought.

The Rhetoric

In this treatise with three books, Aristotle defined rhetoric as finding all the available means of persuasion and as the counterpart of dialectics and politics. The first two books emphasized the classes of speeches, role of invention, classes of evidence, and the best ways to persuade the souls of one's audience. The short third book, probably added at a later time, emphasized the three remaining aspects of persuasion: style, memory, and delivery. *The Rhetoric* opened up the compositional, theoretical, analytic, and critical aspects of persuasion throughout Western history, but it was so influential that it has also led many later authors into viewing rhetoric as a mechanical system. Aristotle himself avoided the dilemma that later developed by creating an open and systematic approach to persuasion.

Beginning his treatise, he contrasted rhetoric as the counterpart of dialectic, both of which he claimed belonged to no definite science as all individuals engage in examining and submitting ideas to inquiry. Rhetoric is useful, Aristotle claimed, because truth and justice are naturally stronger than their opposites, and truth and justice will emerge in the process of offering proofs and telling one's story in political terms.

Aristotle defined three classes of speeches: future-oriented *deliberative* speeches, which argue what individuals should or should not do; present-oriented *epideictic* or ceremonial speeches, praising or condemning individuals and their actions; and past-oriented *judicial* or forensic rhetoric,

which persuades judges to decide whether an individual has or has not committed a crime and, if so, what the punishment should be. Aristotle believed that orators should be able to reason on both sides of a question in order to know the whole state of the case, not to promote evil, but to know the difference between good and evil. Unlike Plato, however, who believed that rhetoric itself must lead to moral conclusions, Aristotle argued that rhetoric is neither moral nor immoral, but amoral, as it is the orator who is responsible for leading audiences toward truth, justice, goodness, and happiness.

For Aristotle, persuasive speech must deal with probabilities as orators try to persuade their audiences by what is probable rather than what is absolute, or at least they must argue the difference between the possible and impossible. He said that artistic rhetoric must be concerned with proofs, which are a kind of demonstration, either through *enthymemes*—the most authoritative of proofs—in which the truth of one premise is well known and therefore is omitted, or by *sylogisms*, with the major and minor premises stated, followed by a conclusion. Aristotle's major rhetorical contribution was the notion that there are three kinds of artistic proofs: *ethos*, or ethical proof, which depends on the credibility of the speaker, knowledge of the subject, and good will for the audience; *logos*, or logical proof, which depends on enthymemes and syllogisms; and *pathos*, or emotional proof, depending on appeals to the audience's emotions, such as friendship, joy, anger, or sorrow.

In the second book, about the invention and arrangement of the speech, Aristotle wrote about how these proofs can be organized to persuade one's audience. Specifically addressing the Greek men of his day, he proposed that young men are most likely to accept and be persuaded by emotional proofs, middle-aged men are likely persuaded by a mix of logical and emotional proofs, and old men are persuaded by reasoned logic. Aristotle proposed that all speeches have at least two parts, the thesis and the proof. He also used the analogy of a human body to make this point: the head, the body, and the feet, or an introduction, proof, and conclusion, comprise the parts of a speech.

In the third book of *The Rhetoric*, Aristotle briefly emphasized rhetoric's central role in language, especially in terms of the metaphor, which

he had earlier discussed in *The Poetics*, plus simplicity and clarity. He described all words as having denotative and connotative meanings as they may give the audience new knowledge. Aristotle called the metaphor and the simile figures of speech that enrich the orator's artistic proofs by bridging the unknown and the known, but he urged that they should always be used in moderation. Finally, he briefly commented on the quality of the orator's memory in recalling universal and specific commonplaces or topics to use in one's oratory, as well as the need for a proper delivery. These two concepts were much more fully developed in the Roman *Rhetorica CE Herrenium*, written about 85 BCE.

Marcus Tullius Cicero

Cicero was one of Rome's greatest statesmen, elected Consul in 64 BCE, as well as one of the greatest Roman jurists, orators, and rhetoricians. Among his best-known speeches are his Catiline orations, delivered in the Senate in 63 BCE against Lucius Catiline. Cicero claimed Catiline had conspired to overthrow the Roman republic. After Caesar's assassination in 44 BCE, Cicero delivered his 14 Philippic orations against Mark Antony, who then had Cicero assassinated in 43 BCE. Both Cicero's orations against Catiline and his Philippian orations are considered models of nearly perfect classical rhetoric.

Cicero had studied in Greece and was heavily influenced by Isocrates (436–338 BCE), the author of *Antidosis* and *Against the Sophists*, one of the most important Attic orators, and the founder of a rhetorical school in Athens who recommended the importance of rhetoric for the development of citizenship. Aristotle, whose discussion of logical and emotional proofs served as the foundation for invention and arrangement of speeches, was also an important rhetorical influence on Cicero. His own rhetorical influence extended to Quintilian (35–95 or 40–118 CE); Jerome, the translator of the Bible into Latin (347–419 or 420); Augustine (354–430); and Petrarch (1304–1374), who rediscovered many of Cicero's lost works, thus establishing the significance of Cicero's contributions for the Renaissance.

Cicero's rhetorical writings included his history of Roman oratory, *Brutus* (45 BCE); *Orator*

(45 BCE), in which he identified the Greek Demosthenes (384 or 383–322 BCE) as the ideal orator, and by implication himself, arguing that the moral orator provided the best source for the advancement of civilization and government; and *On Oratory* (55 BCE), written after finishing his political and military career.

On Oratory

This treatise, replacing his youthful treatise *On Invention*, was written in three books, in what is called a Ciceronian or Aristotelian dialogue style, in contrast to Plato's more interactive Socratic dialogues. In *On Oratory*, Cicero uses an imaginary conversation among friends in 91 BCE to discuss the value of rhetoric; Lucius Licinius Crassus (115–53? BCE), one of the main participants in the dialogue, represented Cicero's own views.

Crassus argued that the power of oratory on assemblies could direct their inclinations wherever the speaker wishes or divert them from whatever the speaker wishes. Furthermore, he suggested that in every free nation, and most of all in communities that have attained the enjoyment of peace and tranquility, rhetoric is always the most superior art as the best source of civilization. After being challenged about this positive argument, Crassus responded that while he was aware of the foolish arguments by Gorgias for the value of the orator's style over knowledge, still the orator must be fully aware of the substance of the matter under discussion, as Socrates had proposed. Essentially, *On Oratory* discussed ethical and emotional proof more in the philosophical views of true rhetoric introduced by Plato's *Phaedrus* and in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* than in Plato's *Gorgias*.

Orator

Cicero's last rhetorical work, in the form of a letter to Marcus Junius Brutus, delineated his view of the ideal orator and argued that true eloquence requires excellence in both thinking and expression, dividing style into appropriate language and delivery. The great orator must master three rhetorical styles—the plain for simple topics, the middle for more profound topics, and the grand style for very important occasions, as was seen in the orations of Greece's perceived best orator,

Demosthenes. For Cicero, the ideal orator can speak in the courts or deliberative assemblies so as to prove, please, or persuade. Cicero called the orator of the grand style magnificent and undoubtedly possessing the greatest power in civilization.

Quintilian

A Spanish Roman, Quintilian was the first teacher of rhetoric in Rome to receive a state salary. His description of the true orator was the good man speaking well.

Quintilian wrote the 12 books of his *Institutes of Oratory* in about 95 CE when his patron, the emperor Domitian, was daily condemning many Roman citizens to death for the slightest expression of disrespect toward himself; he banished all philosophers from Rome for fear that they would turn people against him. Domitian entrusted the rhetorical training of his two young nephews to Quintilian, and Quintilian wrote the *Institutes* for them as a treatise recommending the moral education of young boys as future citizens and leaders. Quintilian emphasized that the orator must above all study morality. Both Jerome and Augustine utilized the values promoted in *The Institutes*.

After being lost, *The Institutes* were rediscovered in 1470 and had a major influence in the Renaissance. Quintilian proclaimed rhetoric as entirely practical and useful, and while admitting that it could be misused, argued that it should be considered a good rather than evil contribution, both to the individual communicator in developing ethical standards and to civilization itself.

Augustine

Augustine is typically considered the figure who bridges the classical and medieval periods. A teacher of rhetoric before converting to Christianity, Augustine in a sense essentially begins rhetoric anew. The contrast between *Verbum* as the word of God and *verbum* as the word of man was debated from the beginning of the Christian church. Jerome, a classical scholar and Christian best known for his translation of the Bible into Latin, frequently argued with Augustine about whether Christians could honorably utilize the ancient pagan rhetorical works. Jerome claimed his Ciceronian training was his great weakness in his moral

development, and he gave up his study of classical rhetoric for Christianity. Augustine, however, in the fourth chapter of his treatise, *On Christian Doctrine*, argued that if pagan rhetoric could be used to honor God, then one could still utilize it. *On Christian Doctrine* not only ignores style over substance, it returned to Plato's idea of moving individuals to truth by preaching the word of God. Augustine agreed with Aristotle that rhetoric itself is neither moral nor immoral but that the speaker is responsible for developing wisdom and truth. Nonetheless, wisdom without eloquence is of small benefit to states, but eloquence without wisdom is often extremely injurious and profits no one.

Summary

Classical rhetoric is important as the foundation for the modern field of communication, and the elements of rhetorical training offered by classical rhetoricians continue to be the basis of rhetorical training today. At the same time, there continues to be considerable debate about the nature of rhetoric, its properties, functions, and ends, just as was the case in classical times.

Michael H. Prosser

See also Argumentation Theories; Community; Epistemology; Ethics Theories; Legal Communication Theories; Metaphor; Narrative and Narratology; Ontology; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Philosophy of Communication; Rhetorical Theory; Traditions of Communication Theory

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CO-CULTURAL THEORY

Co-cultural theory is a framework designed to provide insight into the communication behaviors of individuals with little societal power. Generated primarily from the research of Mark Orbe, co-cultural theory focuses on how culture and power affect communication. The theory focuses on various segments of society that have traditionally been described as being a part of subcultural or minority groups. This theory prefers the term *co-cultural group*. Initially, the theory focused on people of color; women; persons with disabilities; gay, lesbian, or bisexual persons; and those from a lower socioeconomic status. More recently, researchers have used the theory to study other groups, including the homeless, first-generation college students, immigrants, and international students.

The core concepts of co-cultural theory emerged from a series of qualitative studies designed to study communication processes from the perspective of those historically marginalized in social structures. These foundational studies drew on the ideas of muted group and standpoint theories and used a phenomenological methodology to gather descriptions of everyday communication inductively. In particular, the theory is based on a specific set of assumptions and related factors that help individuals understand how co-cultural group members use different practices (strategies) that are part of a larger communication orientation.

Co-cultural theory is based on five assumptions, each of which reflects a foundational idea found in *muted group* or *standpoint theory*. The first assumption states that a hierarchy of power exists in each society whereby certain groups of people have greater access to power than others do. In the United States, dominant group members include men, European Americans, able-bodied persons, heterosexuals, and those in the middle or upper

class. The second assumption is based on the idea that dominant group members occupy most positions of power throughout society; these positions of influence are used to create and maintain societal structures that inherently benefit their interests. The third assumption of co-cultural theory explores how the reality of dominant group power impacts members of nondominant groups. In particular, it states that dominant group members' societal structures work overtly and covertly against individuals whose cultural realities are different from the cultural realities of those in power. The fourth assumption acknowledges the differences that exist within and between different co-cultural groups; however, it simultaneously recognizes the similarities that also exist within and across groups that occupy similar social positions. The fifth, and final, assumption states that co-cultural group members will be more aware of the importance of strategically adopting communication behaviors that help them negotiate dominant societal structures. Such behaviors will vary within, and across, different co-cultural groups.

According to the theory, co-cultural group members will communicate strategically in a way that reflects a particular *communication orientation*, and not all members of one co-cultural group will have the same communication orientation. How one communicates as a member of a co-cultural group is influenced by six factors: *field of experience*, *situational context*, *abilities* to enact different practices, *perceived costs and rewards*, *preferred outcome* (assimilation, accommodation, or separation), and *communication approach* (nonassertive, assertive, or aggressive). Different co-cultural group members will communicate in strategic ways based on how they negotiate these six factors. For instance, members of a small group of African American women may communicate in different or similar ways, depending on their upbringing, life goals, personalities, or other aspects of their identities. These similarities and differences, according to the theory, may also change depending on situational context. This idea is counter to existing research, which attempts to generalize the communication behaviors of nondominant groups.

Early research by Orbe and colleagues identified 26 different co-cultural practices and determined that different practices were associated with

various communication orientations. Co-cultural group members, for example, will use an *assertive assimilation orientation* if they seek to fit in with dominant group members through behaviors that assert their own rights without violating the rights of others. This orientation would involve the co-cultural practices of *extensive preparation* (engaging in extensive amounts of groundwork before interactions with others), *overcompensating* (working extra hard in order to be accepted), *manipulating stereotypes* (exploiting existing stereotypical views for personal and professional gain), and *bargaining* (creating overt or covert agreements to ignore co-cultural differences).

In comparison, an *assertive separation orientation* would be enacted for co-cultural group members seeking to work independent of dominant group members. This orientation involves *communicating self* (interacting with others openly, authentically, and genuinely), *intragroup networking* (working with other co-cultural group members), *exemplifying strength* (promoting the positive attributes of one's co-cultural group), and *embracing stereotypes* (redefining traditional negative stereotypes and incorporating them into a positive self-concept).

In addition to these two orientations, the theory conceptualizes seven others—*nonassertive assimilation*, *aggressive assimilation*, *nonassertive accommodation*, *assertive accommodation*, *aggressive accommodation*, *nonassertive separation*, and *aggressive separation*—each of which has several co-cultural practices associated with it. While early research defined this framework, subsequent research has continued to fine-tune these co-cultural orientations by adding, revising, and debating how different practices are used for different purposes in different situational contexts.

Co-cultural theory has been heralded for its effectiveness in creating a theoretical lens to understand the communication behaviors of underrepresented group members from their own respective perspectives. In addition, it is valued for the ways in which it resists cultural generalizations by highlighting the diverse forms of co-cultural communication. Simultaneously, the theory reveals the commonalities inherent in how individuals attempt to negotiate discriminatory societal structures, regardless of the source of their oppression. Critics

of co-cultural theory have questioned the logic of this approach and pointed to the dangers of equating sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, and other forms of social oppressions. Others have argued that the process of co-cultural communication is not specific to particular groups; instead it is something that all individuals experience as they occupy less powerful positions throughout their lives. Despite some of the limitations associated with this theory, co-cultural theory holds great promise for promoting an increased understanding of the inextricable relationship of culture, power, and communication.

Mark P. Orbe

See also Culture and Communication; Feminist Communication Theories; Feminist Standpoint Theory; Intercultural Communication Theories; Muted Group Theory; Phenomenology

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COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

Cognitive dissonance theory is concerned with how perception and cognition influence and are influenced by motivation and emotion. Hundreds of experiments have tested dissonance processes. For the most part, these experiments have explored

the ways that the experience of cognitive dissonance causes attitude and behavior changes.

Leon Festinger formulated the original theory of cognitive dissonance in the mid-1950s. Festinger theorized that when an individual holds two or more elements of knowledge that are relevant to each other but inconsistent with one another, a state of discomfort is created. He called this unpleasant state *dissonance*. Festinger theorized that the degree of dissonance in relation to a cognition = $D/(D + C)$, where D is the sum of cognitions dissonant with a particular cognition and C is the sum of cognitions consonant with that same particular cognition, with each cognition weighted for importance.

Festinger theorized that persons are motivated by the unpleasant state of dissonance to engage in cognitive work so as to reduce the inconsistency. To reduce the dissonance, individuals could add consonant cognitions, subtract dissonant cognitions, increase the importance of consonant cognitions, or decrease the importance of dissonant cognitions. One of the ways of reducing dissonance assessed most often is change in attitudes. Attitude change in response to a state of dissonance is expected to be in the direction of the cognition that is most resistant to change. Tests of the theory often assume that one's most recent behavior is usually most resistant to change, because it is often very difficult to undo that behavior.

After a decision, all the cognitions that favor the chosen alternative are consonant with the decision, while all the cognitions that favor the rejected alternative are dissonant. The greater the number and importance of dissonant cognitions and the lesser the number and importance of consonant cognitions, the greater the degree of dissonance experienced by the individual. In a decision situation, dissonance is typically greater the closer the alternatives are in attractiveness (as long as each alternative has several distinguishing characteristics). Dissonance caused by a decision can be reduced by viewing the chosen alternative as more attractive and/or viewing the rejected alternative as less attractive.

Dissonance is typically aroused when a person acts in a way that is contrary to his or her attitudes, especially when no one provides encouragement or incentive for doing so. Individuals may reduce this dissonance by changing their attitudes to be more consistent with their actions. Dissonance

can also be aroused by exposure to information that is inconsistent with beliefs or attitudes.

Some theorists hypothesized that the effects were due to nonmotivational, cognitive processes or impression-management concerns. However, subsequent research confirmed that dissonance is a motivated process. Beginning in the late 1960s, researchers began to propose motivational explanations for dissonance effects that differed from Festinger's theory. Four revisions have been proposed.

Elliot Aronson proposed that dissonance is not due merely to an inconsistency between cognitions. Instead, he posited that dissonance occurs when a person acts in a way that violates his or her self-concept, that is, when a person performs a behavior inconsistent with his or her sense of self. Since most persons have a positive self-concept, dissonance is most often experienced when a person behaves negatively, behaving in an incompetent, irrational, or immoral manner. One of the primary predictions derived from this revision is that individuals with low self-esteem and individuals with high self-esteem should respond with less and more dissonance reduction (e.g., attitude change), respectively, because in dissonance experiments, individuals with high self-esteem are induced to act in ways that are more discrepant from their positive self-views. Experiments testing this prediction have produced mixed results.

Claude Steele's self-affirmation theory proposed that persons possess a motive to maintain an overall self-image of moral and adaptive adequacy. Accordingly, dissonance-induced attitude change occurs because dissonance threatens this positive self-image. While Festinger's dissonance theory posited that individuals are motivated to reconcile inconsistent cognitions, Steele proposed that individuals are merely motivated to affirm the integrity of the self. In support of this idea, Steele presented experiments in which, following a dissonance induction, participants either were or were not presented with an opportunity to affirm an important value. When participants were allowed to affirm an important value, dissonance-related attitude change did not occur. Other experiments have suggested that making important but non-self-affirming values salient reduces

dissonance by reducing the individual's perception of the importance of the dissonant act, consistent with Festinger's theory.

Joel Cooper and Russell Fazio proposed the idea that the discomfort experienced in dissonance experiments was due, not to an inconsistency between the individual's cognitions, but rather to feeling personally responsible for producing an aversive consequence. In support of this idea, experiments revealed that dissonance-related attitude change occurred only in conditions in which an aversive consequence was produced. More recently, experiments have found dissonance-related arousal and attitude change in induced compliance conditions where individuals do not produce aversive consequences.

Several experiments since 1995 have supported the original conception of dissonance theory. But why does dissonance evoke this state? Eddie Harmon-Jones proposed an action-based model of cognitive dissonance in an attempt to answer this question. The action-based model proposes that the perceptions and cognitions likely to arouse dissonance are those that are associated with action tendencies. The action-based model further proposes that dissonance between cognitions evokes an aversive state because it has the potential to interfere with effective and unconflicted action. Dissonance reduction, by bringing cognitions into consonance, serves the function of facilitating the execution of effective and unconflicted action. Experiments have revealed that experimentally increasing the degree of action orientation experienced following difficult decisions increases the degree of dissonance reduction.

Eddie Harmon-Jones

See also Attitude Theory; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Power, Interpersonal

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COGNITIVE RULES MODEL

See Cognitive Theories

COGNITIVE THEORIES

The term *cognition* simply refers to mental activities. Thus, in everyday conversation, when people make reference to *paying attention, planning, forgetting, guessing, daydreaming*, and so on, they are invoking cognitive concepts. The domain of mental activities is obviously very broad, encompassing everything that transpires from the initial perception of a stimulus (e.g., the sight and scent of roses and letter shapes on a card) to evocation of thoughts and emotions, and even production of overt responses (e.g., verbal and nonverbal expressions of joy and appreciation). Cognitive theories provide an important window on communication processes because both message production and message comprehension ultimately transpire in the mind.

The objective of cognitive theories is to describe the mental system(s) that give rise to the various phenomena of interest. In other words, explanation (and prediction and control) comes from specifying the nature of the mental structures and processes responsible for producing a particular phenomenon (in much the same way that one might explain the movement of an automobile by describing the action of the pistons, drive shaft, and so on). At the most fundamental level, cognitive theories focus on explicating foundational mental processes such as the nature of attention, perception, comprehension, memory, and response production. As an approach to illuminating the sorts of issues of interest to communication scholars, cognitive theories have been developed to address phenomena as diverse as communication skill acquisition, social anxiety, memory for messages in the mass media, romantic relationship development, and group decision making.

Historical Background

Cognitive science is a broad, interdisciplinary enterprise that draws from numerous intellectual

traditions, among them philosophy, sociology, psychology, linguistics, artificial intelligence, and communication. The systematic, empirical investigation of mental processes dates to the late 19th century, with the work of Wilhelm Wundt and others, but some authors have suggested that the actual inception of *cognitivism* as we know it today did not occur until the mid-1950s. Prior to that time, *experimental psychology* had been dominated by various versions of *behaviorism* that gave little heed to unobservable mental processes. Nevertheless, other fields of study, including *social psychology* and *developmental psychology*, had made ready use of mentalistic concepts at least since the 1920s and 1930s. In that same period, early researchers in speech departments began to focus on topics such as attitude change and the processing of persuasive messages.

By 1970, incorporation of the assumptions, models, and methods of cognitivism into social psychology had led to the development of *social cognition*—an area of study focused on how people acquire, store, and use socially relevant information, especially information about themselves and others. These topics, quite naturally, were of interest to communication scholars, and during the decade of the 1970s, cognitive models of various symbolic and social processes began to appear in the field of communication. By the time Michael Roloff and Charles Berger's edited book, *Social Cognition and Communication*, was published in 1982, the cognitive perspective was firmly ensconced as a way of theorizing about communication processes. The impact of cognitivism in advancing understanding of communication phenomena extends to the present, as evidenced by the work reported in David Roskos-Ewoldsen and Jennifer Monahan's recent volume, *Communication and Social Cognition*.

Types of Cognitive Theories

Cognitivism is a general perspective that encompasses a number of only partially overlapping modes of theorizing. Although it is not exhaustive, one approach to distinguishing types of cognitive models identifies three basic theoretical stances. The first of these seeks to explain behavior by recourse to *brain structures and processes*. A particularly important development driving advances

in theories of this sort is the growing use of neuroimaging techniques, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging, which allows researchers to identify areas of the brain involved in communication activities such as processing spoken language or viewing mass media content. In contrast, at the other end of the continuum of cognitive approaches are theories that invoke the terms of *folk psychology* as explanatory constructs. By *folk psychology* is meant the mentalistic terms employed in everyday parlance. Examples of such terms abound, but they include conceptions of *goals*, *plans*, *attitudes*, *self-concept*, and so on. The standard model of theorizing in the tradition of folk psychology is to explain behavior by recourse to one's goals and the information (or beliefs) at one's disposal.

Occupying something of a middle ground between theories cast in neuroanatomical terms and those cast at the level of lay psychology are theories expressed in functional terms. Theories of this sort seek to explain the phenomena of interest by specifying the *functional architecture* (as opposed to the physical architecture) responsible for observed regularities. Thus, functional theories are cast at the level of *mind* rather than *brain*. Theorists working at this level assume that the activities of the mind are instantiated in some way in the brain, but they are not terribly concerned with the precise nature of that link. It is this approach to theorizing that, to date, has been most common among communication scholars pursuing development of cognitive theories. Examples of functional-level theoretical constructs include conceptions of *schemas*, *scripts*, *associative networks*, *procedural records*, and *processing capacity*.

Distinguishing theories whose terms are essentially physical, functional, or of folk psychology is useful for identifying what sort of theoretical "animal" one is dealing with (and what sorts of data are relevant to informing and testing those theories). At the same time, such a simple three-category scheme is limited by the fact that, in practice, theories may blur the line between approaches. It is very common, for example, for hybrid theories to attempt to explicate commonsense terms in functional ways (thus, theories have been developed to specify the nature of the memory structures that represent self-concept, attitudes, etc.). On the other side of the continuum's midpoint, theories developed within the discipline of *cognitive neuroscience*

attempt to illuminate the link between brain and mind (i.e., the ways that the physical systems of the brain produce the functional systems of the mind).

Information Processing Systems

One of the key conceptual underpinnings of cognitive science is the notion that the mind is comprised of a series of subsystems, each responsible for carrying out certain operations along the path from stimulus to response. A rudimentary scheme for organizing discussion of these subsystems distinguishes three major processing stages: input processing, memory, and response generation. Although useful as an expository device, such a general scheme comes with the caveat that these processing subsystems overlap, and in fact, each contributes to the functioning of the others.

The input-processing system entails the mechanisms responsible for attention, perception, and comprehension. It is this system that allows us to recognize letters and words on a printed page, to identify facial expressions of emotion, to hear auditory stimuli as music, to follow the plot of a movie, and so on. The response-generation system is responsible for the production of both covert (i.e., mental) and overt (behavioral) outputs. The activities of this system, then, include processes such as goal setting, response planning, behavioral monitoring, and motor control.

The memory system is the repository of information acquired via the activities of the input-processing and response-generation systems. As such, the memory system holds both declarative information (i.e., factual knowledge) and procedural information (i.e., the knowledge that underlies the ability to perform skilled activities such as driving a car or pronouncing the phonemes of one's native language). Cognitive theories typically distinguish between long-term and short-term (or working) memory systems. Long-term memory is an essentially unlimited-capacity system that, as the label suggests, retains information for extended periods of time (i.e., years, or even decades). In contrast, the working-memory system holds a small amount of information, often assumed to be that of which a person is consciously aware, and this only for brief periods of time (i.e., on the order of seconds).

Cognitive Theories Bearing on Communication Processes

Specific examples can help illustrate the nature and range of application of cognitive theories that bear directly on communication processes. Certain cognitive theories (e.g., action assembly theory, heuristic-systematic model) are addressed elsewhere in this encyclopedia and need not be covered here, but other examples are useful for illustrating the diversity of cognitive theories addressing communication phenomena.

Limited-Capacity Model

The idea that humans possess a finite pool of processing resources that can be flexibly allocated to carry out various information-processing tasks, and the corollary notion that some activities make greater demands on processing resources than others, dates to the pioneering work of Daniel Kahneman. Building on these ideas, the limited-capacity model, developed by Annie Lang and her associates, is concerned with processing of messages in the mass media. A general integrative framework, the model incorporates conceptions of limited processing resources, controlled and automatic processing, and appetitive and aversive motivational systems to address how people attend to, store, and retrieve media content. Noteworthy, too, in this approach is the use of physiological operationalizations to tap underlying processing mechanisms.

Construction-Integration Model

A fundamental principle to emerge from the study of perception is that it involves the interplay of bottom-up (or sensory-driven) and top-down (or conceptually driven) processes. This idea is at the heart of Teun van Dijk and Walter Kintsch's model of discourse comprehension. This model addresses the ways that people are able to assign meaning to individual words and clauses (or propositions), to link successive clauses, and to arrive at an understanding of the overall gist of a message. Van Dijk and Kintsch hold that comprehension involves the interaction of perceptual systems, long-term memory of personal experiences and general knowledge (e.g., word meanings), and a dynamic cognitive representation of the message

that is being processed. With regard to this final component, a key aspect of the model is the distinction between the representation of the message itself, the *textbase*, and the *situation model*—a representation of what the text is about (e.g., the actors, actions, events). The authors note that memory for the textbase is typically much more limited than memory of the situation model.

Dynamic Memory Theory

In their early work on people's ability to understand and remember narratives, Roger Schank and Robert Abelson gave emphasis to the role of *scripts*—long-term memory structures representing familiar sequences of events (e.g., visiting a restaurant). In light of subsequent empirical research, Schank revised some of his earlier notions in developing *dynamic memory theory*, a description of the memory structures involved in processing current events by relating them to previous similar experiences. In this later formulation, less emphasis is given to the role of structures representing fixed sequences of specific types of events, and more attention is devoted to *memory organization packets* (MOPs)—more general memory structures that apply to whole classes of situated activities (e.g., conducting purchasing transactions). MOPs, then, organize sequences of more specific scenes (e.g., selecting grocery items from store shelves, going through the checkout line). Beyond its obvious implications for understanding the comprehension of narratives, the MOP concept has found application in the study of a variety of other communication phenomena, as is illustrated in the work of Kathy Kellermann and others.

Relational Framing Theory

Studies of interpersonal relationships consistently converge on the finding that they are arrayed along three dimensions: affection–hostility, dominance–submission, and involvement–noninvolvement. In relational framing theory, James Dillard, Denise Solomon, and their associates address the processes by which people make use of cues to draw conclusions about the nature of their relationships along these fundamental dimensions. According to the theory, virtually any statement or other social cue can be interpreted either with respect to its

implications regarding the affection–hostility (liking) dimension or the dominance–submission (power) dimension. The theorists propose that cognitive structures, termed *relational frames*, allow people to make sense of, or understand, the relational significance of what would otherwise be ambiguous behaviors. The liking and power relational frames exert mutual inhibitory influence such that activation of one frame tends to suppress the other. The effect of cues relevant to the third relational dimension, involvement, is to intensify interpretations associated with the activated relational frame, whether it be liking or power.

Cognitive Rules Model

One of the pervasive understandings in the study of social behavior is that people act in the pursuit of various goals. Common examples of classes of goals include objectives such as securing material resources, establishing or maintaining interpersonal relationships with certain characteristics, and creating a desired image of oneself in the minds of others. Steven Wilson's cognitive rules model addresses the processes by which a person formulates his or her interaction goals. The model invokes an associative network architecture—an approach to addressing memory phenomena that has found very widespread application in cognitive science. An associative network consists of nodes that represent concepts and links that represent relationships between nodes. In the cognitive rules model, features of social situations, characteristics of one's conversational partner(s), and so on are linked with particular objectives. When a person encounters a specific configuration of situational features, the interaction goals associated with those features tend to be activated, and if this activation exceeds a threshold value, a goal is formed. Other aspects of the theory extend this basic formulation to address the effects of individual differences, situational ambiguity, and familiarity on social-goal formation.

Attitude Accessibility Theory

The attitude construct is a staple of social science, but research suggests that the relationship between attitudes and behavior is more complex than might initially be supposed. In an effort to better understand the link between attitudes and

behavior, theorists like Russell Fazio (in psychology) and David Roskos-Ewoldsen (in communication) have pioneered the notion that attitudes may be more or less accessible in memory, and that accessibility, in turn, determines whether and how attitudes play a role in message processing, behavior, and attitude change. Like the cognitive rules model, attitude accessibility theory assumes an associative network architecture in which concepts, corresponding to attitude objects, are linked to evaluations. And, as in standard network models, the links between nodes vary in their strength such that when a given concept is activated, any evaluations with which it is strongly linked will be rapidly and automatically retrieved. In contrast, when associative links are weak, people may have to deliberate to determine their evaluation of a person, thing, or event. Among the predictions suggested by the theory are that readily accessible attitudes are more likely to predict behavior and to persist over time than are attitudes that are less accessible.

Planning Theory

Models of plans and planning were among the earliest developments in cognitive science, dating almost to its inception. Plans are typically held to be mental representations of a sequence of steps leading from some current state of affairs to a desired goal. Charles Berger's planning theory is a noteworthy example of the application of the plan construct to explication of communication phenomena, particularly message-production processes (although the theory also applies to understanding the actions and messages of others). According to Berger, plans are hierarchical, with abstract action specifications at the top (e.g., persuade someone to purchase this used car) and successively more concrete steps below (e.g., offer a 30-day warranty). The theory further asserts that plans vary in their complexity, both with regard to their specificity and in their incorporation of contingencies and alternative paths of action. An important element of the theory is the *hierarchy principle*, which suggests that when a plan is thwarted, people will revise lower level (i.e., more concrete) action specifications rather than the more abstract elements of their plans.

John O. Greene

See also Action Assembly Theory; Attitude Theory; Attribution Theory; Communication and Language Acquisition and Development; Communication Goal Theories; Communication Skills Theories; Elaboration Likelihood Theory; Heuristic-Systematic Model; Intrapersonal Communication Theories; Learning and Communication; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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COLLECTIVE INFORMATION SAMPLING

Early conceptualizations of collective information sampling (CIS) arose in the mid-1980s in an attempt to give insight into the nature of communication processes and information management within decision-making groups. Garold Stasser and William Titus found that members of decision-making groups tend to communicate and discuss information that all members already know in common (*shared information*) at the expense of discussing information that individual members may uniquely know (*unshared information*). This tendency to favor shared information has a significant impact on the efficacy of group decisions and flies in the face of most intuitive communication thinking. The further development of the theory helps to extend and explain the nature of information sharing within groups, especially those groups that have been given the task of making an important decision within a specific communication context. The major tenets of this theory include not only the explication of the CIS bias toward discussing shared information but also the unpacking of the *mutual enhancement* effect that underpins CIS, as well as a discussion of additional factors that moderate this otherwise robust bias.

Collective Information Sampling Bias

The CIS bias toward discussing shared information is relatively counterintuitive. After all, the assumption is that decision-making groups are formed in order to disseminate information to group members that they may otherwise never discover on

their own; groups are then expected to use the collective knowledge of members to make a decision that is better informed than that of any one individual. However, in 1985 Stasser and Titus uncovered the tendency for group discussions to favor *shared information* over *unshared information* to a much greater degree than is predicted by simple probabilities. In a group setting, the probability that a certain piece of information will be discussed, $p(D)$, is based on the following model: $p(D) = 1 - [1 - p(R)]^n$. This model relates the probability that a member will recall and contribute an item of information ($p(R)$) to the number of members who can potentially recall the item (n). This model shows, through basic algebraic computations, that information that is held by more than one member has a significantly higher probability of being mentioned in a group conversation or task. However, actual groups perform much differently than predicted by the model, such that shared information is favored in discussions to a much greater degree than simple probabilities suggest. Unexpectedly, decision-making groups prefer to talk about information that everyone in the group already knows, and they do so significantly more than group organizers likely hope. Essentially, members do not disseminate much new information but instead prefer to discuss information that is likely already known by other group members.

As a result of this lack of new information obtained during discussion, decisional outcomes are often biased toward the prediscussion preferences of individual group members; this bias toward prediscussion preferences is typically found even when the pooled information strongly favors a different decision alternative. Put simply, people often go into groups with a slight bias toward a decision, and other group members do not reveal enough new information to sway that decision; as such, groups are not able to make decisions any better than any one individual within the group.

Mutual Enhancement

In addition to Stasser and Titus's finding that group members are more likely to communicate shared information than unshared information in a decision-making group, later research has found that those group members are also likely to evaluate their group experience more positively when

members discuss mostly shared information (similar to those processes present in *groupthink*). That is, members will rate the group interaction more favorably and will report greater satisfaction with the final decision when the group discussion emphasizes shared information that all or most members previously knew. In the late 1990s, this self-congratulatory group effect became known as the *mutual enhancement* effect. *Mutual enhancement* is likely caused by group members' needs to feel validated and affirmed by other group members. Studies show that members tend to repeat shared information in order to affirm themselves, appear credible to the group (*impression management*), receive favorable ratings from members of the group (*face negotiation*), and/or create a rapport with other members of the group. That is, one group member may be likely to mention something that other group members already know to be true, so that he or she can feel validated as other members display their verbal or nonverbal agreement with that statement.

Moderators of Collective Information Sampling

One way that researchers better understand the myriad potential moderators of CIS involves the experimental use of a *hidden profile* information sheet, much in the same manner as the original Stasser and Titus CIS research, which reveals shared and unshared information. By varying the proportion of shared and unshared information that is given about two options in a decision-making task, one can measure the extent to which groups discuss that hidden unshared information based on the proportion of groups that choose the more correct option as the favored alternative.

Using this hidden profile method, many potential variables have been found that decrease this bias toward the discussion of shared information during group decision making. Research has found that group knowledge of individual expertise (through formal or informal channels) allows members the freedom to discuss unshared information to a greater degree. Additionally, group norms that encourage critical interaction often overcome the mutual enhancement needs of members. Structural considerations also have been shown to significantly decrease the otherwise robust nature

of CIS, including the introduction of leadership styles, the delineation of expert roles, the addition of time pressure, and the demarcation of member status.

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See also Face Negotiation Theory; Group Communication Theories; Groupthink; Impression Management

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COMMUNIBIOLOGY

The communibiological paradigm refers to a perspective on the study of human communication that focuses on the role of neurobiological systems in the production of behavior. Individual differences in communication behavior are conceptualized as reflecting individual differences in neurobiological systems. The initial rationale for the communibiological paradigm was based on the fact that after 30 years of research effort, the learning paradigm had failed to account for acceptable percentages of variance in either traits or behaviors. Similarly, models that suggested that humans can respond spontaneously to the demands of social situations also failed to produce accurate prediction of what people do during social encounters. The communibiological paradigm was proposed to lead to more accurate predictions of communicative behavior.

Within the communibiological literature, it is common for the paradigm to be expressed as a set of propositions parallel to those first proposed in the temperament literature. The propositions evolved as new research findings were published and as social and behavioral scientists changed the way they thought about the nature of social interaction. Before these propositions are examined in detail, it is important to place them in perspective. First, the propositions were not offered as knowledge claims. Instead, they should be viewed as assumptions or axioms on which theories can be constructed. All theories are based on assumptions. One of the most conspicuous characteristics is the explicitness with which theoretical assumptions are stated. Second, each proposition is heavily supported by empirical research. Although the propositions are not knowledge claims, a considerable body of research in support of each proposition is presented to demonstrate that the propositions are reasonable. The propositions presented below represent the most current version of the communibiological paradigm.

The first proposition is that *all mental processes involved in social interaction are reducible to brain activity*. It might seem obvious that all mental processes can be reduced to brain activity, but the implications of that proposition are incompatible with some lines of thought about interpersonal communication. The proposition indicates that communibiology takes a reductionistic perspective on the relationship between the mind and the brain. This means that all mental activity first begins as brain activity. As cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker has argued, to say that we can control our thoughts makes no sense unless by the term *we*, the activity of a cluster of brain cells is implied. Communibiology rejects the notion that some metaphysical force or entity guides thinking. Drawing heavily from the work of neuropsychology, the communibiological paradigm depicts the subjective experience of self-control as an illusion created by the left hemisphere in the cortex.

The second proposition in the communibiological paradigm is that *communicator traits and temperament characteristics represent individual differences in neurobiological functioning*. In the communibiological literature, communicator traits have been conceptualized as expressions of temperament. Traits play a central role in the

communibiological paradigm. It should be clear to casual observers that people differ from one another in the way they react to stimuli. When people can be differentiated on the basis of their reactions, trait labels are used to refer to individuals. For example, if someone routinely reacts with anxiety when forced to interact with others in a social situation, that person might be referred to as socially anxious. In this case, social anxiety would represent a trait. According to the communibiological perspective, any theory of communication that ignores communicator traits is necessarily and substantially incomplete. The proponents of communibiology argue that this incompleteness will manifest itself most conspicuously in weak predictive power such as that observed in the learning theories. Studies conducted along the lines suggested in the communibiological literature have resulted in substantially more accurate predictions of behavior than have been observed in the situational paradigm research.

In the development of the second proposition, research was cited that demonstrated that individuals could be sorted correctly into high or low levels of various traits such as extraversion or aggressiveness on the basis of biochemical by-products detectable in body fluids after exposure to a stimulus. For example, the hormones present in the saliva of a person who is inclined toward aggressive behavior are noticeably different from those of a typically passive person after conflict with a stranger. It was primarily this type of research that communibiologists marshaled in support of their proposition. Although more research focused on the trait-behavior relationship is warranted, the linkage between traits and individual differences in neurobiological functioning distinguishes the communibiological perspective from other trait models of behavior.

The third proposition is that *individual differences in the neurobiological systems underlying communicator traits are principally (but not completely) inherited*. Care should be taken not to interpret this proposition as meaning that communication behavior itself is inherited. According to the communibiologist, behavior represents an outcome of traits that are manifestations of neurobiological systems that are mostly heritable. Behavior usually results from more than one trait, and the impacts of situations are not direct but mediated

through personality and neurobiological filters. All this makes for a complex relationship among factors that determine behavior. Individual differences in neurobiological systems are not entirely inherited, as prenatal hormone cascades can also shape dimensions of personality. Prenatal hormone effects are neither genetic nor environmental in the social learning sense, but they are biological.

At present, there are no studies that show a direct link between specific genes and the neurobiological systems proposed as determinants of communication traits and behaviors. Rather, the evidence cited in the communiobiological literature has shown an indirect connection. This is because linking specific genes to the behaviors that interest communication scholars has not been a priority for geneticists. Nevertheless, the communiobiologists maintain that there is more evidence for assuming that neurobiological structures are inborn than for assuming that structures are produced by experience or were assembled randomly. Three lines of research are cited in support of this proposition.

First, a huge body of studies referenced in the communiobiological literature indicates that individual differences in temperament, which reflect individual differences in neurobiology, are observable in newborn infants before experience could possibly shape the traits observed. Second, studies link the presence of specific hormone combinations during pregnancy to the development of the infant's personality. Finally, findings from the huge number of studies that have compared similarities of identical twins with those of fraternal twins are persuasive in support of the proposition that neurobiological structures are mostly inherited. Biogeneticists point out that identical twins are genetically identical whereas fraternal twins are no more genetically alike than any other sibling pair. Therefore, high degrees of similarity between identical twins and low degrees of similarity for fraternal twins indicate the presence of hereditary influences. The percentage of influence due to heredity can be estimated from the correlations for the two types of twins. Meta-analyses, which are quantitative summaries of research, show that on average, about 70% of the variance among individuals in a cluster of variables related to interpersonal affiliation (e.g., friendliness, sociability, social competence) is heritable. Furthermore, social

anxiety was 65% heritable, and aggressiveness was 58% heritable. Although the results of twin studies are not definitive with respect to the role of heredity, the communiobiologists maintain that twin studies, in combination with the newborn temperament observations and the prenatal hormone exposure studies, provide ample evidence to consider the proposition as a reasonable one.

Finally, the fourth proposition advanced in the communiobiological paradigm is that *dimensions of situations have only negligible effects on behavior*. Individuals react to situations based on their traits rather than situations. Indeed, research shows that people respond differently to the same situation. Furthermore, research indicates that the nature of the response to a situation is heavily determined by the person's traits. According to communiobiologists, individual traits contribute to behaviors in three important ways. First, individuals place themselves in circumstances that are compatible with their traits. Second, individuals' temperaments contribute to the situation itself. Third, interpretations of the situation are strongly influenced by the individual's personality. All these factors are seen as interacting in the production of behavior.

The alternative position is that situations have direct and strong effects on behavior. However, this position stands in contrast to the results of over 20 years of research that does not show strong situational effects. The communiobiologists argue that the relatively small direct effects reported in the research are due to the assumption that all people react the same way to a given situation. According to communiobiology, individuals show preference for situations and react variously to them.

In the communiobiological literature, the four propositions are organized sequentially into a causal chain. Specifically, genetic inheritance and prenatal hormone exposure are seen as leading to the development of neurobiological system parameters, which in turn dispose individuals to different types of temperaments, which in turn dispose the individual to particular behavioral responses. This depiction of a causal chain is proposed in the communiobiological literature as the framework for building theories about specific communication constructs.

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See also Interpersonal Communication Theories; Learning and Communication; Social and Communicative Anxiety; Social Interaction Theories; Trait Theory

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COMMUNICATION ACCOMMODATION THEORY

See Accommodation Theory

COMMUNICATION ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN

Humans have considered and written about their time-bound nature since they had the leisure to do so. And while the life course probably has not changed all that much, the way we understand it has. Life span communication theory should describe, explain, and predict the modifications that occur to human communication and thus to its outcomes over the course of a life span. This is a tall order, but it goes to the heart of what makes communication so interesting: It is what makes us human, what makes us capable of self-change, and what creates our social worlds. What follows is a brief history of life span scholarship and how it informs the specialty of life span communication, a summary of the challenges to studying life span changes, examples of communication phenomena that have been tested for age differences,

and the current status of life span communication as a theory.

Background

Scholars of sociology and cognitive psychology were the first to formally study the life progression of human behavior. Sociologists prefer the term *life course* to life span and examine the effects on social policy of changing demographics. Psychologists are more interested in individual cognitive changes across the life span. Some, such as Laura Berk, who did much of the research on the developmental function of private speech, may refer to their specialty as *human development*. Particularly in psychology, life span work arose from the study of early childhood development. In the 1920s, Jean Piaget systematically studied the cognitive development of very young children and assumed that development ended with the teen years. But life continues.

The premise of any life span approach to human behavior is that the potential for human development extends across the life span. In the communication discipline, the key factor in human development is *spoken symbolic communication*, which makes possible self-directed change.

In 1989 Jon F. Nussbaum, inspired by the founding work of other social scientists, was the first communication scholar to formally articulate a life span perspective. His view is that a life span perspective can subsume all other communication theories under its umbrella. However, as both Nussbaum and Nikolas Coupland, a sociolinguist, pointed out a few years later, the early work in communication development did not conceptualize language and interaction as constitutive of life span experiences, meaning that people come to understand such experiences in terms of how they actually communicate about these experiences. And this is an important distinction for communication theorists to make. Although sociolinguists and psycholinguists do acknowledge the constitutive nature of language, communication theorists are best positioned to explain the link from spoken symbolic interaction to individual identity and distinctively human experience. However, the empirical research necessary to support this link rarely appears in the communication literature. One

reason for this gap is that life span methodologies are complicated and take time to execute well. Perhaps a more important reason is the relative newness of life span study and the resulting dearth of graduate-level coursework in life span theory and methods.

Methodological Concerns

Sophisticated methods for studying life span changes arose from the limitations found in existing research designs. In 1988, Paul Baltes, Hayne Reese, and John Nesselrode wrote the book, literally, on research methods for life span developmental psychology. Communication studies of life span change using the simplest appropriate sampling designs—cross-sectional and longitudinal—have appeared in the past decade or two.

Cross-sectional has been the most frequently employed design because the researcher collects data from different age groups at one point in time, thereby avoiding the problems involved in following subjects over many years. The remaining difficulty with gathering data from subjects of different ages is that the samples may not be comparable—in fact, probably are not. Confounding cohort influences may make for a difference between groups; 5-year-olds in 1973 may have had different experiences than 10-year-olds did in the same year. If you ask a set of siblings about that year, you will receive very different answers that are not attributable just to age but to other influences: parenting, teaching practices, access to world events, and so forth. Another source of variation in cross-sectional design is the measurement itself. With very young children, some measures, such as written surveys, are not feasible. And with interviews or observations, the effect of the researcher's attention alone may have unwanted effects. Julie Yingling has interviewed children in treatment for cancer who ranged from age 3 to age 17. Even though the same set of questions was asked of each child, the answers received were not comparable across age groups. The very young children just enjoyed the talking and playing; the teens were serious and thoughtful in their responses. So, results were descriptive but not generalizable, or true for all children in treatment. Cross-sectional designs are quick but not always productive of useful developmental data.

Longitudinal designs, which follow the same person or relationship over time and repeated observations, may seem ideal for examining developmental processes, but they bring different problems. Some measurements (e.g., surveys) are prone to practice effects. If we study the same participants over several months or even years, and use the same survey measure, the participants will become accustomed to it and may remember past responses rather than respond anew. One solution is to use observational measures instead of subject-controlled measures, in which the answers are controlled by the subjects who provide them. Yet another source of variance may be time of testing or observation. If the researcher's plan is to measure at the same time of day over several weeks, months, or years, the time of day itself could be producing an effect (8:00 a.m. can be very different experientially from 8:00 at night). The more severe problems include attrition (no researcher wants to end a longitudinal study with only half of the original subjects), the demands of time (often counted in years) that ignore the tenure clock, and the lack of flexibility to refine study procedures and theory as the field develops past the study. Nonetheless, longitudinal designs are appealing in their capacity to show people as they change. One example of their allure was the very popular British ITV television series that began in 1964 as "Seven Up" and documented a group of 7-year-olds every 7 years, ending with "Forty-Nine Up." Charming and interesting as it was, it could not claim to be solid scholarship about development, although it raised intriguing questions about culture and aging.

Even before life span research began, those who studied child development proposed more-sophisticated designs created to eliminate the disadvantages of both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. In 1953, Richard Q. Bell suggested alternate sampling to assess differences across sets of cohorts matched on chronological age. A decade later, K. Warner Schaie went further by proposing a *general developmental model* that involves three sequential designs, each of which varies two factors of the three he views as critical to behavioral performance: chronological age, birth cohort, and time of measurement. These three designs (cross-sequential, cohort sequential, and time sequential) require successions of studies, like so: Time 1 observation: ages

10, 15, 20; Time 2 observation (5 years past Time 1): ages 10 (new group), 15 (the original 10s from Time 1), 20 (the original 15s), and so on. The general developmental model controls for many sources of error and can generate solid descriptive data.

Beyond method and design, complex statistical analyses that lend themselves to the study of change have appeared more recently. Two applicable to life span communication data are *linear sequential modeling* and *complexity theory* (also called *chaos theory* or *the new science*). Rather than test mean differences, sequential modeling can solve more complex problems involving analysis of variance and covariance matrices, thus moving beyond simple description to the possibility of prediction.

Complexity theory originally was developed by physicists and biologists to explain nonlinear dynamics in living organisms, and then it excited interest in the social sciences. The biologists were inspired by Ludwig von Bertalanffy's 1968 *general systems theory*. As with systems theory, complexity models are meant to describe the nonlinear and dynamic nature of change and the nature of mutual influence among interacting levels of systems. Complexity theory has been used to examine weather patterns, traffic flow, tipping points, and abuse dynamics in families. However, the nonlinear mathematics involved in modeling these processes are not easily accessible or available to communication scholars, and not likely to be in the near future. At this time, a communication scholar interested in developmental issues must find colleagues in other social sciences to assist in shoring up communication studies' developmental foundations. Those foundations now consist of a few theoretical perspectives and a growing body of descriptive studies.

Developmental Research in Communication

Concepts that recur in life span communication include those that define variables borrowed from psychology: attachment, accommodation, personality, identity, private speech, and social support, and those that are primarily communication variables: persuasiveness, cognitive complexity, conflict management, comforting, dialectical tensions, and turning points.

Regardless of the phenomenon studied, current life span communication practitioners have, for

the most part, studied either children's communication or late-life communication rather than developmental changes in communication across the full range of the life span. Only very recently have communication researchers begun to examine systematically points in the human life span other than the first or last.

Scholars examining early development have favored *systems* approaches. In 1993, Laura Stafford and Cherie Bayer plotted the existing research on parent-child interaction by the direction of influence used to explain change: unidirectional, bidirectional, and systems process (or multidirectional), demonstrating the superiority of systems models for examining patterns of interaction and mutual influence. Four years later, Beth Haslett and Wendy Samter acknowledged systems theory as useful to studying *communication and language acquisition*, while emphasizing four structural layers critical to a developmental perspective of children's communication: sound, meaning, grammar, and discourse. Psycholinguists would use the terms *phonetics*, *semantics*, *syntax*, and *pragmatics* for those concepts. Regardless of terminology, any scholar of development would have to give some consideration to how these structures are acquired and how they interact in infancy and early childhood. Thus systems theory has been the prevailing choice of those studying early development for its ability to demonstrate mutual influence of communication structures, as well as interactional partners.

On the other end of the spectrum, those examining aging have chosen to test very specific communication theories across age groups to challenge the implicit assumption that studying communication practices in college-age subjects produces reliable explanations. Most communication theories are tested first in college populations, and many go no further. But at least two theories in common usage have been tested across age groups: attachment theory, borrowed from developmental psychology, and accommodation theory, which originated in sociopsychology.

Attachment theory emerged from the 1991 observation by John Bowlby and Mary D. Slater Ainsworth that parent-child interaction affects personality development. Explanations drawn from ethological research support the view that attachment serves a protective function for humans

as much as it does for young birds and monkeys. For Ainsworth and Bowlby, the crux of the matter was that early caregiver interaction leads to either security or insecurity; that in turn lays the foundation for the child's personality development and later attachments. With the repetition of a given response to caregivers over time, the child forms one of four working models of self and others, creating a more or less enduring attachment style by adulthood: secure (positive models of self and others), dismissive (positive self model, negative other model), preoccupied (negative self model, positive other model), and fearful (negative models of self and others).

Although it is not featured in early versions of the theory, Laura Guerrero recently noted that communication is a cause of attachment style; the caregiver clearly sets the stage for the infant to learn interaction skills. The nature of the dynamic between them will affect the child's attachments, perhaps for a lifetime. Attachment styles have been considered fairly stable, given a strong early infant-caregiver bond and subsequent reinforcement of that attachment—which is highly likely given that the developing child will be most comfortable participating in the same dynamic over and over. However, critical life events such as death or divorce can precipitate change in attachment style. Not only is communication a cause of attachment style, it can also be a consequence or mediator of style and can certainly reinforce or modify style. Several studies have shown that, in relationships, partners' attachment styles interact to predict communication patterns. Guerrero suggests that the reverse could be true: By developing more socially skilled styles of communication, people could improve their models of self and others, thus modifying their attachment style toward the secure. Attachment theorists have predicted relational satisfaction from style for some time, but this approach can be used much more widely to examine all sorts of influences between communication and working models for self and other as they function and change throughout the life span.

Accommodation theory was developed in 1975 by Howard Giles and Peter Powesland to explain how communication behaviors change depending on whom our interaction partner happens to be. It has since been modified to a communication accommodation theory that explains the process

by which we can both reduce and magnify communicative differences between people. *Convergence* toward another by approximating the other's communicative behavior enhances similarities and reduces uncertainty. For example, adopting a conversational partner's accent or vocabulary can lead the partner to perceive the accommodating speaker as more similar to the partner and perhaps as more likable. *Divergence*, on the other hand, can be triggered by dislike of another, by wanting to appear as different as possible from the other. However, accommodation theory is more complex than simply that. Researchers have found that context and perception affect results, thus allowing for the complexity of development. Accommodation theory has proven useful for the study of relational development and intergenerational communication. Mary Lee Hummert's work from the 1990s on suggests that as we age, we develop more sophisticated stereotypes of aging. That is, older adults have more positive views of aging than do younger adults. The use of communication accommodation theory contributes to what we know about life span changes in communication and promises to continue to do so.

Life Span Communication as a Theory

Although there have been studies that examine (a) intergenerational differences, (b) links between self- and other-perceptions and communication behavior, and (c) changes with increasing age, there have been precious few to tackle the developmental questions of life span change in communication from an overall theoretical perspective. Systems theory seems appropriate but is so general as to explain very little about change until all the subsystems and linkages have been first described. One useful attempt to flesh out systems theory is Urie Bronfenbrenner's *ecological systems theory*, first proposed in 1977, which has been used to study the influences of school and home subsystems on early childhood communication but has yet to be used extensively for life span studies.

Jon F. Nussbaum and his colleagues Loretta Pecchioni and Kevin Wright treat the study of the communication life span as an umbrella theory under which all communication theories can fit. Their perspective, set forth in 2005, uses broad assumptions: (a) It is the nature of human communication to foster

development, (b) life span communication involves multiple levels of knowledge, (c) change can be both quantitative and qualitative, and (d) unique methods are required to capture communication change. These assumptions are nearly axiomatic; few who study development or communication would argue against them. The theory has served well to pull together disparate communication research programs for a broader view of how communication changes across the life span.

In 2004, Julie Yingling also set out a series of assumptions to support a *relational–dialogical perspective* of communication development. In her view, human communication development is a *dialectical* process that first relies on physiological endowments, then builds symbolically and interactively across the life span. Stated briefly, her assumptions include the following: (a) The human mind is constructed with boundary experiences, or symbolic interactions with others; (b) these are internalized to create an identity that may fluctuate as communication experience fluctuates; and (c) internalizations of experience occur in cycles, the peaks and valleys of which may be viewed as *turning points*. This perspective relies heavily on the theory of *relational dialectics*, in which Leslie Baxter and her colleagues describe the process of *making meaning* between partners from the interplay of competing discourses. The fact that making meaning, a distinctively human symbolic activity, is both diachronic (occurs over time) and synchronic (in one moment in time) gives a clue to the developmental effects of meaning making. As we make meanings, we create and modify identity and social reality. In the process, we learn how to view self, how to view others, and how to view self *with* others. Such a dialectical process is inherently developmental and therefore fitting for the study of life span communication.

Both of the articulated perspectives of life span communication provide a starting point for filling in the blanks in our understanding of how, when, and why shifts in communication, identity, and social meaning occur in the human life span. Both theorists frame the existing communication literature to describe an overview of life span changes in communication.

Julie Yingling

See also Accommodation Theory; Attachment Theory; Communication and Language Acquisition and Development; Communication in Later Life; Communication Theory of Identity; Relational Dialectics; System Theory

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COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Relationships among communication, language acquisition, and development are deeply involved in what makes us human. While speech scientists and psycholinguists have examined language acquisition, and cognitive psychologists have tied language to developmental issues, most communication scholars have shied away from the question, What exactly does communication have to do with language acquisition and development?

Definitions of Terms and Links Among Them

One of the first scholars of communication to consider the links among communication, language, and development was Frank Dance. This entry will start with the definitions he began to use early in the 1970s. *Communication*, in its simplest sense, is acting on information. *Human communication* is the way humans act on information to communicate by means of spoken language and its derivatives (e.g., writing, symbolic gestures). *Human language* is the systematization of symbols, which is syntactic and culturally determined. According to Frank Dance, yet one other definition is critical in providing the developmental piece. *Speech* is the human, genetically determined, species-specific activity consisting of the voluntary production of phonated, articulated sound through the interaction and coordination of physiological and neural systems.

For Dance, the human capacity for speech is what leads to the inception of the symbol and, further, to the development of human conceptualization. In his view, it is our human speech-making capacity that provides the connections among communication, language, and development. Indeed, cognitive psychologists from Lev Vygotsky through Alexander Luria and Philip Lieberman have agreed with the broad outlines of such a connection. Frank Dance posited more specifically, for the communication field, that when human language is acquired normally, it is spoken, and that the development of spoken language leads to the constitution and effects of specifically human communication.

These kinds of theoretical statements stood out as novelties when they first appeared in the 1970s and early 1980s. Today they are not as controversial, yet neither have they become mainstream. Despite deeper examinations of communication development, we have been unable to either definitively prove or disprove the causality from speech to symbol to human communication effects, but the support is compelling. We look now to the work on these matters that has come to us from other disciplines, then to the current state of thought.

Contributions Across Disciplines

Among the first to systematically link verbal communication with development was the Russian

psychologist Lev Vygotsky in the 1920s. He had read Jean Piaget's work of the same era about egocentric thought and speech and found something missing. Piaget claimed that the young child (younger than 7 years) thought and spoke egocentrically, and only later were thought and speech socialized. *Egocentric speech* is language that is not adapted for the listener's needs whereas *socialized speech* is. For example, a 3-year-old is likely to say exactly what is on his or her mind: "I want a cookie." An 8-year-old, however, is more likely to take into account the demands of the situation (e.g., it's near dinner time, Mom is cooking vegetables) and say, for example, "If you let me have a cookie, I'll eat my broccoli." Piaget reasoned that we say what our thought tells us to say; a young child thinks egocentrically and therefore speaks egocentrically. As the brain develops, the child is more capable of more complex, socialized thought.

Vygotsky undertook his own studies of egocentric speech. He made the children's tasks more difficult, and as he did, the amount of egocentric speech increased. He reasoned that the children were using speech *to* figure out problems—that speech indeed helped the child construct trains of thought, not the other way around. Consider this example: A boy, in creating a picture of his home, said, "Where's the blue crayon? I need the blue crayon. Well, never mind, I'll use green and wet it to make it darker." Here, the child, who could not find his blue crayon, is instructing himself how to adapt to its loss and solve his problem. For Vygotsky, speech was the tool children use to create sophisticated cognitive processes. Note that Vygotsky does not attribute this power to language, which is a cultural acquisition, but to speech, which is a genetic endowment subsequently enriched by language. The ability to articulate sound so that the sound can stand for something—to create symbols—is what allows humans to reason in the way they do.

Vygotsky's explanation made sense to many, including Piaget himself, as he admitted in a foreword to one of Vygotsky's translated books. Others who noted and built on Vygotsky's theory include Alexander Luria, another Russian psychologist, and Jerome Bruner, an influential American psychologist. The former is known for his sophisticated work on the making of the mind

and the latter for providing the foundations of the *interactionist* school in developmental psychology.

Meanwhile, the discipline of linguistics was changing from the formal study of written language structure to considerations of the language-cognition connection and natural spoken language acquisition. The new cognitive linguists or psycholinguists were interested in questions regarding the role of language in thought and vice versa. Beginning in the late 1950s, Noam Chomsky, a brilliant scholar and lifelong activist, called for a new kind of grammar—transformational—to explain what really happens when we produce language. Chomsky attributed the child's ability to produce grammatical sentences to a brain structure he named the *language acquisition device* (LAD). Again, as with Piaget, the focus is on the role of the mind (i.e., the LAD) in building social behavior rather than the role of social behavior in the development of mind.

When Jerome Bruner discovered the Soviet psychologists in the 1960s, he based his own observations of early child language on their principles. He may be the best known of the developmental school of *social interactionists*. He explained that human development could not be merely a matter of biological propensity or behavioral conditioning. He argued that Chomsky's LAD would not be triggered without a corresponding *language acquisition support system*. More sophisticated and enculturated language users provide the scaffolding for a child's construction of symbolic language.

Also concerned with the communicative part of the picture, Philip Lieberman, cognitive scientist and linguist, devised in the early 1970s a theory about the evolution of human language. By the early 1990s, he argued that Chomsky's LAD, or an innate universal grammar structure, was biologically implausible if one examined principles of evolution. Instead, he proposed that children learn language similarly to the ways they learn everything else. The only difference is that they are uniquely equipped to produce and understand speech. Human speech allows us to communicate much faster than in any other mode and to articulate distinctive sounds, thus allowing us to combine sounds in a structured (grammatical) way. This ability to "chunk" bits of sound and attach meaning to them in combination permits us to overcome the ordinary limits of memory. By using

sounds as symbols, we retain their meaning over time. The crux of the matter is the use of sounds for meaning: the symbol.

A *symbol* is one sort of stimulus that allows us to refer to something. In that sense, it shares the communication stage with signs. A *sign* is a stimulus that announces that thing to which it is intrinsically linked. The relationship between a sign and its referent is fixed and concrete; it will always mean the same thing. For example, smoke is a sign of fire and announces to perceiving animals that fire is near. Similarly, a baby's hunger cry announces a hungry baby. And the species' set response in the baby's mother is the letdown of her milk. On the other hand, the relationship between a symbol and its referent is entirely arbitrary. In the example above, mother can choose to perceive her child's cry symbolically in any number of ways. For example, even as her body responds to the child's cry as a sign, her mind can be assigning meanings like "my child loves me" or "my baby is trying to make me crazy from lack of sleep." We create the meanings for symbols, the capacity for which endows us with creative gifts like time shifting—the ability to imagine what will be in the future and to voluntarily consider what has happened in the past. Symbols give us the raw materials for a self-concept in particular and for concepts—complexes of meaning—in general. For example, if Sue is told when she is 3 that she is a girl and the apple of her daddy's eye, that information constructs her idea of self. In preschool she adds pals to her life and so knows herself as a friend. Later, she excels at music, and she is a pianist. By adulthood, we cannot trace back all the sources of self-concept, but it is a pretty firm structure nonetheless.

Given that symbols are critical for developing other human characteristics and abilities, how do they arise? Apparently, the answer is that children grasp how to use speech sounds in a meaningful way with other humans *in interaction*. And it is here that the communication part of the equation links speech with interaction in development to result in language and logical thought. Contrary to Piaget's view that cognition moved from egocentric to socialized thought, it is more likely that human thought develops from a spoken symbolic process worked out in the presence and with the assistance of others to a silent symbolic process worked out internally. Say that Ben has lost his mittens, yet

again. As his mother is trying to run him out the door to kindergarten, he says, “But I can’t find my mittens, Mom!” She prompts, “Well, where did you last have them? Did you wear them yesterday after school?” He remembers; “Yes.” She continues, “Where were you playing? Who were you with?” He now recalls, “Jack was here. We made a snowman in the yard, and I needed a nose and took off my mittens.” And off Ben goes to the yard to find his mittens next to the snowman. Alexander Luria and others observed that this kind of learning to use symbols for thought is done with the assistance of more sophisticated thinkers, such as parents, teachers, and tutors. Human communication does not spring into being fully formed; it develops and changes over time. Those who understand this process of development and its dependence on interaction will be those who understand communication changes in the individual.

Communication Scholarship

The first direct treatment of developmental issues in the communication field was in the Frank Dance and Carl Larson text on speech communication in 1972. Ostensibly, it was a basic theory text but included a consideration of the uniqueness of speech communication behavior. Here were ideas from biology, semiotics, philosophy, and more. Further, they stated that the newborn infant is human only in form and potential; what confirms the infant’s humanity is the process of interaction with the human environment via symbolic communication. Dance and Larson go on to claim that symbolic communication leads to the development of human cognition. Here is where we see the influence of Lev Vygotsky on Frank Dance’s *speech theory of human communication*, formalized a decade later: The gradual internalization of speech communication mirrors the development of complex thought processes.

While Dance and Larson were basing their theory on the Russian theorists who viewed speech as primary, Jesse Delia and Daniel O’Keefe were founding their theory, *constructivism*, on the work of psychologist George Kelly, who actually had little to say about communication development but quite a lot to say about personality and personal constructs. A *construct* is a reference axis—or comparison point between two alternatives—created

by a human for setting up a personal orientation to experienced events (including self and others). For example, an early construct might be a comparison point for people as either “nice” or “not nice.” One may create a meaning for “nice” only in the context of a meaning for “not nice”—some comparison point. Kelly posited that we devise frames for making sense of our experience in this way.

The *constructivists*, starting in the mid-1970s with Jesse Delia, Ruth Ann Clark, and Daniel O’Keefe, built a communication theory that uses *cognitive complexity* as a explanatory variable for communication behavior. To measure cognitive complexity, they counted the number of *constructs*—descriptive words—that an individual uses to describe others. Their research demonstrated that both complexity and persuasive skill progress with age. They concluded that the more constructs the child has available for distinguishing different kinds of people, the more capable the child is of adapting persuasive speech to influence various others. This sounds as if the child is constructing socialized speech. Notice that a Piagetian would say that cognition is now serving communication. However, a Vygotskian would instead reason that the child’s symbol system—developed in interaction with others—has become internalized and has begun to serve cognition. The constructivists have stayed out of this argument, for the most part, but have continued to use cognitive complexity as a primary variable that affects communication.

Others who studied constructivism, such as Brant Burleson, have moved on to study communication behaviors such as comforting while retaining the notion of cognitive complexity as a related necessity for the development of sophisticated comforting behaviors. Indeed, his recent work demonstrates that parents and peers who were skilled in comforting influenced the development of children’s comforting skills. Even more interesting is the finding that peers’ comforting skills were related to a child’s perspective-taking ability. Seemingly, interaction partners contribute a great deal to the child’s developing abilities for socialized thought and sophisticated communication skills.

So, interaction, human cognition, and language (spoken symbols) are interrelated. The order in development seems to be (a) interaction, (b) spoken language, and (c) human cognition. Certainly infants think, but their thinking is largely limited

to present time and place until symbols serve to stretch their capacities. When spoken language and cognition merge (at about 18 months), a new form of thought begins—conceptual thought—on the basis of internalizing symbols. But it is the interaction with symbolizing others that provides the impetus for such development. Children do not learn to think humanly or to speak meaningfully in the absence of social interaction.

Despite their differences, most scholars of development are thorough *social interactionists*; they believe that interaction is necessary to the development of both communication and language and that we must study interaction to tease out its effects. Thus, much of learning to be a competent communicator is a matter of the interaction we encounter and the sense we make of it.

Current Thought

Although studies about early childhood communication have burgeoned in recent years, complete theoretical treatments about communication/language/development relationships are still relatively rare in the communication field.

One worthy text, by Beth Haslett and Wendy Samter, appeared in 1997. Although they did not offer a communication theory per se in *Children Communicating*, they did frame nicely what we know about early childhood development of language and communication. They offer overviews of Piaget's and Vygostky's theories and then offer an alternative *ecological* approach articulated by developmental psychologist Michael Forrester. For Forrester, the most important social cognitive skill is the ability to understand and participate in conversation. He suggests that young children learn by "overhearing" interaction. Haslett and Samter are content to say that communication, language, and thought all interact and mutually influence each other.

In 2004, Julie Yingling offered a *relational-dialogical* perspective of development, extending it beyond infancy and childhood to the human life span. This approach, owing much to the developmental *interactionists* and to *dialectical* theories of communication, rests on the notion that human thought and self-awareness emerge from the ability to use spoken symbols interactively. Mikhail Bakhtin, another Soviet scholar, suggested that

consciousness lies on the border between the organism and the material world. Further, he claimed that the workings of each human are at such variance as to require the translation found in symbols. Here, at the boundary between self and other, dialogue is what creates meaning. Yingling uses dialogic processes to explain how human communicative development occurs—in a series of progressive internalizations of symbolic interactions or *boundary experiences*.

To explain fully the relationships among communication, language acquisition, and development calls for knowledge of each of these processes, including their physiological and neurological bases, as well as the influence of various interaction sources on the developing human. Much of that knowledge is available and has produced current theories that rely on symbolic interaction as an explanatory variable for many human effects. Refinement and adjustment of these theories is inevitable as relevant communication research continues to proliferate.

Julie Yingling

See also Communication Across the Life Span; Constructivism; Dialogue Theories; Language and Communication; Relational Dialectics; Social Construction of Reality; Social Support; Symbolic Interactionism

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COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

See Social and Communicative Anxiety

COMMUNICATION GOAL THEORIES

A goal is some desired end or state of affairs that an individual desires to attain or maintain. Desires become *interaction goals* when communication and coordination with another are required for goal achievement. The majority of our communication with others is goal directed. We pursue goals as we seek to form relationships, convince others of our position, or work to accomplish a task. Goals are a cognitive phenomenon; merely thinking about a goal is not enough to achieve a desired end. The achievement of a goal requires some sort of action designed for attainment. *Planning* consists of producing one or more mental models detailing how a goal might be achieved through interaction. The products of goals and plans are the overt behaviors produced in service of a goal. Goals affect all levels of behavior ranging from the content and structure of verbal messages to nonverbal behaviors. This entry explores theoretical explanations of goals and plans and the ways these cognitive processes inform communication.

Forming Goals

Theories of goal-driven behavior locate goals within a *goals-plans-action* (GPA) sequence initiated by the activation of goal-related concepts from memory. Greene's *action assembly theory* and Wilson's *cognitive rules model* assume that goal-relevant information, including knowledge about goals and situational features relevant to each goal, is stored as nodes within an associative network in long-term memory. The network of goal-relevant information includes concepts such as people, traits, relational qualities, and desired outcomes.

In a given communication situation, relevant concepts are activated in memory. For example, when one is with a romantic partner, concepts related to relationships, romance, and anything relevant to the specific partner may be activated. If one wanted to convince a partner to go to dinner at a certain restaurant, concepts related to persuading the other would be activated as well. Activation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for goal formation. Concepts have an activation threshold, whereby a goal is not formed unless a certain level of activation is received. The probability of particular goal-relevant information being activated is based on three criteria: fit, strength, and recency. For *fit*, there need to be a large number of goal-related concepts that are relevant to the current situation. The *strength* of the activation is determined by how frequently the concepts have been activated in the past; information that has been triggered frequently in the past possesses a stronger activation level than does content that has not been activated as much. Finally, *recency* is defined by when the concepts were last activated, with more recently activated concepts being more accessible in memory than those that have not been activated as recently. Goals are a cognitive product of this activated information, such that what constitutes a goal is assumed to be reflective of the most situationally relevant and appropriate information.

Types and Properties of Goals

There are three general types of goals that people seek to achieve through interpersonal communication. *Self-presentation* or *identity* goals reflect concerns about the image of who we are and how we want to be perceived by others. *Relational*

goals include desires to develop, maintain, or neglect particular relationships. *Instrumental* concerns involve obtaining some sort of tangible resource, getting others to do us a favor, or accomplishing some sort of task. These goals often occur or shift between one another. Communication is often framed by an instrumental goal such as problem solving or gaining compliance from another, yet identity or relational concerns often become more salient throughout a discussion. For example, a common problem among roommates concerns keeping their apartment clean. One roommate may confront another with the instrumental goal of figuring out a way to solve the problem of cleaning the apartment. However, consider if the other roommate replies, “You are such a slob; it’s like we live in a barn!” In response, the roommate may consider it more important to pursue a self-identity-related goal to reestablish that he or she is a neat and good person instead of the initial instrumental concern. This shift in goals during a conversation reflects a shift in goals from *proactive* (i.e., goals that guide a discussion) to *reactive* (i.e., goals in response to another).

Interaction goals are assumed to exist at many levels of *specificity* within a hierarchical goal structure; higher-level goals subsume lower-level goals. Higher-level goals are abstract. For example, a goal “to do well in school” has many meanings and may be achieved in a variety of ways. Higher-level goals are pursued via a variety of lower-level *basic* goals that are more proximal and concrete and facilitate specific behaviors that are pursued in the service of attaining more abstract, higher-level goals. For example, as part of doing well in school, a person could pursue the concrete goal of studying for 3 hours each night. The pursuit and achievement of a goal are more likely if the lower-level goal does not conflict with higher-order goals. Further, clear, attainable goals produce higher levels of performance than general intentions do.

Goals may also be defined and organized in terms of their *importance*, which reflects the particular value or salience of a goal relative to other goals. Important goals are motivating and energizing. Deciding that a goal is important motivates us to pursue the goal as well as to stay committed to its pursuit. Thus, the occurrence of an important goal directs cognitive processing resources toward the pursuit of that goal and encourages the production

of behaviors structured toward the realization of that goal, in place of other behaviors that are not directly related to the most important goal.

While sometimes the most important goal is the one that guides what we say and do, research with Dillard’s GPA model suggested that goals may function differently during interactions. The GPA model distinguished between primary and secondary goal functions. *Primary goals* define the focus of an interaction and answer the question, What is going on here? For example, in order to get a good grade on a group project, you may possess a goal to persuade your teammates to start the project early. This goal, in turn, should drive you to confront and persuade your teammates about the project. *Secondary goals* are concerns that shape and constrain what people say as they go about pursuing a primary goal. Dillard specified five categories of secondary goals: (1) identity goals, which reflect desires to act consistent with one’s beliefs; (2) interaction goals, or desires to maintain a positive image, saying things that are relevant and appropriate and protective of the image of the other person in the interaction; (3) relational resource goals, which reflect desires to maintain relationships; (4) personal resource goals, which reflect concerns about maintaining one’s time, money, or safety; and (5) arousal management goals, as reflected in concerns to reduce anxiety or nervousness. While primary goals define what an interaction is about, secondary goals “pull” the conversation by constraining what people say. For example, a primary goal to persuade teammates to start the project early may be constrained by secondary concerns to get along with the other teammates and to make sure that they like you.

Another defining property of goals is their *difficulty*. Goal difficulty may be defined according to perceived performance in goal pursuit. When self-satisfaction is contingent on the attainment of challenging goals, more effort is expended than if easy goals are adopted as sufficient. In other words, the harder the goal, the more people work to attain it and the greater their performance. Difficulty may also be defined in terms of the number of important goals that an individual attempts to pursue. Managing multiple concerns involves managing more information; thus the more goals a person seeks to pursue at any one time, the more difficult goal achievement will be.

Goals and Planning

GPA theories commonly assume that goals stimulate planning processes designed for goal achievement. *Plans* are cognitive; they constitute knowledge about the preconditions, contingencies, and actions that may facilitate goal pursuit and achievement. Our knowledge of plans may come from a variety of sources, including our own prior experiences, observations of how others have pursued goals, imagined hypothetical interactions, or recommendations from others. *Planning* refers to the psychological and communication processes involved in recalling, generating, selecting, implementing, modifying, and negotiating plans. Planning how to implement a goal occurs to some extent before an interaction; however, quite a bit of planning occurs during an interaction as participants define and negotiate their plans together.

Just as there are a variety of goals, so too are there many types of plans that we may pursue, and some plans are more specific than others. Further, certain plans may be more complex or difficult to implement than others. Complex plans include more actions, more diversity of behavior, and more contingencies than simple plans do. Further, some plans may not be appropriate for every circumstance. Plans are developed and selected with the following considerations in mind: (a) What goals does a situation easily afford? (b) What are the rules and roles associated with the situation? and (c) Is the pursuit of the goal and its associated behaviors socially acceptable?

Monitoring and Revising Goals and Plans

Of course, we are not always conscious of our goals and plans. In some instances, people may behave without any clear goal in mind. This is often the case in routine interactions. But even routine behaviors are reflective of prior conscious and strategic attempts to achieve a goal. Research suggests that although we may not think about our goals and plans all the time, we have a frequent, although fleeting, awareness of our goals and plans during conversations.

While individuals may be able to engage in goal pursuit and achievement with relative ease, some goal pursuit is frequently challenged or thwarted. Sometimes, goals are thwarted when individuals

realize that goal pursuit is not proceeding satisfactorily. However, goal pursuit may also be challenged during an interaction with another. For example, suppose someone asks you for directions to the campus library. As you describe the path to the library, your questioner says to you, "I don't understand. Can you tell me a different way?" Thus, the questioner's lack of understanding has blocked your efforts at pursuing the goal of helping the questioner. When a goal or plan is challenged, there are several potential outcomes. An individual may continue a current plan of action toward goal pursuit. Or, an individual may increase his or her efforts in pursuing that goal. Alternatively, an individual may temporarily disengage from goal pursuit or abandon that goal altogether. In giving the directions to the library, you may have to change your plan (the directions) to meet the goal of helping the questioner. Or, you may have to abandon the goal of helping altogether if your repeated efforts fail. Berger's model of planning suggested that revisions are first considered at the lowest or most concrete level of goals and plans and work up the hierarchy to higher-level goal conceptions as goal blockage increases.

A consideration of goals provides a theoretically rich understanding of where communication "comes from" and provides an explanation as to why different people communicate so variably, even in the same situation. As well, the goals-based perspective can provide insight into how intention shapes interaction before, during, and after communication occurs.

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See also Action Assembly Theory; Cognitive Theories; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Intrapersonal Communication Theories

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COMMUNICATION IN LATER LIFE

Rather sudden and quite dramatic global increases in the proportions of living older adults, together with the ever-expanding horizons of longevity, make the study of aging very timely. Being interdisciplinary, this study is explored from radically different vantage points, from the biological to the sociological. Kofi Anan, then secretary general of the United Nations, pronounced 1999 the International Year of the Elderly and established a task force to explore the pressing implications of what he called this “silent revolution.” Although many social and physical disciplines were implicated in this enterprise, communication was not. Nonetheless, in the past few decades, our discipline has made great strides, empirically and theoretically, in enlightening us as to the ways in which communication phenomena and processes are crucial constituents of the social construction of aging.

In what follows, theories outside our discipline that provide an important backdrop to social gerontological theory will be briefly described. While focusing on older adults, these theories, rightly, often take on a so-called life span perspective. In other words, they do not vacuously look at older individuals within a narrow temporal frame

(e.g., 65 and older) but, rather, identify how and why the continual management of events across the life span affects people’s later wellness. Not surprisingly, perhaps, many of these theoretical positions are also directed toward understanding and predicting *successful aging*, and culturally determined dimensions of self-reported life satisfaction (such as a zest for life and independence) are a critical component of this. Thereafter, communication and aging theories will be introduced.

Theories From Other Disciplines

Much research on communicating to, about, and from older adults has shown distinct signs of ageism, and this is so cross-nationally. In line with this, albeit originally devised to show the social dimensions of aging, one of the first well-cited frameworks was *disengagement theory*. Somewhat discredited these days, this position suggests that older people disengage—as the term suggests—in a seemingly natural way from involving themselves and contributing to society and, moreover, are passively encouraged to do so by younger segments of society. It was felt that disengagement eased the process of ultimate or impending demise for older adults in later life. Erikson’s developmental theory similarly proposes that coming to terms with one’s own death is, and is also seen to be, an important factor in aging successfully. Indeed, a *terror management theory* perspective on ageism claims that older people are often stereotyped very negatively and hence avoided because their presence can provide anxiety-provoking reminders for younger bystanders of their own inevitable mortality.

In contrast, *activity theory* suggests that socially engaged older adults (e.g., those with hobbies and responsibilities) are happier and survive longer, with the influential, but empirically challenged, position of Robert Kahn and John Rowe claiming that successful aging is, in part, commensurate with a lack of physical disabilities and ill health. Other theories have invested in notions of being internally in control of one’s environment and of circumstances that become developmentally more and more important in the second portion of the life span. Indeed, an important adjunct to this idea is being ready and able to effectively compensate for any growing or emergent deficiencies in such areas as memory or agility. Meshing the latter

so-called *selective optimization with compensation theory* and models of “possible selves” would allow older persons energetically to keep in sight, or strive to be congruent with, their ideal self. This approach would sidestep any discrepant conceptions of a feared (or even dreaded) self. Indeed, *continuity theory* affords particular theoretical weight to people who pay attention to valued aspects of stability and their enduring unique characteristics across the life span. That said, *identity balance theory* suggests that successful aging involves sustaining a demanding equilibrium involving subtly adjusting to or assimilating the former self-concepts and redefining aspects of the self to accommodate necessary changes.

Finally here, Laura Carstensen’s *socioemotional selectivity theory* proposes different developmental trajectories across the life span to the extent that in later life, individuals become less and less interested in garnering knowledge about the world around them and in meeting different people but, instead, become increasingly more focused on investing in their very close personal relationships and social networks. This is in line with the *convoy* and *intergenerational conflict models*, which suggest that people opt to associate with those who can provide them solidarity and protect them from disturbing comparisons that can lower self-esteem, such as comparisons to people who are perhaps more socially and cognitively active. Indeed, the resource of being able to reminisce and exchange life narratives (or life reviews) with empathic age peers can be an important buffer to dwelling on self-demise. Yet an important empirically supported aspect of Carstensen’s theory is that it is not old age per se that brings on this socioemotional focus but, rather, feelings of or knowledge about being near to death and finitude—an experience also felt by some young people dealing, rather prematurely, with death (e.g., those with HIV or certain cancers).

Communication Theories

Although the foregoing models were not developed within the discipline of communication, they can, nonetheless, be implicitly considered to have communicative dimensions. This is certainly the case when social networks and life narratives come under scrutiny, as well as when people seek for

predictability and meaning across the life span in what might be regarded as an extension of uncertainty reduction and management theories. When we turn now to explicitly communication-oriented theories, then models of intergroup relations and communication become pertinent—as they have done with respect to the study of media and aging. One such theory is Jake Harwood’s *social identity theory of gratifications and uses*, which shows ways in which older people reinforce their social identities by the media content they select. Communication theories often focus on how certain contexts can make age salient for people and, consequently, induce people not to think of themselves and others with them as idiosyncratic characters but, rather, representative members of age categories. Consequently, the mediating roles of age stereotyping figure prominently in these theories.

The first of these theoretical positions emerged in the mid-1980s, and one that has guided a significant proportion of empirical research is the *communication predicament of aging model*. This framework, which was inspired by communication accommodation theory, proposes vital relationships between intergenerational communication and subjective well-being. It attends to how young people’s negative stereotypes of older people (e.g., as frail and despondent) may induce them to adopt overaccommodative communications that are ideationally simple, slowed in speech rate, and exaggerated in intonation. Continued encounters of this nature could lead some older people to wonder if they are truly as incompetent as messages to them from younger people would attest. As a result, and in self-stereotypical fashion, older people may assume the very ageist communication characteristics (such as a slowed gait and voice perturbations) implied by a younger person’s stance toward them, despite the fact that they may well be quite competent and independent spirits. Such poor self-perceptions may cumulatively lead to social withdrawal, a lessened sense of self-worth, and even somatic changes accelerating physical demise.

An elaboration of this model, as well as the *communication enhancement of aging model*, attends also to messages that would circumvent the older person experiencing major predicaments and negative outcomes. In the former case, this could be manifest by elders’ use of assertive

responses to, say, patronizingly stereotyped speech from younger people and, in the latter, by encouraging younger people not to categorize older people by age but to seek the individuality inherent in older adults, encouraging personally accommodative messages toward them and ultimately creating a communicative climate that is empowering to both parties. Indeed, given that older people reciprocally and negatively stereotype younger people too, applied intervention strategies aimed at promoting cross-age healthy relations need to be bilaterally designed. This would inform both (or all) generational parties implicated, as well as encourage media literacy regarding age discrimination and prejudice levied against *both* younger and older age groups.

Mary Lee Hummert and her associates, in their *age stereotypes in interactions model*, also looked at ways in which the negative feedback cycle inherent in the predicament could be interrupted and, instead, yield more favorable outcomes. A number of factors were proposed, including past quality intergenerational contact, high cognitive complexity of the younger person, and attributes of the older person that could trigger positive age subtyping (e.g., wisdom). In this case, stereotypical speech toward the older person that could be viewed as condescending and debilitating would be avoided—and what is referred to as *normal adult speech* substituted.

Valerie Barker and Howard Giles's so-called *integrative model* not only identified sociostructural factors and filial piety as determinants of successful intergenerational encounters but also drew attention to the fact that *intragenerational* communication climates require modeling too. This was a theoretical advance because cross-cultural studies had shown that what predicted poor indices of psychological well-being for certain (particularly Asian) older populations was not poor younger-to-older communication at all but actually nonaccommodative stances from same-aged peers. Finally, life span models that promote successful aging should not be applied simply so as to educate people to appreciate the psychological parameters of aging (e.g., “you’re as young as you feel” and “aging is merely a state of mind”) but should also encourage people—even in later young adulthood—to resist harmful self-attributions of aging in their face-to-face and electronic communications (e.g., “I must

be getting on!”). In addition, such a position would encourage people to talk about later aging in significantly positive emotional linguistic terms (i.e., as an absorbing adventure).

Much theorizing about human communication implicitly (if often not explicitly) revolves around young people—the empirical mainstay diet of our theorizing. But life circumstances change such that communication management necessarily involves different needs, values, and expressive practices at different age junctures and in different contexts, such as the family and workplace. There is a need for the blending of communication and noncommunication theories of aging on one hand and for forging models more truly centered on life span communication on the other. Such models also need to attend to different subpopulations as they age differently, as well as to perceived age boundaries and transitions, including retirement. As each of us ages, and more of us do so for longer, the role of theory in middle—as well as older—adulthood becomes an imperative challenge. As communication theory illuminates further the work of aging well, the discipline might soon be recognized as a crucial component of any future task forces on matters of aging.

Howard Giles

See also Accommodation Theory; Communication Across the Life Span; Family Communication Theories; Narrative and Narratology; Social Construction of Reality; Social Identity Theory; Social Support; Uncertainty Management Theories; Uncertainty Reduction Theory; Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency

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COMMUNICATION SKILLS THEORIES

At the very core, communication skill simply concerns the proficiency or quality of one's communicative performance. Just as people's dancing, driving, or chess playing reflects a certain level of proficiency, so too do their various communication activities, such as listening, public speaking, and making small talk. Communication skill is one of the most extensively and intensively studied of all aspects of human behavior, in part because it is fascinating in its own right, but also because communication skill is vitally important to one's well-being: Skillful communicators are happier and healthier, enjoy more satisfying interpersonal relationships, and perform better in school and in their jobs.

Historical Overview

Questions about communication skill have occupied thinkers for millennia: At least as far back as the Greek Classical Age (5th to 4th centuries BCE), philosophers grappled with identifying effective persuasion techniques. This concern with persuasion has continued as an important area of study to the present day, but in the past century, examinations of communication skill have extended far beyond issues of persuasion and social influence to include practically every aspect of verbal and nonverbal behavior. And the study of social skill has become a broad,

interdisciplinary enterprise: Examinations of communication proficiency are found in virtually every branch of scholarly inquiry regarding human social behavior—from political science to neuroscience.

Disciplinary Developments

Amid the breadth and diversity of investigations of communication skill, certain key events and people stand out. Some of these concern the development of broad intellectual traditions and fields of study. For example, because skills are learned rather than innate, the scientific study of *learning processes* that began in the late 19th century bears directly on issues of skilled performance. The study of learning has, itself, undergone various transformations in perspective, progressing through the now familiar epochs of *behaviorism* (based on classical conditioning) in the early part of the 20th century, *radical behaviorism* (based on operant conditioning, most commonly associated with B. F. Skinner) in the middle of that century, and *cognitivism* during the past 50 years. Other pertinent threads are found in examinations of changes in children's cognitive abilities as reflected in the rise of *developmental psychology* in the 1920s and 1930s (with Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and others) and the study of *child language acquisition*, which began to flower in the late 1950s. In a similar way, *personality psychology*, as represented in pioneering work of people like Gordon Allport in the 1930s, laid the groundwork for a tradition of examining the role of individual differences in behavioral proficiency that continues to the present.

Among these broad disciplinary developments, three others are particularly relevant. Studies of social influence, group and normative forces, empathy, and so on had occupied researchers since the early 1900s, but in the years immediately following World War II, led by scholars like Kurt Lewin, *social psychology* entered something of a golden age that saw the development of many of the classic concepts and theories that continue to infuse that field. Most pertinent to concerns with communication skills is that in the early 1970s, a particular branch of social psychology emerged. *Social cognition* placed emphasis on perception of others, attributions concerning their behavior, and memory for what they said and did—with the

attendant assumption that these processes could be systematically biased or flawed.

The second disciplinary thread of particular importance grew from studies of *perceptual and motor performance* that, like allied studies of learning, date to the end of the 19th century, when early researchers investigated topics such as people's ability to send and receive Morse code. With the aforementioned rise of cognitivism, early theorists, such as Frederic Bartlett in the 1950s and two decades later Alan Newell, Herbert Simon, John Anderson, and others, advanced the notion that high-level *cognitive skills* could be studied and understood in ways analogous to those pertaining to perceptual and motor skills.

A third disciplinary movement of special importance was the emergence of *speech communication* as an academic field. American colleges had taught courses in speech since their founding, but most often these courses were taught in English departments. Around 1900, speech departments began to break off from English, and in 1914 the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking (today the National Communication Association) was founded. Speech communication's central focus on skills training has expanded over the intervening years such that departments now routinely offer classes devoted to enhancing skills for public speaking, group discussion, interviewing, conflict management, and so on.

A Sampling of Milestone Contributions

The emergence of various fields of study bearing on communication skill provided an intellectual milieu in which numerous specific conceptual advances were made. These are too numerous to list, but certain examples merit mention. During the 1960s, Albert Bandura developed *social learning theory*—a rejection of behaviorist, stimulus–response–reinforcement formulations—which instead gave emphasis to the cognitive, symbolic representation of actions and their consequences. Bandura made a compelling case that people can learn from observation and that rather than relying on direct experience of responses and reinforcement, we very often model the behavior of others. People, then, may act in a socially skilled way because they have observed others and are able to anticipate the consequences of their

actions and monitor and regulate their own behavior.

In a series of books appearing in the 1970s, Michael Argyle and his colleagues advanced a general model of skilled interaction behavior that suggested that people pursue social goals via a sequence of steps: (a) perception of the environment—a process that involves attention, interpretation, and so on; (b) translation of perception into performance—a step that includes problem solving and decision making; and (c) motor responses—the generation of overt behaviors. Working from this model, Argyle was able to specify various sources of skill deficits (e.g., in goal setting, planning, behavioral enactment). Moreover, Argyle identified qualities such as expressivity, rewardingness, assertiveness, and so on that distinguish proficient from inadequate interaction behaviors. Yet another contribution of this work was the idea that people could be trained to employ more appropriate perceptual, cognitive, and behavioral responses.

A third example of important contributions to the study of communication skill, also from the decade of the 1970s, is found in John Wiemann's examination of the nature of *communication competence* (and subsequent exploration of that construct by Brian Spitzberg, William Cupach, and others). Wiemann emphasized that competence is a dyadic construct in the sense that the competent communicator not only is able to achieve his or her own goals, but moreover to do so in a way that is satisfying for the other party in the conversation. In Wiemann's formulation, five dimensions of competence are identified: (1) empathy, (2) affiliation and support, (3) social relaxation, (4) behavioral flexibility, and (5) interaction management skills (i.e., handling interruptions, taking turns, etc.).

Theories of Skill Acquisition

Because skills are acquired over time, a great deal of research has focused on understanding the processes that underlie skill development. This research shows that skill acquisition is typically a gradual process; in fact, studies in a variety of domains (not just communication skills) have shown that expert performance requires approximately 10 years of concerted practice. Much of the work on skill development has involved constructing

learning curves that graph performance quality on the *y*-axis and amount of practice on the *x*-axis. (In many cases the number of practice trials examined in this research is in the hundreds or even thousands.) These learning curves virtually always have a characteristic shape: They show large performance gains early on, but over time, improvements with practice become smaller and smaller.

Significant to note is that although skill-acquisition curves almost always take the same general form, there are individual differences in the course of skill acquisition: Some people start off better, learn faster, and achieve higher levels of performance than others do. Theories of skill acquisition suggest that a variety of personal factors, including intelligence, achievement motivation, and age, will affect the course of performance improvement. Regarding this last point, while it is the case that older adults typically do not acquire new skills as rapidly as their younger counterparts, skills acquired early in life tend to be retained in later years.

The process of skill acquisition is marked by a number of behavioral and cognitive changes, including but not limited to (a) becoming faster or more fluent, (b) making fewer errors, (c) experiencing reduced cognitive load, and (d) being more flexible and adaptive. Various theories have been developed to explain these changes, but the prevailing view focuses on the distinction between *declarative* and *procedural memory*. Each of these refers to information held in long-term memory, but declarative information is essentially memory for facts, while procedural information is memory for how to do things. In the standard model, then, early in the process of skill acquisition, a person learns a set of facts or instructions about what to do. It is possible to act on the basis of this declarative information, but performance tends to be slow, error prone, and cognitively demanding. With continued practice, a person enters a second stage of skill acquisition, in which the information used to carry out the activity is transformed from declarative to procedural form. At this point it is no longer necessary to keep the instructions for the activity in mind, and as a result, he or she gets faster and experiences less cognitive load. Finally, in the third stage of skill acquisition, the procedural memory structures for the activity are strengthened with continued practice (a process which can extend over many years).

Theories of Skilled Performance

The Nature of Communication Skill

Despite the fact that it has been so extensively studied and discussed, there are a number of different theoretical perspectives on what *communication skill* actually entails. In part this diversity in perspectives arises from the fact that the properties or characteristics of a given sample of behavior can be coded at various levels of abstraction. For example, at a molar level, raters might judge whether a person was “friendly” or not. At a more fine-grained level of analysis, however, instances of smiling might be counted and timed. In a similar fashion, the functions served by a given action can be understood at various hierarchical levels (e.g., a person may be “answering a question” or “impressing a job interviewer”). Despite these, and similar, difficulties, it is possible to posit a rough hierarchy of levels of analysis commonly reflected in models of what constitutes communication skill. With no claim of exhaustiveness (i.e., that the framework captures every relevant approach), or of mutual exclusivity (i.e., that any particular model will reflect just one tier), a simple, five-tiered scheme is useful for imposing some order on a complex domain.

At the most molar level of the hierarchy are properties of skilled behavior identified in the aforementioned *communication competence* perspective. Certainly there are differences in the specifics of various formulations, but models in this vein generally emphasize that competent communication is characterized by (a) *effectiveness* and (b) *appropriateness*. That is, the competent communicator is able to accomplish his or her goals while also acting in a socially appropriate way. A person who is effective in achieving his or her objectives, but does so by threatening, bullying, lying, and so on, would not be considered competent, nor would one who is polite, ethical, and pleasant, but unable to “close the deal.”

A second hierarchical level for thinking about what constitutes communication skill derives from theoretical perspectives that emphasize that all social interactions involve the mutual *presentation and negotiation of “social reality”*—including the identities of the interactants, the nature of their relationship, and the definition of the social setting (e.g., the purpose of the interaction, standards of appropriate behavior). It is not unusual that one

person's view of self, other, relationship, and situation may differ considerably from that of his or her interlocutor. The skilled communicator, then, is sensitive to the implications of his or her own presentation of social reality, the ways in which the perspective of the other may be different, and ways of accommodating those differences or negotiating a mutually acceptable perspective.

Moving yet another step in the direction of more molecular conceptions of communication skill are views that emphasize *general properties of behavior* that are more or less skilled. It is this level of abstraction in the coding of behavior that tends to be reflected in people's everyday characterization of their own and others' actions (so, for example, we commonly think and talk about people as being friendly, rude, and so on). There are obviously a great many of these general dimensions relevant to communication skill, and what counts as skillful varies to some extent with culture and context, but among theories focusing on this level of analysis, emphasis is often given to qualities such as being (a) *other-oriented* (i.e., attentive and responsive to the other), (b) *affirming* (i.e., positive and supportive rather than caustic and punishing), (c) *flexible* (i.e., creative and adaptive), (d) *fluent*, and (e) *relaxed and poised*.

A fourth level reflected in characterizations of communication skill focuses on *information processing capabilities* required to act in an effective and appropriate manner. These mental activities include those related to taking in and making sense of the stimulus environment and those involved in behavioral production. Thus, on the input-processing side of the system, key components of skill include allocation of attention to relevant stimuli, listening, comprehension, social categorization, and appropriate inference making. With respect to behavioral production, the skilled communicator is able to plan and choose among behavioral alternatives, monitor and edit his or her behavior, and translate abstract conceptions of what to do and say into actual, intelligible verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

A final level of analysis seen in conceptions of communication skill is perhaps the most obvious and harkens back to Argyle's pioneering work mentioned earlier. Here the focus is on *overt behavioral features* (e.g., speech rate, occurrence of disfluencies, direction and duration of eye gaze,

discrepancies between message channels). Research dedicated to examining such molecular behavioral features indicates that, among others, behaviors perceived as more socially skilled include more eye contact, more smiling, more gestures, and fewer adaptors (i.e., fidgeting). In the verbal channel, behaviors such as asking more questions and paying compliments are perceived as skillful actions.

Sources of Variation in Communication Skill

One of the primary factors motivating the study of communication skill is the problem of variation in proficiency—a problem that manifests in numerous guises: Why are some people more skilled than other people? Why do people act in a more skillful way at certain times and in certain situations than in others? And why are individuals more skilled in some communication activities (e.g., making casual conversation) than in others (e.g., public speaking)?

These are compelling questions, and a great many theories have been developed to address them, but among these theories, certain themes and approaches are especially noteworthy. Some shortcomings in communication proficiency have their roots in cognitive and information processing deficits, as, for example, in cases of autism and age-related dementia. Among the population not characterized by problems such as these, the study of variation in communication skill very often involves examination of (a) motivation and ability, (b) stable individual-difference factors, or (c) state variables.

Examinations of the role of motivation and ability in communication proficiency are predicated on the notion that skilled performance requires both the ability to act in an effective and appropriate way and the motivation to do so. The person who does not know what to do (or how to do it) is unlikely to act in a socially skilled way. By extension, the individual who does know what to do but is not motivated to put that knowledge into practice is likely to behave in a suboptimal fashion.

Almost certainly, the most common approach to examining variability in communication skill is to locate the source of cross-individual differences in proficiency in relatively enduring trait-like individual-difference factors. Examples of such individual-difference variables are numerous

indeed, but among the most prominent are *extroversion*, *self-monitoring*, and *cognitive complexity*. While the literature on the role of such variables in communication skill is extensive and very often produces statistically significant effects, it is important to note that these relationships tend not to be large, rarely accounting for more than 10% of the variance in actual behavior (as opposed to self-reports of behavior, responses to hypothetical scenarios, etc.).

In contrast to relatively enduring person factors, *state variables* refer to characteristics of persons that change over comparatively short time spans (i.e., days, hours, or even minutes). Among such state variables is the individual's level of *physiological arousal*—a factor that is particularly interesting because some evidence suggests that the relationship between arousal and proficiency is curvilinear: Performance improves with increasing arousal up to some point, but beyond that, still higher levels of arousal result in performance decrements. Other examples of state variables include various moods and emotions, most prominently *social anxiety*—the nervousness and “butterflies” accompanying social interaction that have been shown to be associated with a variety of behavioral manifestations generally taken to be less competent or skillful. In contrast, positive moods tend to be associated with greater creativity and increased social engagement. Still other state variables related to social proficiency include stress, drug ingestion (e.g., “alcohol myopia”), and lack of sufficient sleep.

John O. Greene

See also Cognitive Theories; Communication and Language Acquisition and Development; Competence Theories; Facework Theories; Impression Management; Intercultural Communication Competence; Learning and Communication; Social and Communicative Anxiety

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COMMUNICATION THEORY OF IDENTITY

The *communication theory of identity* (CTI) was developed by Michael Hecht and colleagues; the theory emerged in the 1980s as part of a shift from considering identity a central element of human existence to identity as a social phenomenon. While earlier views emphasized the Western notion of “self” as a single, unified identity, this broader conceptualization argues that humans are inherently social beings whose lives revolve around communication, relationships, and communities and who operate from *multiple and shifting identities*. As a result, identities and *identification* are key processes through which people and groups orient themselves to each other and the world around them.

From this beginning, a *framed or layered perspective* emerged in the early 1990s that described

identity as multifaceted, including personal, enacted, relational, and communal frames. Hecht and colleagues were studying interethnic communication with the expectation that identity would influence these processes and they, in turn, would lead to outcomes such as satisfying communication. However, the data did not fit this model. Instead, identity and communication influenced outcomes jointly. The need to explain these findings and emerging research on media representations of identity led to an examination of research conceptualizing identity as a social process and the CTI view of identity as consisting of four frames.

The *personal frame* encompasses what has traditionally been thought of as self and self-concept—the ways an individual conceives of self. The *enacted frame* is the performance or expression of identity. CTI argues that the enactments themselves are a frame of identity—that communication *is* identity and not just caused or influenced by it. As a result, managing or negotiating identity is a central process. Next, the *relational frame* of identity refers to identities that are invested in relationships, exist in relationship to each other, and are *ascribed* in and through relationships. For example, being a parent requires a child, and who we are is established and defined through identities that are ascribed to us by others. Identities also exist as characteristics of communities (*communal frame*). Media tell us, for example, what it means to be successful. Communal identities are held in common by groups rather than individuals. Finally, these identity frames are said to *interpenetrate* or intertwine with each other. For example, one's view of self as a man or woman (personal identity) is juxtaposed to how others see us as men or women (relational identity), as well as how one's communities (communal identity) define these social positions.

While the CTI has many other aspects, the conceptualization of identity as social, the interpenetration of the four frames, and the management of these identities form the core of the theory. One implication is that at any time we are likely to be experiencing multiple, intersecting identities, some of which are group based, or communal. People rarely operate out of a single identity; rather multiple identities guide their thoughts and behaviors. This precept had not been well represented in research, and as a result, ethnic communities were

often seen as homogeneous. CTI-related research, in contrast, examined diverse ways of experiencing these identities. For example, studies by Hecht and Sidney Ribeau examined different labels used by members of the African American community and how these labels manifested themselves in relationships, behaviors, and thoughts.

This research also suggested some of the ways in which *identity management* can be problematic. Not only is there a tendency to see members of a group as homogeneous, but the potential conflicts that emerge from competing enactments of identities must be skillfully *negotiated*. For example, the work of Michael Hecht and Sandra Faulkner on Jewish American identity described not only the ascriptions others make to group members but also multiple and fluid communal identities, members' own insider/outsider status, the "closetable" nature of this potentially stigmatized identity, and how all these factors get negotiated inside and outside the group. Specific strategies for revealing identity align along an explicit-implicit dimension that is influenced by the relationship type (especially the presence of romance) and in the greater societal context of isolation and "otherness." In closer relationships and more supportive contexts, identities may be overtly discussed and negotiated (e.g., how all members will get to celebrate their own holidays and even aid in these enactments), as opposed to the more covert practices that go on when discrimination and prejudice are rife. These findings demonstrate the power of the theory to focus on the dynamics of identity—how it changes and evolves.

Another line of work focusing on these dynamics was initiated by Eura Jung in his 2004 dissertation on *identity gaps*, which are defined as disconnects between and among the various frames that challenge identity management. Since communication and human relations are inexact, there are often discrepancies among how we see ourselves (personal identity), how others see us (relational identity), and how we express ourselves (enacted identity). These identities also may differ from communal representations, especially when communal representations are stereotypic. These gaps have proven problematic for effective communication, as well as mental health, across different groups and situations. For example, Jung and Hecht found that Korean immigrants who come from a homogeneous society into a racially

segmented and hierarchical U.S. society often experience gaps in identity, especially when they occupy “middle person status” between higher status Whites and lower status Blacks and Latinos in inner cities. These gaps have been shown to produce depression. These gaps also have proven problematic in grandparent–grandchild relationships, as shown in work by Jennifer Kam.

CTI also has directed work on youth identity and health. As a guiding force in Michael Hecht and Michelle Miller-Day’s *Drug Resistance Strategies Project*, begun in the late 1980s, CTI has been used to study Latino identity and substance use as well as to develop an evidence-based, multicultural, middle school substance abuse prevention curriculum called “*keepin’ it REAL*.” The prevention curriculum was infused with the identities of the audience through its basis in *narrative* and narrative performance. The *principle of cultural grounding*, an approach to health-message design developed by Michael Hecht and Janice Krieger, emerged from this work and guides prevention message construction. These messages may address different frames, but it is argued that focusing on indigenous narratives about identity and the identities most salient to these narratives is essential to effective health messages.

Since 2000, CTI has been guiding a number of new lines of research that demonstrate its encompassing and expansive view of identity. Culture has often been defined in terms of nationality, race, and ethnicity; CTI encourages a broader definition consisting of multiple frames of identity. For example, on a communal level, rurality is defined by population density and/or proximity to dense population areas. These definitions have not been useful in public health campaigns except in noting that rural communities tend to be underserved. As a result, Janice Krieger is exploring the construct *rural identity* as it reflects the other frames. *Online communities* also are sources of identity and locations for identity expression. CTI research by Jennifer Warren has demonstrated how different aspects of identity influence online health information seeking by lower income African American women and is being used to develop smoking interventions targeted at members of this ethnic group. From the social-networking sites to health information seeking on the Web, identities are implicated in the online

world. Finally, identities have proven useful when *targeting* health messages to groups or *tailoring* them to individuals. Messages designed to include identity representations and to appeal to salient identities are proving effective in health campaigns. The multifaceted nature of CTI makes it ideal for understanding the new global village, with its electronic and face-to-face connectivities and emerging sense of multiple identities.

Michael L. Hecht

See also Co-Cultural Theory; Cultural Contracts Theory; Cultural Identity Theory; Health Communication Theories; Identity Theories; Social Construction of Reality; Social Interaction Theories; Symbolic Interactionism

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COMMUNICATIVE ACTION THEORY

Jürgen Habermas, the contemporary German philosopher and social theorist, formulates what are arguably his most important ideas in his theory of communicative action. This account of social

action features communication as an integral component and attempts to provide a normative grounding for social and critical theory. Habermas can be considered a second-generation member of the Frankfurt School of social thought, but he differs from such thinkers as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno with his reflective defense of enlightenment themes. While his two-volume work *The Theory of Communicative Action* covers many topics, this entry will focus on those components most relevant to accounts of communicative activity and their normative assessment.

Habermas's theory of communicative action aims to provide a normative basis for social theory and the critique of particular forms of social organization. Instead of selecting norms based on social theories such as Marxism or abandoning any sort of covering norms, as many in postmodern strains of thought do, Habermas wants to continue the project of enlightenment and identify universal notions of truth and freedom. Instead of grounding these in nature or human nature, Habermas places these firmly in the intersubjective action that takes place in certain communicative encounters.

In general, Habermas's account of human action is twofold. Humans can employ what is called *strategic action*, or action that is based on the realization of specific ends by known means. For instance, building a bridge will involve a variety of interactions between humans and material objects, and skilled engineers will be able to predict what actions are necessary to construct a bridge that has certain structural virtues. The second sort of action is *communicative action*, or action oriented toward achieving a rationally held consensus. Whereas many social theories and critiques portray human interaction as merely being the interplay of various forces (as is the case in strategic action), Habermas attempts to build a theory that does justice to another force that is evident in human interaction—the force of reason.

Habermas discusses this distinction between strategic and communicative action by extending the work of speech act theorists such as J. L. Austin. Strategic action in language tends to utilize what Habermas calls *perlocutionary speech acts*. These are uses of language that attempt to achieve some end in the world; the actual utterance is simply the means. These are strategic insofar as they operate on the level of cause–effect and nonrational force.

An example of such utterances would be a shout to “Stop!” that literally stops people in their path, or to lie to individuals who do not know that they are being misled. Both of these cases operate, not on the level of informed and free consensus, but in a causally specifiable fashion. The first utterance is effective because it is loud and arresting; the second utterance is effective because it involves a difference in knowledge between the liar and the lied-to individual.

In contrast to strategic action, communicative action is action that is oriented toward the reaching of understanding and, as such, typically involves *illocutionary speech acts*. These are utterances that attempt to advance some claim about the world to an auditor. Habermas calls these *validity claims*, and they can be divided into three general types. *Constative* claims are representations of some state of affairs in the objective world (“You drove my car yesterday”); these are the sorts of claim that are liable to judgments of truth. Another type of validity claim is a *regulative* claim, or a statement asserting that some state of affairs (actual or possible) in the social world is right or desirable. An example of such a claim would be “It was wrong for you to borrow my car without permission yesterday.” The third type of claim is the *expressive* claim. These are claims that assert a certain subjective state of the speaker is the case, and are thus liable to judgments of truthfulness. An example of such a claim is “I am upset that you borrowed my car without permission yesterday.” Another important implication of the theory of communicative action is that any utterance having illocutionary force can be criticized on grounds relating to any of these sources of validity. One can criticize any claim insofar as claims all assume some state of affairs in the external world, they involve relations between people (and the assumption that one is justified in making that claim to that hearer in the first place), and they are assumed to represent the actual thoughts of the speaker (and hence be truthful).

Communicative action occurs when individuals are oriented toward exchanging utterances (of the above three types of validity claims) in an attempt to reach an understanding about the claims advanced. In other words, a speaker advances some claim about the objective, social, or subjective world, and a hearer either accepts it or asks for reasons that claim ought to be accepted. The

speaker is then under an obligation to provide such reasons. Ideally, rational and free discourse proceeds in communicative action until such an informed consensus is reached on the validity claims in question, although Habermas admits that such progress toward consensus is often rarely achieved in actual practice. Instead, this ideal of communicative action can be used to describe some practices in human society (i.e., deliberative discourse in policy-making) and can be used to critique other communicative practices (such as the use of fear appeals in political advertisements).

These themes are incorporated in Habermas's notion of the *public sphere*, or places where people can openly explore meanings and ideas, as well as in the *ideal speech situation*, which is assumed by all engaging in communicative action. He argues that the mere act of trying to get someone else to agree with the claim you are advancing and the reasons you offer for that claim means you—and the other person—are committed to certain presuppositions: (a) that all individuals are using the same linguistic expressions in a consistent way; (b) that no relevant voices have been excluded or forced out of the interaction; (c) that no force is employed except the force of the better reason (no threats of personal harm, promises of rewards, etc.); (d) that all participants are motivated by the search for consensus and agreement through dialogue; and (e) that no validity claim is immune from challenge by participants. Practices, groups, and organizations can be criticized insofar as they fail to approximate such an ideal speech situation, and they can be reformed to encourage more communicative action.

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See also Critical Rhetoric; Critical Theory; Frankfurt School; Public Sphere; Speech Act Theory

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COMMUNITY

Community is a much-used term in communication research and theorizing, occurring in a variety of everyday senses and as a central concept in several intellectual traditions. As an ordinary term in speech and writing, *community* has (at least) five different meanings. A first and one of the most common ones, *community*₁, is to equate the term with the set of people who inhabit a certain geographic place. In this meaning, community is a geographic unit bigger than family and neighborhood but smaller than the state, region, or nation. *Community*₁ is the name for the people who live in local units such as cities, towns, and school districts (e.g., the Denver community).

A second meaning, *community*₂, is as a term of reference for a discrete set of people who share a culturally marked identity. In the United States, media frequently make claims about the gay or older community, the Hmong or Latino community, the Muslim or Jewish community, and so on. In this second use, community is a synonym for identity groups. *Community*₂ is regularly used to refer to the groups that the larger society has marginalized or stigmatized in some way. Related to this second meaning is a third one, *community*₃, which treats community as a set of people who share an interest or activity (e.g., the snowboarding community, the Facebook community, the vegan community).

Community's fourth meaning, *community*₄, is as a positive sentiment that may be enacted, accomplished, pursued, or endangered. An aim of most groups and organizations, whether they exist face-to-face or virtually, online, is to establish a "sense of community" among participants. Groups that succeed in building community are ones that through their communication have created a sense of caring and connection among the participants.

The last everyday meaning for community, *community*₅, is as a pole in two pairs of political values that both depend on and are in tension with each other. Within this meaning, commitment to the well-being of a group (community) is contrasted with a valuing of individual rights. Here, the needs and demands of people living together with bonds of connection and mutual responsibility, *community*₅, are contrasted with the impersonal, more minimalist rights of society.

These ordinary meanings of community complement as well as contradict each other. Community as a place, an identity, and an interest often come together, and when they intersect, the focal community frequently pursues community as a desired sentiment. At the same time, the demands of community₁ and community₅ (the social needs of a geographic-based group) may conflict with the needs or wants of identity or interest groups (community₂ and community₃). These ordinary meanings of community are to be found in many corners of communication scholarship. *Communication Yearbook 28*, a handbook of review articles, made community an organizing concept for 2004. The titles of the articles in this yearbook reflected the multiple meanings of community. Consider but three: "Communication in the Community of Sport," "Meetings: Discursive Sites for Building and Fragmenting Community," and "Ideal Collaboration: A Conceptual Framework of Community Collaboration."

In communication theorizing there are two traditions, or more accurately, two families of traditions, in which community is a key concept. The first family of traditions is descriptive studies of speech, discourse, or practice communities, predominately community₁ to community₃ meanings; the second family of traditions involves normative theorizing about how communication links to community and the usually positive but sometimes negative effects of community, community₄ and community₅. Each of these theoretical traditions builds on the ordinary meanings of community, albeit pulling the concept into a theoretical frame that raises very particular issues about communication.

Community as a Descriptive Term

A long-standing tradition in which community is an important concept is *ethnography of*

communication studies begun by the anthropologist Dell Hymes and brought to communication in the mid-1970s by Gerry Philipsen. In ethnography of communication, the key unit of analysis is the speech community. Philipsen, for instance, studied a neighborhood of White, ethnic, urban, working-class males in an American city in the 1960s. He named his speech community Teamsterville, and his research made visible how members of this community held distinctive beliefs about categories of people such as women and children and spoke in culturally identifiable ways that differed from middle-class American practices.

While many of the speech communities that have been investigated involved sets of people who lived in a relatively small geographic locale and engaged in face-to-face exchanges, a speech community need not be geographically constrained. Tamar Katriel, for instance, studied the cultural speaking practices of Ashkenazi Jews in Israel, Kristine Fitch studied middle-class Colombians in Bogotá, and Donal Carbaugh investigated middle-class Americans' communicative beliefs and practices.

Research seeking to understand speech communities has a centrally descriptive thrust. Its goal is to make understandable the interpretive and speaking practices, sometimes called *speech codes*, of an identifiable set of people. To facilitate this descriptive enterprise, researchers use the SPEAKING mnemonic, initially developed by Hymes, to direct attention to important facets of a community's symbolic practices. SPEAKING includes the setting (S); the participants (P); the end purpose of an event (E); the sequence of acts that comprise particular events (A); the emotional key (K); the instrumentalities, that is, whether an occasion is face-to-face or mediated (I); the norms of interaction and interpretation (N); and the genre (G) of an activity. Although the kinds of people that could be a speech community has expanded across the years, its center has been a group of people bound by nationality and geography, and often also ethnicity and social class.

A related concept is that of *discourse community*. A discourse community, in John Swales's words, is a "socio-rhetorical network." In contrast to the national, geographic foci of speech communities, discourse communities are created through people's sharing of interests, aims, and

activities. Occupational groups such as accountants or social workers are discourse communities, as are people who share a recreational interest in a television series, stamp collecting, or hip-hop. Members of discourse communities come together occasionally for joint activities such as competitions or conferences, and what makes them a *discourse* community is their distinctive ways of communicating. Discourse communities use socially marked vocabularies and engage in specific genres of communication; they also share ways of segmenting and understanding the social world with regard to their foci.

Community of practice is a final way of identifying community in terms of a descriptive unit. Community of practice, a term coined by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, refers to a set of people who share a purpose and pursue that purpose jointly in shared practices. Community of practice has much in common with discourse community, but it has been significantly more influential as an idea in communication and related disciplines. Communities of practice look at teams in a workplace, classroom groups, or any set of people spending significant amounts of time together. In education, for instance, the notion of community of practice has changed the way learning is conceptualized, moving it away from an individual, cognitive action and toward seeing learning as distributed among a set of people and accomplished by immersion in shared social practices.

People are generally members of multiple communities of practice. Whenever people come together in groups to do things—in school, at church, in work groups, and in political or recreational groups—they are involved in a community of practice. Most people are central members of some communities of practice and peripheral members in others. It is because community of practice turns attention to the communication processes that create and sustain people's definition of what they are about and fosters connections to others involved in the practice that the idea has been so influential in communication. Ana Ostermann, for example, compared the communicative practices of an all-woman police unit and a feminist crisis center dealing with women who were victims of domestic violence. She found these two occupational groups had very different ways of talking

with the female victims and tied these differences to identifiable values in each community.

Community as a Normative Ideal

A different sense of community can be traced to Aristotle's *Politics*. For Aristotle, every state was a community. Communities were created by a state's men speaking with each other about which proposed courses of action were fair and just. In Aristotle's time a community included only the nonslave adult males in a relatively small geographic area. It was these people who would come together to deliberate and make decisions about the community, and it was the communication about political matters that created a sense of connected caring.

David Depew and John Peters provide a historical overview of how community was taken up by different thinkers in the United States, with each giving the idea a different inflection. At the beginning of the 20th century, George Herbert Mead and Robert Park were interested in exploring how communities in Chicago came into being through communication. Community formation was a major concern. In contrast to the descriptive notion of community, in which people may pursue many types of aims, the normative notion of community foregrounds political aims. A "great community," American Progressives believed, was made possible by the widespread availability of newspapers because newspapers provided different segments of American society the information that would enable the segments to be knit together. Although self and community for people like Rousseau were pitted against each other, for scholars such as Mead and John Dewey, the two terms were interdependent and created through interaction. Selves and communities came into being together.

A problem in contemporary U.S. life is that people much less frequently come together in civic, neighborhood, and church groups to plan and carry out activities together. The relative absence of social ties—what Robert Putnam called *social capital* in his influential book *Bowling Alone*—creates a society in which there is no sense of community, no commitment to a social good that is larger than the needs of individuals.

Although community is usually treated as a solution to the troubles of American life, there is a

recognition that communities may also be repressive. In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey advanced two criteria for a good community: First, in a good community, the interests that were shared among members were numerous and varied. Second, the interplay between a community and other forms of association were free and full. In essence, then, a good community is not a walled off cult but a group that is diverse and connected to other associations of people.

Another version of the normative notion of community can be seen in the political movement that has been dubbed *communitarianism*. In the early 1970s, the philosopher John Rawls wrote a widely influential book, *A Theory of Justice*. Rawls argued that the main goal of government is to gain and then distribute fairly to individuals the economic resources and liberties that exist within a society. Many scholars were critical of his position, seeing it as advancing a set of universal criteria for making decisions that unfairly advantaged those who already had power and influence. People, these critics argued, are situated in particular times, places, and cultural groups. Rather than conceiving of citizens as a bundle of individual “rights,” communitarians argued that we needed to see people as being part of social and political groups in which groups of people had responsibilities to each other; these groups, not just individuals, were entitled to shape what a society would construe as the societal good.

Concluding Thoughts

In a recent review essay, Erin Underwood and Lawrence Frey examined how the term *community* has been used in communication research. As just about everyone writing about community does, they note that the term is overused, a “purr word” that people use because it generates positive feelings. Underwood and Frey argue for a dialectical conceptualization of community that recognizes how overlapping senses of community frequently co-occur, connecting the traditions of community described above. Drawing on an ethnographic study of a set of people living together in a home for people with AIDS, Maura Adelman and Frey show how the people who lived together created a community of practice that involved physical and communicative ways to help each other, to recognize people’s lived

experiences, and to commemorate those who died. In participating in this community of practice, members used communicative rituals to create a sense of community. That is, communicative practices within the community were used to create a sense of community for all who lived there.

Community is a concept rich in association and emotional power; it is a strategically ambiguous idea, but one that treats communication as central to who people are and how connections are built with others. For these reasons, we can expect community will remain a favored concept in communication theorizing and research.

Karen Tracy

See also Bona Fide Group Theory; Community of Practice; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Ethnography of Communication; Interpretive Communities Theory; Network Society; Symbolic-Interpretive Perspective on Groups

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COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Community of practice is a concept emphasizing that learning, knowledge, and identity are ultimately social processes arising from the collective engagement among members of a community. The theory is grounded in the doings, actions, or practices of individuals that take on meaning as the individuals engage with others in shared activities and interests. For communication study, the theory weaves together concerns of joint activity, meaning making, and identity within situated localities.

A community of practice is marked by three characteristics. First, individuals engage in *joint enterprises* reflecting a shared domain of interest. Individuals undertake tasks and activities that are linked to a commonly understood interest or aspect of the community. For example, insurance claim processors in an office individually undertake the collective work of responding to claims submitted by clients for compensation of medical expenses. Second, by undertaking joint activities and discussions, participants build relationships of *mutual engagement*; they assist one another, help each other learn how and what to do, and clarify what is meaningful and what is not, without necessarily being explicit about such concerns. Chatting with colleagues about the day's work provides such opportunities. Third, members of communities develop a *shared repertoire* of resources over time. A shared practice of experiences, tools, stories, strategies for problems, objects, and materials

results from members' involvement as practitioners of the community's domain. As claim processors undertake the routine tasks of their day, they acquire and create a host of things to do and say to enable their successful engagements in their work.

While the term was briefly noted in Etienne Wenger's dissertation of 1990, the concept was first introduced to a wider audience the following year by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger in their book *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Over succeeding years the concept has been articulated further, receiving book-length description by Wenger in his 1998 *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Since then the concept has been explored by its application to numerous fields and settings in organizations, education, and governmental agencies, among others.

Communities of practice developed from the goal of creating a *social learning theory* to explain the development of knowledge and membership via social practice. Emphasizing the social nature of the process and seeking an alternative to activity theories, the theory is based on four premises: (1) Humans are social beings, (2) knowledge is situated competence in valued undertakings, (3) knowing involves active engagement in such undertakings, and (4) learning ultimately produces meaning. Building from the emphasis of *legitimate peripheral participation*, in which learning is characterized as a feature of community practice as learners move from peripheral to full member status, development of the *community of practice* theory involves integrating concerns of meaning, practice, community, and identity. Broadly, the concept is situated among theories of social practice, which collectively engage the production and reproduction of social resources, coordinated activity, and interpretations, and among theories of identity, which collectively address the social formation of the person and membership among collectives.

Four fundamental dualities make up the concept, each providing a theoretical element extendable in practical application of the theory. The first duality is *participation–reification*, the process of our negotiating meaning by our experience and engagement with the world. As we live, we develop memberships in social communities, participating and taking part in their recognized doings. In addition, we give form to our experiences, which is what *reify*

means, by creating tools, symbols, stories, concepts, and material objects that reflect the practices in which we engage as participants. Meaning is manifested by the interplay of our participation and the things we create to reify or represent the practices of our communities. In our claims office, we create forms to aid our classifying of claims and talk to one another about the cases we encounter.

The second duality, *local–global*, emphasizes that practices and identities are locally created and reified. The local ways of undertaking activities, discourses, and materials are particular to this collection of members at this locality. It is emergent as individuals work together in response to what binds them together as a collective. As well, our identities as members are tied to the locale and its practice. For example, an entomology lab may have particular ways of organizing experiments that have developed over time in response to the participants' needs. More broadly, individual communities of practice, sharing a focus or domain of interest, may have connections to broader organizations or *constellations of practices*. All entomology labs share procedures associated with life sciences laboratories in general, presenting *global* concerns in their local practices. Our identities as well represent our multiple memberships in different communities.

Identity is further emphasized in the third duality, *identification–negotiability*. Identification refers to the process of individuals' investing themselves in the meanings of their communities by participating and reifying practice. It is also socially organized, linked to our perceived membership within the community. But with identification is also recognition that we may have different abilities or powers to shape or *negotiate* what is meaningful for us within communities. Not everyone in the claims office may adopt various activities as equally meaningful for their understanding and identification within the office.

The fourth duality emphasizes the continuities and discontinuities of learning by noting that practice involves *design* and *emergence*. Practice is not simply a context for learning about something else. We learn the practice of a community by our engagement in it, developing our memberships as we do. In this perspective, learning is ongoing across one's life in communities. Some aspects of practice may appear designed; new employees are

trained to do procedures in ways the supervisor prefers. But collectively, individuals develop ways of undertaking and understanding their activities to be productive members. Practice, then, is an emergent structure created by what and how people learn to jointly undertake the meaningful activities associated with their community. Practice is both stable, resistant to change, and adaptable, capable of responding to new concerns of the community.

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See also Activity Theory; Community; Identity Theories; Learning and Communication; Organizational Socialization and Assimilation

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COMPETENCE THEORIES

Although competence has been examined from different disciplines and perspectives, it can be simply conceptualized as an individual's ability to interact appropriately and effectively with another person in a specific context. As a basic need of human beings, competence can be understood as the extent to which a person produces the intended effect in the process of interaction. The concept is usually discussed by social scientists and communication scholars under several generic categories, including fundamental competence, linguistic competence, social competence, interpersonal competence, and relational competence.

Fundamental competence concerns the cognitive ability that helps individuals communicate effectively in different situations; *social competence* emphasizes a person's specific skills that lead to an effective interaction; *linguistic competence* focuses

more on the knowledge of and the ability to execute language and messages in the process of interaction; *interpersonal competence* is more goal oriented and concerned with the individual's ability to accomplish tasks by demonstrating certain successful communication skills; and *relational competence* highlights the importance of the reciprocal process of interaction, in which the interactants are able to establish relationships with each other to achieve goals. However, all these generic categories can be put under the concept of *communication competence*.

Debates About Communication Competence

Although the definition of competence is commonly accepted, debates continue to exist among scholars regarding whether competence is a trait, state, or perception. The trait approach argues that competence is an inherent predisposition or ability; thus some people are born to be more competent than others. The state approach argues that competence is based on performance or behavioral skills, which are influenced by the particular context, time, or place of interaction. The perception approach argues that competence is neither an intrinsic trait nor extrinsic skills but is the perception or impression resulting from the characteristics and behaviors of the interactants within the relational or interactional context of a communication interaction.

In addition to these debates about the essential nature of competence, another conceptual ambiguity related to defining competence is the use of *competence* and *effectiveness* in similar and overlapping ways. Because effectiveness mainly refers to behavioral performance, and competence requires appropriateness, which is based more on individual knowledge about or motivation toward the situation to complete its meaning, *competence* and *effectiveness* should not be used interchangeably. Instead, effectiveness should be considered one of the criteria in conceptualizing competence.

Theoretical Approaches

An array of theories have been developed to conceptualize the diversity of approaches to competence, including psychological, social, and critical. Theories of communication competence from the psychological perspective basically focus on message processing and production. The psychological

perspective of communication competence emphasizes the individual's mental process underlying behaviors. In 2003, Steven Wilson and Christina Sabee specified *expectancy theories* and *attribution theories* as the two categories of communication competence theories for message processing; these theories concern how people attend to, interpret, and evaluate communicative behaviors in interaction. Wilson and Sabee described *goals-plans-action theories* and *hierarchical theories* as the two categories of theories for message production; they concern goal attainment through the process of generating and enacting communicative behaviors.

Theories of communication competence from the social perspective emphasize the relational, functional, and contextual nature of competence. Represented by dialectic theories of human relationship, the social perspective of communication competence takes a dialectical and dialogical stance to examine the change and multiplicity of communicative behaviors in interaction.

The critical perspective for studying communication competence is a less advanced area, drawing on the critical metatheoretical approach developed by Jürgen Habermas. Based on the belief that truth is embedded in the universal pragmatic relations between speech acts, between speakers, and between speech situations, this perspective claims that the emancipated form of life must be anticipated in every act of communication. Thus, competence can be reached only in an open and unconstrained communication context. In other words, communication competence refers to the authentic, accurate, and appropriate exchange of messages in the absence of a dominance-subordination hierarchical structure of social relationship. This approach shows its potential strength when identifying competence in the context of intercultural communication.

Common Themes

The theories contained within each of these perspectives are often incompatible in terms of approaches to communication competence; nonetheless, examining the common themes that cut across these differences is important to a comprehensive understanding of competence. These common themes, based on the criteria of effectiveness and appropriateness as valid indicators

of competence, dictate that communication competence should comprise three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral abilities.

Cognitive Ability

Cognitive abilities are reflected in the individual awareness of relevant communication situations and their requirements. This situational understanding may include knowing the verbal context, in which one should know how to make sense in terms of expression; knowing the relationship context, in which one should know how to match the messages to the particular relationship at hand; and knowing the environmental context, in which one should know the constraints imposed by the symbolic and physical environments on message making. This cognitive knowledge is equivalent to *self-awareness* or *self-monitoring* in the process of communication. Self-awareness or self-monitoring helps one detect the social appropriateness of self-presentation and to further control and modify one's own expressive behaviors to meet the requirements of particular situations.

Affective Elements

The affective perspective of competence mainly concerns personal emotions or changes in feelings caused by different communication contexts or people involved in the interaction. In other words, to be competent in communication, the individual must be able to project and receive positive emotional responses in the process of interaction and demonstrate respect for differences between interactants. Scholars have identified five common personal attributes that reflect affective ability: self-concept, empathy, open-mindedness, social relaxation, and nonjudgment.

Self-concept is the way we see ourselves, which directly impacts how a person communicates and relates to the surrounding world. A person with positive self-concept, especially self-esteem, is more likely not only to think well of himself or herself and be accepted by others, but also to feel more comfortable and perform better in an ambiguous situation. Other aspects of self-concept, including optimism, extroverted personality, and self-reliance, also contribute to the enhancement of communication competence.

Empathy, or *perspective taking*, is the ability to see the event from one's counterpart's perspective during the interaction. Empathic persons are able to project themselves into another person's point of view and feel the same feelings and think the same thoughts as that person. Being able to step into another person's shoes in order to sense what is inside another person's mind helps the individual adopt different roles as required by different communication contexts, which in turn leads to reciprocity, active listening, and the establishment of rapport between the interactants.

Open-mindedness is the willingness to share with others what is on one's mind. It also is the willingness to recognize, appreciate, and accept different views and ideas from others. This process of mutual validation and confirmation of each other's identity is key to fostering a favorable impression in an interaction.

Social relaxation is the ability to regulate anxiety in interactions. A feeling of uneasiness is caused by the uncertainty or unpredictability that is created by an ambiguous situation during an initial encounter. A less competent person tends to feel insecure psychologically when entering a new situation, in which the social anxiety may lead to rigid posture, hesitation, speech disturbances, and limited communication.

Finally, being *nonjudgmental* is an effective way to avoid stereotypes and prejudices that prevent a person from listening sincerely and actively to others during the interaction. In this regard, a lack of communication competence is reflected in a person's tendency to hastily jump to conclusions in conversation without sufficient information. Such evaluative messages often lead to defensive reaction from one's counterparts, putting the interaction and the relationship in jeopardy. In contrast, being nonjudgmental fosters a feeling of enjoyment of personal differences and allows for the development of a satisfactory and supportive communication climate.

Behavioral Aspect

The behavioral aspect of competence is a dimension that concerns the ability to attain communication goals through effective application of behavioral skills. Such skills are demonstrated by adroit verbal and nonverbal behaviors that enable

an individual to get the job done effectively and appropriately in communication. Five key factors of competent behavioral skills have been identified by scholars: message skills, interaction management, behavioral flexibility, identity management, and relationship cultivation.

Message skills form the foundation of linguistic competence in communication. They demand the knowledge of linguistic rules and the ability to skillfully use verbal and nonverbal language during the interaction. For example, the effective use of communication codes, the ability to identify and distinguish main ideas and message types, and the capacity for organizing, expressing, and evaluating ideas clearly and precisely are important behavioral skills that lead to a competent communication.

Interaction management is the ability to implement the interactional rules of verbal and nonverbal messages, which mainly refers to conversational turn taking. A competent person is able to make an accurate assessment of the needs of others in order to appropriately initiate, terminate, and take turns in interaction. In other words, in the process of initiating and terminating a conversation, a competent person indicates interest, tolerance, and the ability to orient toward the others in the interaction. A successful interaction management also involves affiliation and support through speech alternation, eye contact, head nods, smiling, and physical proximity, which will naturally manifest the personal abilities of attentiveness, perceptiveness, and responsiveness in terms of communication.

Behavioral flexibility shows a person's ability to adapt to different communication situations by selecting appropriate and effective strategies to achieve personal goals in interaction. Behavioral flexibility is accompanied by a comfortable feeling when interacting with different people in different contexts. In addition to feeling easy and relaxed about getting along with new people and fitting in with different groups of people, a person with behavioral flexibility is also good at making choices in terms of messages to mark the status and relationship of the people involved in the interaction.

Identity management is based on the ability of knowing oneself as an entity, and at the same time being able to inform the counterparts about who they are. Identity cannot be developed alone by

oneself; instead, it is formed through the process of negotiation and reinforcement between the interactants in communication, which reflects a dynamic and multifaceted process. Thus, how to display the salience and intensity of each other's identity in different temporal and spatial situations is the sine qua non of being competent in communication.

The last factor of the behavioral aspect of communication competence is the ability to develop a positive relationship with others. *Relationship cultivation* is dictated by the independent and reciprocal interactions between the two parties; only through this dimension can one's needs be satisfied and a positive outcome of interaction be attained. Usually, being friendly, showing concern and commitment, and displaying courtesy and cooperativeness during the interaction will ensure the development of a beneficent relationship.

Assessment of Communication Competence

A final issue for the study of communication competence that needs to be addressed is how to assess communication competence. Scholars have taken three approaches to resolving this problem: (1) soliciting data from individuals through self-assessment of their own abilities, (2) training raters to provide objective and reliable observations of interactants' behaviors, and (3) soliciting interactants' views of their counterparts' communication abilities in communication. The issues and methods of the assessment of communication competence were organized and discussed in depth by Brian Spitzberg in 2003, providing clear direction for future researchers interested in pursuing this specific area of study.

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See also Cognitive Theories; Communication Goal Theories; Emotion and Communication; Intercultural Communication Competence; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Learning and Communication

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COMPLEXITY AND COMMUNICATION

Sir Isaac Newton argued that the relationships between all physical elements can be measured, predicted, and controlled. *Complexity theory*, as developed in the 20th century by scientists such as the Nobel laureate chemist Ilya Prigogine, says otherwise, holding that the relationships of many physical elements and organisms are nonlinear. Some theorists in the social sciences have begun to recognize the adaptability of complexity theory to human systems. For example, one of its classic ideas—that “initial conditions make a difference”—which was originally discovered in meteorology simulations, is transferable to human relationships. Meeting an attractive person, say, or beginning an important project is affected by

the precise context of when such an event happens in a sequence of other possibilities.

Inevitably, complexity theory became an umbrella concept that covers a wide span of influences in the hard and soft sciences—from chemistry and physics to communication and social psychology. It has this breadth because the more a focus on any given system, be it social or physical, is widened to include its supersystem (the layer of influences outside it, such as the weather, external politics, or technological change) and its subsystem (the layer below, such as subordinates, commodities, or outsourced functions), the more complex that system becomes. For example, SEMATECH, the computer research consortium developed in the mid-1980s to regain U.S. market share from Japan, has as its supersystem the computer industry; as its subsystem, it has its various suppliers of products and services. Complexity theory would say that it is impossible to understand SEMATECH as an organization without understanding the industry and its suppliers. And, in fact, a team of researchers documenting the SEMATECH story in the 1990s showed that the consortium’s leader, Robert Noyce, found it necessary for SEMATECH to invest in the supplier subsystem in order to improve chip-manufacturing performance.

This entry describes two kinds of complexity and then discusses the kinds of communication to be used in response to them. First is *structural* complexity, a set of conditions characterized by numerosity (e.g., the greater the number, the greater the complexity), diversity, and interdependence of system parts. When combined, these three conditions increase the amount of uncertainty that one finds or must deal with in a given system. Structural complexity, then, describes the *conditions* inherent in that system. *Dynamical* complexity, on the other hand, is the actual process of things changing nonlinearly in a structurally complex system. Say, for example, 100 leaders (numerosity) from 100 sovereign nations (diversity), whose fates are connected, must reach a decision concerning the allocation of scarce resources (interdependence of system parts). The process of their decision making is inevitably complex, and the result equally uncertain, which is to say, unpredictable. While traditional Newtonian science may identify main effects and principal features of a system, complexity theorists would argue that

total control of elements within that system is impossible because combined effects that are in simultaneous interplay act—and interact—in unpredictable ways, making systems dynamical. When structural and dynamical complexity are applied to human systems, we are reminded anew that people are only occasionally logical and rational. Because they possess imperfect information, they tend to act on the basis of ideology, chance, and perceived individual payoff.

Under conditions of dynamical complexity, the environment shifts around and behind a person such that it is difficult to know what will happen next. For example, in 1980 no one imagined the existence of the Internet and its wide use that followed just 25 years later. At the same time, a picture telephone had existed since the 1960s, but its cost was so high and the quality of the technology so low that no one used it. Who would have predicted 15 years ago that people would be interested in watching a movie on a 5-cm × 5-cm (2-in. × 2-in.) screen held in their hand, as in a smartphone? So, looking at technology alone and how consumers' tastes change in relation to their ability to pay for it exemplifies this kind of complexity.

Nonlinearity includes the idea that the mere behavior of some people taking action has a way of changing the rules for everyone. Since there is no necessarily “right” direction or answer, people, needing a way to gain some modicum of control under conditions of complexity, tend to play off each other and act outward—that is, they use each other's actions as a guide for what to do next. To return to our example of the smartphone, technologists must now be asking themselves, “What does a 5-cm × 5-cm screen mean for the future of our technology? How might such a small screen affect word processing in the future? How might we solve the problem of minute fonts and keyboards?” By the time this little entry is read, even these questions will in all likelihood seem comically dated. This ongoing evolution, in which the system state or condition at any time depends on the preceding condition, defines the system as dynamic and therefore transformative over time.

What happens in the dynamic enactment of structural complexity? Progress is uneven; the varying rate of diffusion of innovations is evidence that players with unequal knowledge innovate at different rates of speed. But there is also a greater chance

for synergy, both positive and negative. There are all kinds of synergies—religious, pharmacological, ideological, practical, and mathematical.

The synergy relating to communication in organizations is of special interest to us here. One such kind of synergy is group synergy. It includes the effect of combining unique individual talents into a team that produces a special outcome, such as a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, a Lewis and Clark expedition, or a Woodward and Bernstein political investigation. But synergy can also be the way in which complexity increases risks negatively. Just as it is possible to create new technologies that, because of their simplicity, bypass more complicated ones and create transformational results—such as the microchip's replacing the transistor—the opposite can also be true: Negative synergy can generate disastrous results. The combination, in 2001, of the technologies of passenger jets, skyscrapers, and a rudimentary knowledge of piloting an airplane is a poignant example.

Another effect of dynamical complexity is a balancing act between order and disorder within a system. This condition is called *far from equilibrium* (FFE). It has both negative and positive feedback loops and thus is simultaneously capable of stability and instability. Behavior under conditions of FFE is paradoxical because the system moves autonomously back and forth between stability and instability. Take, for example, jazz music. It has stability that is created by the bass and percussion instruments, which establish the basic rhythm of the music. But once this rhythm is in place, variation and improvisation are possible from other instruments because they play off the continuous rhythm. The combination of rhythm and improvisation makes jazz what it is—a complex system that is deliciously FFE.

What does a structural and dynamical interpretation of complexity have to do with communication? This is where the work on integrative complexity in communication and social psychology is applicable. *Integrative complexity* refers to a style of thinking—more particularly, a style of problem solving—that involves recognizing and integrating multiple perspectives and possibilities and their interrelated contingencies. The concept has two features: *differentiation*, which is the number of features of a problem situation recognized and taken into account in decision making, and *integration*, which is the

number of complex connections that are drawn from among the characteristics that have been differentiated. Integrative complexity focuses on the extent to which individuals make differentiations in their thinking and integrate those differentiations into workable solutions.

For example, let's say we're a start-up high-tech company aspiring to create technologies that build on the smartphone. All the different pieces of relevant information about that phone—as its price decreases by x percent, its adoption increases by y percent—exemplify differentiation. Meanwhile, the number of connections we manage to make among these pieces of information—for example, the total market for smartphones will be saturated in z years—exemplifies integration.

Let's say, further, that our company aspires to create a superior work environment that will help promote our creation of these technologies. Here, our goal is an environment that is markedly practical, is hospitable to lots of different meanings, and generously takes into account others' points of view. What we do not want is a simplistic environment that prefers black-and-white interpretations of information and that assumes that authoritative figures are more apt to be correct than subordinates who actually operate close to what is going on. Here, then, is the difference between integrative complexity and its opposite, low-integrative complexity.

Integratively complex thinking is affected by the speed and rate of interpretation. Low-complexity thinkers are more likely to (a) be satisfied operating with little information, (b) make snap decisions, and (c) dismiss others into an out-group if the information they provide is disagreeable. Under conditions of complexity, and when creativity is the goal, outsider information increases the quality of decision making because divergent thinkers push against common assumptions.

Integratively complex communication is FFE because it is directed toward the dual goals of processing complex information and making links among the data that provide a workable solution. Integrative complexity involves establishing rules for operating that allow the system to perform without focusing on rules for rules' sake; in addition, those operating under integrative complexity are willing to change rules when they no longer serve the system.

Within integrative complexity, simple social realities are not given as fact but rather constructed and interpreted in complex ways. Any observed phenomenon is the resolution of a large number of mutual, simultaneous, entangled interactions, each of which is constantly shaping and being shaped by all others; there is no simple linear relationship between cause and effect, or even between success and failure. Analytical approaches have generally failed to acknowledge this dynamic nature of organization, analogous to a living process, in which some interdependent parts may experience more comparative degrees of success or failure than others at any given moment. Things tend not to come out even.

Integratively complex systems have checks and balances, multilevel assessments of performance, testing of assumptions with measurement, and public meetings at scheduled intervals to advance arguments so that understanding can mature over time. These practices help show that “the right way to go” is constantly up in the air and dependent on the conversations of participants who are knowledgeable about the problem at hand. Action is valuable under conditions of complexity. It's important to understand the irony of bureaucratic control—that the very attempt to make systems that are perfectly rule-following often results in consequences opposite of what was originally intended.

Integratively complex systems focus on information processing and decision making—especially on how fixed or flexible the interpretation of information is and how, once interpreted, information leads to decision-making structures. An integratively complex system is both stable enough to remain safe from destruction and free enough to experiment and to invent systems that create opportunity.

Larry Browning

See also Cybernetics; Group Communication Theories; Organizational Communication Theories; System Theory

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COMPLIANCE GAINING STRATEGIES

Efforts to gain the compliance of others are ubiquitous. Compliance-gaining communication is a form of persuasion that, in turn, is a form of influence. *Influence* may therefore be understood as an umbrella term that encompasses both intentional and unintentional communication to alter another's beliefs, attitudes, intentions, or behavior. Compliance gaining and compliance resisting are typically viewed as a subset of persuasion that involves intentional efforts to change another's behavior.

Conceptualizing Compliance Gaining

As its name suggests, compliance gaining emphasizes a specific outcome: compliance. Its emphasis

is not on attitude change, but rather on *behavioral conformity*. Research on compliance gaining examines various verbal and nonverbal strategies to increase the likelihood of securing another's adherence. Promise of reward and threat of punishment are two of many such strategies. The trajectory of research in this area has emphasized the interpersonal arena, or one-on-one compliance gaining, although other contexts have been studied as well.

Taxonomies and Typologies

Compliance-gaining research dates back to at least 1960, when John French and Bertram Raven identified five bases of power used in social interaction. *Reward power* involves the ability to confer benefits on others. *Coercive power* focuses on the ability to inflict punishments or impose penalties on others. *Expert power* centers on expertise or competence. We tend to comply with people who “know their stuff.” *Legitimate power* is based on one's official rank or formal standing. Finally, *referent power* has to do with being admired or respected. A person is more likely to comply with a request from someone she or he reveres.

In the mid-1960s, Gerald Marwell and David Schmidt were among the first to demarcate compliance gaining as a field of study. They identified 16 strategies that they labeled as a *deductive taxonomy*, meaning that all compliance-gaining efforts could be grouped into one of the 16 categories. In the early 1980s, Richard Wiseman and William Schenck-Hamlin questioned such an a priori scheme, noting that some strategies, such as deceit or hinting, were ignored. Wiseman and Schenck-Hamlin formulated their own *inductive taxonomy*, which yielded a total of 14 strategies. Frank Boster, James Stiff, and Rodney Reynolds reconciled the disparity in these two schemes by noting that they were complementary and that combining them produced 24 distinct strategies.

Soon after, a proliferation of taxonomies ensued. In the mid-1990s this taxonomic confusion was remedied somewhat by Kathy Kellermann and Tim Cole. They compared 74 different taxonomies and noted that many strategies were overlapping and/or not conceptually distinct. Similar strategies often carried dissimilar labels (e.g., *threat* and *warning*), and dissimilar strategies often shared confusingly similar labels (e.g., *favor* and *altruism*). After

integrating all the strategies, they concluded that 64 separate, distinct strategies had been identified in the literature.

In addition to the patchwork quilt of strategies, compliance-gaining research was problematic on other grounds. First, much of the research was atheoretical in nature. Researchers identified what strategies participants claimed they would use, but not why participants chose those particular strategies. Second, many studies were based on hypothetical checklists. Respondents were presented with hypothetical scenarios, offered a list of potential strategies, and instructed to rate the strategies according to their likelihood of using them. Such an approach risks *social desirability bias*. On paper, respondents might prefer more positive strategies. In practice, however, they might employ more negative strategies. A third limitation is that many studies measured only *strategy preferences*, not behavioral compliance. More recent investigations, thankfully, have focused on actual compliance in real-world settings.

Cialdini's Principles

Robert Cialdini, a leading figure in compliance-gaining research, integrated studies from a variety of disciplines into five basic principles of compliance gaining. The first principle, *reciprocity*, is based on doing another person a favor (called *pre-giving*) and then asking for a different, larger favor in return. Another principle, *commitment and consistency*, centers on a person's desire to maintain psychological consistency among her or his beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The third principle, *social proof*, involves comparing oneself to others and modeling others' behavior. The fourth principle, *authority*, relies on source factors such as credibility. The fifth principle, *liking*, is based on warm, ingratulatory behaviors and attractiveness. The sixth and final principle, *scarcity*, has to do with increasing the perceived value of something by making it appear to be in short supply.

Politeness Theory and Influence Attempts

Influence attempts require facework and identity management. Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's *politeness theory* highlights the interdependent nature of requesters' and requestees' face needs. A requester usually adapts his or her

message to satisfy the requestee's face needs. Some strategies may threaten another's *positive face*—by conveying disapproval, for instance—or another's *negative face*, by constraining the other's freedom or autonomy. When framing requests, then, requesters tend to avoid face-threatening acts and shape their language choices accordingly. The same applies to compliance resisting. When declining a request, the requestee typically chooses language strategies that spare her or him guilt and the other person embarrassment. One of the challenges in making or declining requests is the need to strike a balance between being clear or straightforward and honoring face needs.

Dillard's Goals–Plans–Action Model of Interpersonal Influence

In an effort to understand the bases for strategy development and selection, James Dillard developed the *goals–plans–action (GPA) model of interpersonal influence*. The model focuses on the cognitive processes involved in an influence attempt, starting with the source's goals. Goals are future states of affairs that a person wishes to bring about. Compliance gaining often entails multiple goals, which Dillard delineates as *primary* and *secondary goals*. Primary goals are the catalysts for compliance gaining, while secondary goals shape the approach used. When one person asks another out on a date, the requester's primary goal is for the other person to accept the invitation. A secondary goal might be to save face if the invitation is declined. Thus, the requester might test the waters by asking, "Are you doing anything this Saturday night?" Primary and secondary goals may be complementary or contradictory.

Seven types of primary goals have been identified by Dillard. These include *gain assistance* ("Would you help me move?"); *give advice* ("I'd have that looked at if I were you."); *share activity* ("Let's do lunch."); *change orientation*, for example, alter another's perspective ("You should become a vegan: You'll look and feel better."); *change relationship* ("I think we should take a break and just be . . . friends."); *obtain permission* ("Is it OK if I leave early tomorrow?"); and *enforce rights and obligations* ("You promised we would have a destination wedding!"). Primary goals are the impetus for constructing compliance-gaining

messages. Dillard does not claim these are the only primary goals. He also acknowledges that goals exist at varying levels of abstraction.

In addition to primary goals, five types of secondary goals have been identified. *Identity goals* involve personal, ethical standards of behavior. *Conversation management goals* focus on identity management and face-saving behavior. *Relational-resource goals* focus on relationship maintenance strategies. *Personal-resource goals* are aimed at improving one's assets. Finally, *affect management goals* emphasize the importance of managing moods and emotions during influence attempts.

Primary and secondary goals vary in their degree of compatibility. According to Dillard, the interplay between them reflects their *goal-structure complexity*. Based on the relationships among all the goals involved, a person develops *plans*, which are possible means of achieving goals. Plans vary in their level of abstraction, complexity, and completeness. Thus, a plan may be half baked or carefully conceived. Plans are developed based on such considerations as ease of execution, likelihood of success, and anticipated resistance.

To implement plans, a compliance gainer must develop *strategies* and *tactics*. Strategies are more abstract, while tactics are more specific or concrete. Thus a parent who used a *strategy* of positive reward to motivate his or her son to try harder in school might employ the tactic "If you get all A's this semester, I'll take you to Disneyland." While independent studies have found support for the GPA model, more empirical testing of the model is needed. At present, the GPA model serves as a useful explanatory framework of how individuals go about designing compliance-gaining messages.

Verbal Strategies

Sequential Requests

Compliance gainers often rely on a series of requests, with an earlier request laying the groundwork for a later request. A variety of sequential strategies have been identified in the literature, including the *low-ball* technique, the *that's-not-all* technique, and the *bait-and-switch* tactic. For brevity's sake, this section examines the two that

have garnered the most research attention: *foot-in-the-door* (FITD) and *door-in-the-face* (DITF).

When using the FITD technique, a source makes a small initial request to soften up the recipient, or target, of the request. Next, a larger, follow-up request is made. Compliance with the initial request significantly increases the likelihood of compliance with the second request, compared with no initial request at all. One explanation for the effectiveness of the FITD is based on Daryl Bem's *self-perception theory*. Doing a small good deed activates a person's self-awareness that she or he is a helpful person. Complying with the second, larger request reinforces that self-perception. The FITD strategy has proven to be quite robust, especially when the request is prosocial in nature.

A companion strategy is the DITF technique. This strategy involves making an initial large request, on the assumption that it will be rejected, then following up with a second, more reasonable request. A variety of explanations have been offered for the effectiveness of the DITF. Two of the most common are *reciprocal concessions* and *social responsibility*. For strangers, it appears that targets perceive they are engaged in a negotiation, and compliance with the second request is viewed as a compromise. For friends, a sense of social responsibility or helping behavior seems to be at work. Other explanations, such as the *perceptual-contrast phenomenon*, also have been offered: Compared with the first request, the second request seems much more reasonable. Yet another explanation is *guilt based*; having said no once, the target feels guilty about saying no again. Whatever the underlying mechanism, the DITF has proven to be an effective compliance gaining strategy.

Other Verbal Strategies

Other verbal strategies include the *disrupt-then-reframe* (DTR) strategy, the *even-a-penny-helps* strategy, and the *even-a-few-minutes-helps* strategy. The objective of the DTR strategy is to reduce resistance by using a non sequitur. For example, a requester might ask, "Would you like to buy some raffle tickets? They are \$3. That's 300 pennies. What a bargain." The verbal anomaly "300 pennies" tends to interrupt the target's thought process, thereby reducing resistance. Reframing, for example, "What a bargain," redirects attention to the positive features of the request. For the DTR

to be effective, both elements—disruption and reframing—are essential.

Making a request and adding “even a penny helps” also has been shown to increase compliance. Yet inserting the phrase “even a few minutes would help” is ineffective. Another study revealed that adding the word “please” to a request for a charitable donation actually backfired, reducing the rate of compliance. Thus, not every verbal appeal is effective.

A variety of other verbal strategies rely on impression management to induce compliance. Two such strategies are *ingratiation* and *self-promotion*. Ingratiation behaviors include compliments (“I love that tie!”) and opinion conformity (“You are so right!”). Self-promotion seeks to enhance another’s impression of the source (“I can meet you as soon as I’m done helping at the homeless shelter.”). Both positive (“You are so helpful!”) and negative *social labeling* (“You should be ashamed!”) also have been shown to increase compliance.

Nonverbal Strategies

Immediacy

A number of nonverbal strategies for gaining compliance have been documented in the literature. Many of these are based on *immediacy behaviors*, such as eye contact, smiling, and touch. Peter Andersen’s *direct effects model of immediacy* posits that warm, involving behaviors, in and of themselves, generate more favorable impressions of the requester. Greater liking for the requester, in turn, leads to greater compliance.

Touch and Compliance

A number of investigations have demonstrated that a brief, light touch on the shoulder increases compliance. Touch tends to elicit a more favorable impression of the requester, which translates into greater compliance. Touch has been shown to increase tips left by diners, facilitate helping behavior by passersby, improve participation rates in a survey, and increase petition signing. In one study, strangers were asked to watch a large, unruly dog while its owner ran an errand. Strangers who were touched were more likely to comply, compared with strangers who were not touched. These results appear to be generalizable to other settings. A

meta-analysis by Chris Segrin revealed that touch was always as effective and often more effective than no touch. Interestingly, touch appears to be effective even if the target is unaware of it.

Eye Contact

Gaze is another immediacy behavior that has been shown to facilitate compliance. For example, one study found that direct eye contact increased targets’ willingness to participate in a survey. Moreover, a verbal request is not necessarily required for eye contact to work. One study found that a person with an arm injury was more likely to receive assistance if she made eye contact with a bystander, as opposed to avoiding eye contact.

One exception to the general finding that eye contact facilitates compliance involves illegitimate requests. Chris Kleinke found that eye contact increased compliance with a legitimate request but decreased compliance with an illegitimate request. Avoiding eye contact while making an illegitimate request may be perceived as a sign of deference or humility. With few exceptions, however, gaze seems to be an effective compliance-gaining strategy.

Smiling

People who smile are perceived as kinder, happier, warmer, more sociable, and more honest than unsmiling people. Not only does smiling tend to engender more favorable impressions of a person, it also increases the likelihood that others will lend assistance. One study found that students who were caught cheating received more lenient punishment when they smiled.

Putting a smile on another’s face also appears to facilitate compliance gaining. In one study, a food server who provided a joke for diners received more tips than food servers who did not offer a joke. Smiling, however, is not a foolproof strategy. Smiles can be highly ambiguous. What one person perceives as a genuine smile, another may perceive as disingenuous. The meaning of a smile is thus interpreted against a backdrop of contextual clues, including gender, culture, and the nature of the relationship.

Mirroring and Mimicry

Mirroring or *mimicry* of another’s nonverbal behavior also has been shown to facilitate

compliance. Mirroring another's nonverbal cues may be construed as a sign of liking or rapport. Mimicry also can facilitate helping behavior. As with many nonverbal cues, mirroring appears to operate at a low level of awareness. The person whose nonverbal behavior is being imitated is typically unaware of the strategy.

Appearance and Apparel

Appearance and apparel are not so much immediacy cues as credibility and status factors. An abundance of research suggests that appearance cues, such as attractiveness and attire, play a role in compliance gaining. Physically attractive people benefit from a variety of positive attributions others make about them. These attributions carry over into behavioral compliance. For example, attractive persons who solicited charity donations received a larger number of donations than did unattractive persons. And strangers were more likely to assist an attractive than an unattractive young woman, and more likely still to help a "traditionally" attractive woman as opposed to an attractive "feminist."

The fairly consistent finding is that well-dressed people are more likely to gain others' compliance than poorly dressed people are. In one study, for example, a well-dressed or casually dressed "shoplifter" pocketed a CD in a retail store in plain view of another customer. Customers were less likely to report the well-dressed thief than the casually dressed thief.

People wearing uniforms are more likely to secure compliance than nonuniformed persons are. In one investigation, a passerby was more likely to help a stranger who needed change for a parking meter when the stranger was dressed as a firefighter rather than as a businessperson or a homeless person.

Contexts for Compliance Gaining

Although early studies on compliance gaining relied heavily on self-reports involving hypothetical situations, recent research centers on compliance in real-world settings. A wide variety of communication contexts have been examined thus far, including bystanders and helping behavior, classroom compliance, computer-mediated influence, food servers and tipping behavior, intimate influence,

physician-patient encounters, police interrogation and custodial interviews, retail sales, sexual compliance and resistance, and upward-downward influence in organizational settings. Examining specific strategies in specific contexts has proved much more valuable than the earlier efforts to develop universal, "one size fits all" typologies.

Ethics of Compliance Gaining

As is the case with all persuasion, compliance gaining is fraught with *ethical concerns*. While some view the study of compliance gaining as ethically suspect, equating it with manipulation, others maintain that compliance gaining is a necessary, indispensable feature of human interaction. Robert Gass and John Seiter maintain that particular strategies, such as fear appeals, deception, and ingratiation, are neither good nor bad in and of themselves. Rather, they suggest, the "motives color the means," meaning that the moral quality of an influence attempt depends more on the end(s) sought than the means used. By way of illustration, if one used deception to swindle a person out of his or her life savings, the outcome would be unethical. If one used deception to conceal a surprise party for a friend, however, deception would be justifiable as a means to an end.

Conclusion

Compliance gaining piqued the interest of scholars in the 1960s and has continued ever since. Much of the current research is being conducted in specific communication contexts. While some compliance-gaining contexts may seem mundane, such as studying ways to increase tips, other compliance-gaining research, such as resisting unwanted sexual advances or encouraging patients to follow their doctor's advice, holds important social consequences. Further research in this area offers the prospect not only of how to facilitate compliance, but of how to resist influence attempts as well.

Robert H. Gass

See also Immediacy; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Politeness Theory

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COMPLICITY THEORY

Complicity theory draws on critical race theory and cultural studies to explore how discourse in opposition to certain groups contributes to the negative social construction of difference as well as identity. Grounded in the *theory of the opposite party* attributed to the ancient Greek Sophist Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, complicity theory begins with the idea that individuals or groups that are at odds fail to see how their positions are implicated in each other's and applies this observation to contemporary conflicts that center on issues of race, gender, class, and classification.

Complicity theory takes the notion that language creates reality to its logical extreme by suggesting that a language of argument and persuasion that rests on rigid definitions of self and other actually cultivates an understanding of difference as fundamentally negative. This account questions the underlying assumption of much Western communication theory that argument and persuasion are “natural” forms of human symbolic interaction.

Theories of complicity are not unique to communication studies. In literary theory, for example, complicity critiques account for the ways that those subjected to oppressive symbolic practices reinforce the institutional and ideological systems that oppress them. Within literary, cultural, and rhetorical studies, theories of complicity have offered powerful and provocative perspectives to view the problems and possibilities of oppositional resistance and emancipatory action.

Within literary and cultural studies, complicity critiques have focused on the ways in which social actors participate socially and symbolically in the creation and maintenance of oppressive symbolic and material practices of late capitalism. Within communication studies, complicity theory has focused on the recognition of the subtle and sometimes insidious ways that individuals are implicated in systems of domination by certain oppositional discursive strategies employed to critique those systems. This conception of complicity as a *theory of negative difference* is grounded in research on rhetoric and race that explores the symbolic and epistemological aspects of oppositional discourse and criticism.

The most sustained considerations of complicity theory have emerged in studies of African American culture, consciousness, and identity. The earliest discussions of complicity as a theory of negative difference emerged in research on the rhetoric of racism that challenged accepted notions of domination and subordination and examined the underlying assumptions of traditional Western communication theories and practices, including notions of Black authenticity and unity. The theory has been adopted by African American communication scholars to examine the complexities of Black nationalism and Black masculinity, as well as notions of racial difference and identity. Complicity theory has also been utilized by scholars writing on reconciliation and reparations to

explore the ways in which public and intellectual discourse has actually been reinforced and sustained by oppositional communication.

Complicity theory has also influenced scholarship in studies of Whiteness, gay and lesbian identity, race and gender in higher education, and the power of media to cultivate interracial understanding. In each of these areas, complicity theory offers a useful lens through which the complex character of discursive resistance and reification can be analyzed and explicated. Whiteness studies have drawn on complicity theory to consider how conceptions of racial identity taken to be essentially true contribute to symbolic and social antagonisms and also reinforce White privilege and ideological innocence. Gay and lesbian studies have explored the complex contradictions that emerge at the intersection of Christianity and sexuality and how rigid notions of difference and identity are challenged in this context. Complicity theory has been applied to studies of how educational institutions function with fixed notions of race and gender identity, even as these institutions ostensibly call such notions into question, and has also been used to investigate the potential of film to reshape and transform racial attitudes.

These studies also explore a central concept of complicity theory: the notion of coherence. Coherence focuses on the ways in which seemingly antithetical positions are implicated in each other. While complicity and coherence can be viewed as *contrasting* notions, they can also be understood to exist in a dialogic, or *complementary*, relationship. This understanding of complicity theory assumes that it is not possible to move *beyond* complicity, but only to recognize that we are always complicit in systems of domination. To believe that we can escape our complicity, then, only reinforces the very systems we hope to transform or overcome.

The disease of alcoholism offers a useful analogy: It is only by recognizing and accepting that one is an alcoholic that one can address the disease. When applied to social phenomena such as racism and sexism, complicity theory posits that we can begin to address these conditions only by acknowledging that they always influence our language and behavior, even when we believe that they do not. The notion that one can be “color blind” or “gender blind” is thus a form of self-deception. We are, by virtue of the fact that we live in societies shaped

by racism and sexism, complicit in those systems: Only when we can accept our complicity can we begin to understand and address its implications for language, life, and social interaction.

Mark Lawrence McPhail

See also Afrocentricity; Critical Race Theory; Intercultural Communication Theories; Interracial Communication; Social Construction of Reality

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COMPREHENSIVE MODEL OF INFORMATION SEEKING

See Uncertainty Management Theories

COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

In the broadest sense, computer-mediated communication (CMC) can be any form of communication

that is mediated by *digital* technology. Thus, a telephone conversation can be said to be computer mediated if each speech act is converted into digital code, transmitted, and then decoded for the listener.

In relation to the speech acts themselves, such a conversation is no different from that mediated by an analogue or human-operated telephone exchange. However, when the conversation is converted into a form that is managed by computing systems, the spatial, temporal, and social contexts of telephony can be radically transformed. Speech acts can be digitally recorded and digitally recognized in ways that are storable and exchangeable with other digital information. Calls can be screened, forwarded, and blocked, and conversations can be timed in ways that are linked to billing; all these properties impact how people use the telephone, whether they use it at all, and how long they use it.

While CMC can take in the study of telephony and *interactivity* in any computer-mediated form, the most common meaning of it is related to the direct use of personal computers for communication, to the point that today, CMC is often used interchangeably with online Internet communication. Thus e-mail, chat rooms, bulletin boards, and simulated worlds are all forms of CMC. But the distinguishing feature here is that what is being mediated is *communication*—not information or entertainment. Browsing the World Wide Web and downloading information—the primary activity of Web 1.0 (the original use of the Internet)—are not examples of CMC. Rather, communication between individuals, whether one-to-one or many-to-many, sharing text, sounds, and images in Web 2.0, and interacting in next-generation environments are examples. However, the most common forms of CMC are e-mail, with its very low bandwidth, or the broader-banded online social networking outlets, in which users can post images or music. But in each case, text predominates.

A further division here is between synchronous and asynchronous CMC. Many chat sites, such as the early Internet Relay Chat and “I seek you,” Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs) and MUDs object oriented (MOOs), and today’s Second Life are in real time. The bulk of CMC, however, is asynchronous, with e-mail and online social networking offering the convenience of communication that can be stored in a threaded conversation.

The fact that there are several varieties of CMC, according to temporal and bandwidth qualities, has led some researchers to problematize the status and nature of interactivity in CMC.

Interactivity

Founder of the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Sheizaf Rafaeli is a key theorist who can assist in understanding interaction within CMC. In an important 1988 article, Rafaeli distinguishes between connectivity, reactivity, and interactivity. Networks must have a human interface, but they must also have an architecture that makes interactivity possible. Such interactive networks, once established, take on a history of their own, and through such a history, relationships are formed. Two-way communication does not, in itself, guarantee interactivity. Rather, an exchange or action–reaction must develop into a relationship in which one utterance becomes a context for another. Without this form of connectivity, relationships become either circular or solipsistic.

Rafaeli also wants to abandon the dyadic model that is applied to most CMC. Online interactivity is distributed across a network and cannot be reduced to the sum of a point-to-point exchange. Every message takes into account preceding messages, as well as the ways in which previous messages react to one another. This view of interactivity suggests that the actual use of CMC is seldom interactive, particularly in cases of anonymity in CMC discussion groups. For this reason, a fundamental distinction needs to be made between CMC users and groups that have other outside relationships and those that do not.

Computer-Mediated Communication Research Directions

This distinction corresponds to two dominant directions in CMC research—the *cues-filtered-out* approach, which focuses research on users, and *avatar* research. When CMC is experienced as an extension of interpersonal or institutional relationships online, interlocutors are generally referred to as *users*. When interlocutors have no off-line relationship and identities exist only online, they are referred to as *avatars*.

Cues-Filtered-Out Approach

Research into users is distinctively concerned with the way computer-extended communication mediates face-to-face forms of communication. The face-to-face becomes an analogue and benchmark for measuring the “success” of CMC, which is viewed as substituting for the face-to-face. It is known as a cues-filtered-out approach because it examines which cues of nonverbal communication are missing in the communication event and how they are put “back in.” Particularly important to this perspective, then, is the study of *emoticons*, the symbols used in e-mail to denote facial expressions, and *netiquette*, the ways that cyberspace demands the forms of polite protocol expected in embodied life.

Nancy Baym argues that in computer-mediated interaction, people are not able to see, hear, or feel one another, which eliminates their ability to use context cues. This leaves them in a kind of social vacuum that is different from face-to-face talk. Because of this, CMC participants typically find ways of “putting back in” the cues that are lost from external contexts. Therefore, much effort goes into bringing these external contexts into the content of interaction.

Baym also identifies five different sources of impact on CMC: (1) external contexts, in which the use of CMC is set (language, city); (2) the temporal structure of the group (synchronistic or asynchronistic); (3) the infrastructure of the computer system (speed, number of computers, capacity for anonymity, user-friendliness); (4) the purposes for which the CMC is used (interest oriented, uses and gratifications); and (5) the characteristics of the group and its members (group size, educational level of participants).

Avatar Research

The second direction of CMC research—avatar research—which was very popular in the late 1990s, champions the exclusion of external contexts of CMC. This research argues that online identities, or avatars, enjoy a neutral space of interaction. Because there are no cues that can spontaneously signify an interlocutor’s appearance, gender, class, and ethnicity, avatars are seen to communicate on an equal footing, without any of the social discrimination that accompanies the

above categories. An avatar can exist in a number of CMC environments. The avatar’s identity may be limited to textual representation, or in the case of many synchronous forms of simulated CMC—such as MUDs, MOOs, and Second Life—an avatar can take on a visual form and adopt voices and behavior that are constructed online. The avatar does not have an identity or a history other than what is formed online.

In the 1990s, the question of online identity represented by the avatar was a major source of fascination for CMC scholars. Social-psychological and psychoanalytic frameworks have been used to understand virtual identity as a unique form of self-identity without the social inhibitions that exist in real life. The notion of cyberpsychology emerged, and new journals, such as *Cyber-Psychology & Behavior*, were established. Much of the work in this approach sought to analyze the way CMC relationships might deviate from real-life relationships with respect to honesty, morality, and empathy. Other writers, such as Sherry Turkle, saw CMC as emancipatory because it allowed people to explore their identity in a socially and physically safe simulated reality.

The euphoria that characterized the social psychology of CMC that was popular in the 1990s came under attack from a number of writers who argued that it ignored empirical research showing that CMC is one medium among many by which the same people interact. The concept of the avatar makes sense only if too sharp a distinction is drawn between the *virtual life* and real life. However, a series of everyday-life types of empirical studies in the late 1990s showed this approach to be unhelpful in explaining why some people spent a great deal of time online while for others, CMC represented a minor part of their communication practices. Moreover, at its height, avatar research could hardly lay claim to providing a representation of some kind of neutral, asocial human nature when it is considered that CMC in the mid-1990s was very much dominated by North American upper-middle-class professionals who shared similar interests.

In recent years, the interest in the avatar has waned and is of little interest to the *net generation* of young people who are born as “digital natives” and have not faced the novelty of having to migrate to digital culture. As Susan Herring has noted, the

net generation does not relate well to the utopian speculations or the debates about online democracy, identity, and virtuality of earlier decades.

David Holmes

See also Digital Cultures; Media Equation Theory; Network Society; New Media Theory; Presence Theory

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CONFLICT COMMUNICATION THEORIES

In the early 1970s, communication scholars entered the field of conflict theory, dissatisfied by ways previous scholars had treated interactants as solely rational and strategic, communication as binary (communicate or not communicate), and conflict as necessarily destructive. Two implicit assumptions made it impossible to reveal the process or function of communication in conflict: that conflict results from insufficient or ineffective communication and that cooperation is inherently superior. Communication theorists, rather, espoused a view of conflict as an inevitable and necessary social process that when managed well contributes to creativity, cohesiveness, relational growth, and productivity. Most communication theorists prefer the term *conflict management* to *conflict resolution* because the former suggests an ongoing communication process focusing attention on interaction, whereas the latter suggests episodes that must be dealt with as they occur, focusing attention on the discrete content of each episode. The title of a widely cited book, *Working Through Conflict*, captures the essence of communication theorists' presumptions about conflict communication. Not only do individuals communicate to "work through" conflicts; they also accomplish work "through conflict." This entry reviews conceptual issues in the development of communication conflict theory, overviews early models that form the foundation of contemporary communication conflict theory, and summarizes four continuing traditions of communication conflict theory. A great deal of the information herein is drawn from the 2006 *Handbook of Conflict Communication*.

Uniting Conflict and Communication

Communication and conflict are interdependent, simultaneously defining each other. In 1973, Leonard Hawes and David Smith discussed the conceptualization of conflict along three dimensions: *goal*, *strategy*, and *time*. They delineated prospective and retrospective approaches to goals. The common approach at the time was *prospective*, assuming individuals have clear, direct goals; conflict is defined by contradictory goals. The

retrospective approach assumes that goals are meaningful only after behaviors are enacted; communication defines the nature of a conflict rather than goals. The second dimension, strategy, refers to resolution versus management of conflict, mentioned previously. The difference lies in the assumption of conflict as destructive or constructive. The third dimension, time, refers to the assumption of whether conflict is episodic or continuous—a temporary disruption to be eliminated or a normal, vital, and integrating aspect of interaction to be managed. Different combinations of assumptions on these three dimensions lead to different conceptualizations of conflict. Prior to the entry of communication scholars, theoretical treatments presumed prospective goals, resolution strategies, and an episodic time frame. This approach was very limited. Communication scholars were called on to take the opposite view (retrospective goals, constructive outcome, and continuous time frame).

In 1978, another communication scholar, Brent Ruben, developed a system-theoretic view that embodies this opposite approach. He argued for a pragmatic or transactional view of communication, presumed by a retrospective view. A prospective view of goals implicitly assumes a mechanistic sender → message → receiver = effect view of communication. Ruben's perspective rejects both this linear view and the prospective view of goals. Ruben also distinguished *paraconflict* (symbolic) from conflict (observable action). As symbolic, conflict is defined as constructive or destructive by how it feels to the individuals. As action, conflict is defined as constructive or destructive by how it functions for the system. Ruben did not allow for an episodic conceptualization because he viewed communication as continual and inevitable. Conflict is defined as the discrepancies between the demands and/or capabilities of the system and the demands and/or capacities of the environment. Conflict is the way a system survives, because adaptation (communication) is constant; conflict and adaptation are inseparable.

Conceptualizing Conflict and Communication

By the 1980s, communication scholars had consensus on a definition for conflict that allows for a prospective, constructive, and continuous view of conflict: the interaction of interdependent people

who perceive the opposition of goals, aims, and/or values and who see the other party as potentially interfering with the realization of these goals. Three important features make this definition important to communication theorists: interaction, incompatibility, and interdependence.

Early Conflict Models

Although they rejected basic presumptions underlying much of previous theory, communication conflict theorists found much to build on. The most influential of these early models were game theory and social exchange, integrative and strategic bargaining, the dual-concern model, and mediation competency models.

Game Theory and Social Exchange

Rooted in economic modeling, game theory provides a mathematical system for modeling conflict and predicting conflict behavior. Game theory analyzes rationally conducted conflict between *players*, each of whom pursues well-defined interests and chooses from among alternative actions. Players construct strategies to maximize gain and minimize loss. The underlying premise is that players are consistently rational; a player will necessarily attempt to maximize his or her gains. Game theory failed to capture the social and interactive nature of human intentionality and conflict. The assumption that humans are consistently rational and the inability to account for relational interdependencies are major factors in communication theorists' dissatisfaction. Game theory treated communication as simple information exchange, usually binary (communicate or not). Game theory was unable to account for ambiguities in intentionality, changes in the process, or variations in psychological and relational processes.

Although game theory research in communication declined by the 1980s, its economic presumptions resurfaced in social-exchange models of conflict and negotiation. Social-exchange models presume that disputants hold rational motives to maximize self-interest, which is rooted in symbolic and multiple social resources. Furthermore, the interaction itself can be a social resource. Also unlike game theory, exchange theory allows theorists to account for reciprocity.

Integrative Versus Distributive Bargaining

Integrative negotiation models, introduced in the 1960s, were a key advance in the study of bargaining. Previously, negotiation theory focused on distributive processes, in which participants view their goals as *zero sum* (one party's gain is another's loss). Integrative bargaining is often summarized by the phrase *win-win*; it advocates joint problem solving rather than competition. Communication theorists used models of integrative and distributive negotiation to develop theories of collective bargaining, mediation, and interpersonal conflict. They conceptually differentiated between strategies and tactics. *Strategies* are broad plans of action (e.g., problem solving); *tactics* are specific messages that enact strategies (e.g., information sharing). According to Linda Putnam, in the late 1980s, communication theorists examined the functions of strategies and tactics and how conflict negotiation evolves over time, studying communication patterns and the multiple and various functions served by messages. Communication scholars brought a dynamic view of conflict in their application of integrative and distributive bargaining models.

Dual Concern

The dual-concern model focuses on conflict management styles, predispositions, and behavioral tendencies. The two dimensions are concern for self and concern for others. When these dimensions are arranged to form quadrants, five basic conflict styles can be identified—one in each corner and one in the center. Robert Blake and Jane Mouton developed the original model of management style, the *managerial grid*, in 1964. Their five conflict styles are *forcing* (high concern for results, low concern for people), *confronting* (high concern for results, high concern for people), *smoothing* (low concern for results, high concern for people), *withdrawal* (low concern for results, low concern for people), and *compromising* (moderate on both). In the 1970s, Ralph Kilmann and Kenneth Thomas created an instrument to measure the five conflict styles.

Numerous communication theorists developed dual-concern models and instruments. These models differ in conceptualization of the dimensions and styles, and several collapse the styles into three categories that mirror integrative, distributive, and

avoidance behaviors. Early dual-concern models were meant to exemplify typical conflict behaviors that can be predicted for individuals across time and conflict episodes. As this body of theory developed, many scholars enriched it, examining communication competence, emotional valence, hidden tactics, changes in strategy over time, contextual influences, and personality. The dual-concern model is criticized for its cultural bias, reliance on self-report, inability to account for ongoing interaction, and linear approach to the relationship between conflict and communication, yet it continues to be a dominant approach to understanding conflict and communication.

Mediation Competency

Unlike negotiation, in mediation a third party intervenes to help manage the conflict. Relying on negotiation research, early communication mediation theory examined competent mediators' strategies, tactics, phases, and communication patterns. According to Linda Putnam, the earliest of this work focused on persuasion, examining bluffing, coercion, and influence. Tricia Jones pioneered the study of communication and mediation in the 1980s; her taxonomy of mediation communication strategies and tactics allowed her to discover that mediator communication fulfills three basic functions: facilitation, substantive direction, and procedural control. Previously, communication theorists had relied on labor-management mediation theories that did not account for the richness of interaction and relational communication.

Also at this time, William Donohue developed competence models based on appropriate timing of interventions used by mediators. His most important conclusions were that immediate intervention following an attack avoids conflict escalation and that mediators who adjust to disputants' emotional intensity are most successful. Communication theorists' interest in mediator interventions continues to grow, examining such things as peer and community mediation, perceptual and structural factors, transformational processes, empowerment, and meaning creation.

Continuing Traditions

Continuing traditions of communication conflict theory can be organized into four basic contexts:

interpersonal, organizational, community, and intercultural/international. Theory and research are conducted on three basic levels of analysis: cognitive, interactional, or institutional.

The Interpersonal Context

The term *interpersonal conflict* refers to the context of personal relationships, with a large literature focusing on dating and marital relationships. Ted Huston's *social-ecological model* views the environment, individuals, and relational processes as interconnected levels of analysis, each of which varies on a time frame from molar (broad historical/social processes) to micro (individual events). John Caughlin and Anita Vangelisti integrate relational conflict communication theory and research into this model by organizing the literature into categories: conflict behaviors and relational outcomes, individual influences on relational conflict, and contextual/environmental influences.

William Donohue's *relational order theory* specifically applies to mediation of marital conflict. Disputants' relational messages about their feelings for one another and perceptions of power and status create relational frames constraining negotiation. Relational order theory predicts that development of consistent relational frames allows the ability to find common ground on substantive issues. Four basic relational frames arise from combinations of high and low levels of interdependence and affiliation. The mediator must resolve relational paradoxes and find ways to move the partners toward a frame of high interdependence and affiliation.

Ascan Koerner and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick's model of *family conflict socialization* integrates family relationship schemas, family communication patterns, and family conflict behavior in a process of mutual interdependence and reinforcement. Individuals develop mental representations of family members and relationships. These schemas create shared social reality. Shared social realities create family communication patterns with specific conflict behaviors. These behaviors impact the development of the schemas that are at the root of the process.

Psychologist John Gottman's *cascade model* predicts divorce from a cascading of interrelated processes: complaining and criticizing, contempt,

defensiveness, and withdrawal. These negative expressions are associated with *emotional flooding*: When overwhelmed by their partner's negative behavior, people find it difficult to listen and process information, and they alleviate negative emotions by attacking, defending, or withdrawing. Expressions of contempt and disgust are particularly damaging. Expressions of positive emotion can protect against flooding. Communication scholars Laura Guerrero and Angela LaValley advocate for communication theories (*expectancy violations* and *communication competence*) to expand the cascade model by examining the relations among conflict, emotion, and communication.

Michael Roloff and Courtney Waite Miller constructed a rich framework integrating current knowledge of conflict and *social cognition*. Social cognition/knowledge includes frames, beliefs, scripts, rules, and problem appraisal. Roloff and Waite Miller posit that negative events set off cognitive processes (mindful activity), which mediate between social knowledge and cognitive and social effects. The cognitive processes considered include expectation violation, attributions, accommodation, influence goals, and sentiment override (how messages are interpreted based on the emotional state of the relationship). The effects in their model consist of thinking about conflict, information processing, and storytelling (narrative construction).

Daniel Canary developed a model of strategic conflict driven by the idea that competent conflict behavior is *mindful*. The relationship between *conflict instigation* and *message production* is mediated by three factors: *individual differences* (especially locus of control); *interpretations of the conflict* (understood through attribution theory); and *instrumental, self-presentation, and relational goal assessment*. *Goal control* is the extent to which individuals understand what they want and are sensitive to their partner's goals. Canary describes *message production* along two dimensions: levels of directness and cooperativeness. A comprehensive list of specific conflict strategies and tactics is integrated into these four categories: direct cooperative, direct competitive, indirect cooperative, and indirect competitive. Message production is followed by the *other person's response*. This part of the model allows researchers to examine patterns of communication that lead to various outcomes. Patterns and outcomes can cycle back to any previous events in the model.

The Organizational Context

Organizational conflict usually refers to that which takes place in the context of the workplace or institutional setting, and there is an enormous body of theory and research in this area. The management of organizational conflict has been examined on three fundamental levels: dyadic, group, and institutional. At the dyadic level, theory and research that examine processes of interpersonal conflict in the workplace largely follow a *conflict styles* approach based on the dual-concern model. At the workgroup level, three traditions have been identified, according to M. Scott Poole and Johny Garner. These three traditions are the *instrumental*, which focuses on the impact of conflict on group performance and related outcomes; the *developmental*, which treats conflict as a natural part of group development; and the *political*, which views conflict as a struggle for power.

At the institutional level, a sizable body of work examines the transition of organizational conflict management programs from those that focus on dispute resolution to broader and more proactive conflict management systems. Based on a comprehensive review of literature, David Lipsky and Ronald Seeber have developed a comprehensive organizing framework from which to understand this shift. Organizational conflicts manifest themselves in three forms: disagreements, disputes, and litigation. Managing these three forms of conflict differs according to several factors: the responsible party, the type of conflict, the techniques used, the nature of the outcome, and the extent of third-party involvement. *Alternative dispute resolution* programs have been steadily on the rise as large organizations increasingly face the rising human and economic cost of disputes and litigation. Such programs, however, do little to prevent conflicts from escalating to dispute or litigation because they typically do not intervene prior to this escalation. Lipsky and Seeber's organizing model of the research in this area elucidates both the shifts happening in the practice of organizational conflict management and the deeper social processes at play.

The Community Context

Community conflict refers to conflict in the public arena, focusing on communities defined by

physical collocation. Community conflict is more polarizing than interpersonal and organizational conflict because the parties lack intimacy and coordinated activity. Barnett Pearce and Stephen Littlejohn developed a theory of moral conflict: When individuals with incommensurate moral orders interact, intractable conflict can result from mutual frustration and entrenchment. Conflict rooted in the worldviews of the opponents is difficult to manage; the logics of the paradigms do not permit cross-translation. Parties become locked into a dispute, perceiving no other choice. Their language differs; even similar terms have disparate meanings. Neither side understands the other, and both fail to see why the other rejects their case. These dynamics lead each to describe the other as misguided, ignorant, evil, or sick. The theory has been developed through a series of descriptive case studies, including the U.S. *Religious Right* movement and the abortion debate. Moral conflicts cannot be solved through traditional dispute resolution; they must be transcended through a process of dialogue. Transcendent communication creates new frames, transforms relationships, and creates opportunities to explore the power and limits of multiple worldviews.

Dialogue theories have their own rich tradition. Kevin Barge has described the relationships among dialogue, conflict, and democratic practice, highlighting three important theoretic movements that bring these things together: community mediation, public participation and dialogue, and appreciative inquiry (a social constructionist perspective on community development, emphasizing the positive core of community life). Dialogic democratic practice faces the dilemmas of several tensions: inclusion–exclusion, deliberative–relational, and macro–micro. Dialogue theories explore how dialogic communication manages conflict and builds community. Dialogue theories include those that are encompassed in the intercultural/international context, as well.

Other areas of theory in community conflict include environmental conflict, racial/ethnic conflict, crisis negotiation, and critical approaches. Theories of environmental conflict explore public participation in environmental decision making. Racial or ethnic community conflict theories examine the potential for positive community-building outcomes from the conflict management process

surrounding ethnic identity, minority groups, racial hate incidents, and intercommunal ethnic conflicts. Crisis negotiation, including hostage negotiation, is a unique context for community conflict theory, focusing on the communicative dynamics of conflict as they are complicated by the potential for injury or death of the involved parties. Finally, critical approaches to community conflict take a cultural studies perspective: Conflict is a defining feature of all social systems and threatens identity. Culture, as a site of conflict, becomes an arena in which changing meanings are negotiated.

The Intercultural/International Context

Intercultural/international conflict refers to conflicts between two or more different cultural or identity groups. Many communication theories are directly concerned with or have direct applications to intercultural conflict management. Those with separate entries in this volume include anxiety/uncertainty management theory, expectancy violations theory, cultural types theories, face negotiation theory, accommodation theory, and co-cultural theory. International communication and peace theories also address conflict. Many of these include treatments of racial or ethnic conflict; the field of social psychology also has a rich tradition of ethnic and intergroup conflict theory. Other important theories in the intercultural/international context include *integrated threat theory* (ITT) and the *cultural values dimensional* (CVD) grid.

ITT, developed by Walter Stephan and Cookie White Stephan, assumes that feelings of fear or threat cause prejudice and identifies four antecedent conditions (intergroup conflict history, intergroup knowledge gap, type and frequency of intergroup contact, and societal/group membership power status) that escalate or de-escalate the levels of four types of threat (intergroup anxiety/anticipated consequences, rigid stereotypes, tangible/realistic threats, and values/symbolic threats). Threat escalation creates biased intergroup attitudes (e.g., prejudice) and intergroup conflict cycles, outcomes that then feed off one another.

The CVD grid, developed by Stella Ting-Toomey and John Oetzel, draws from key ideas in anxiety/uncertainty management theory, ITT theory, expectancy violations theory, cultural types theory, and power distance. *Power distance* refers to cultural

values for status differences and social hierarchies. Small power distance (SPD) cultures value equal power distributions, symmetrical relations, and reward systems based on merit. Large power distance (LPD) cultures accept unequal power distributions; asymmetrical relations; and reward systems based on rank, role, and status. The CVD grid posits that the individualism–collectivism dimension of cultural types theory interacts with power distance values to create four cultural approaches to conflict: impartial (individualistic, SPD), status–achievement (individualistic, LPD), communal (collectivistic, SPD), and benevolent (collectivistic, LPD).

Conclusion

The study of conflict and communication is broad and diverse at the same time that it espouses a core set of presumptions. These presumptions include the inevitability and constructive nature of conflict, the dynamic nature of goals, and the mutually constitutive relationship between communication and conflict. Regardless of the context in which conflict theories are generated, communication scholars have consensus on these basic issues.

Anne Maydan Nicotera

See also Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory; Attribution Theory; Co-Cultural Theory; Constitutive View of Communication; Critical Theory; Cultural Studies; Cultural Types Theories; Expectancy Violations Theory; Face Negotiation Theory; Hawaiian Ho‘oponopono Theory; Intercultural Communication Competence; Intercultural Communication Theories; International Communication Theories; Interracial Communication; Peace Theories; Pragmatics; Racial Formation Theory; Social Exchange Theory; System Theory

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CONFUCIAN COMMUNICATION THEORY

Confucianism is a worldview, a political ideology, a social ethic, a scholarly tradition, and a way of life. As one of the most prominent traditions of thought, Confucianism has lasting and profound bearings on social, political, and value systems in East Asia. This entry (a) outlines the cardinal principles of Confucianism, (b) discusses the Confucian view of language, and (c) illustrates the impact of Confucianism on interpersonal relationships and communication patterns in East Asian cultures.

Confucius (551–479 BCE) viewed the universe as an organic whole and all modalities of beings in it as interconnected and governed by a unifying force, *Dao* (the Way). *Dao* and *tao* are the same thing, the Daoist/Taoist notion of the Way. This term is romanized as *tao* in the older Wade-Giles system and as *dao* in the modern pinyin system. This entry uses the latter because it is phonetically closer to the actual pronunciation of the word in Mandarin, and these days more and more Sinologists and communication scholars on Chinese communication have started to make the switch. *Dao* constitutes the harmonious organization of life that upholds and perpetuates a moral order. Through following *Dao*, human beings can gain a sense of self-knowledge; gain insights into the human condition as a whole, as well as one's own

particular location in it; and acquire *de* (virtues), the ability to achieve harmony both within oneself and with others.

Cardinal Principles

Confucian teaching lays out three principal virtues to define proper human relationships: *ren* (humaneness), *yi* (righteousness), and *li* (propriety, rite, and ritual). The fundamental concern of Confucianism is *ren*, to learn to be humane. A person of *ren* is one who (a) loves all human beings; (b) desiring to develop and nourish oneself, develops and nourishes others; and (c) does not do to others what one does not wish done to oneself. *Ren* can be attained through a process of ceaseless self-cultivation that transforms the private ego to the all-encompassing self, a holistic human existence in harmony with all other beings in the universe.

The second cardinal principle, *yi* (righteousness), states the duties or moral obligations associated with people as they are located within networks of social relations. In Confucian teaching, the realization of the self, or the worth of the person, is essentially tied to his or her ability to fulfill his or her social responsibilities. Although Confucius conceived social relationships as often hierarchical, obligations are mutual or reciprocal and required for all parties concerned. The mutuality and reciprocity tenets render fulfillment of obligations a moral imperative for everyone. Those who have more power and privilege are given more responsibilities than those who have less.

The third fundamental concept of the Confucian doctrine, *li* (propriety, rite, and ritual), is the social norms that regulate human actions. *Li* prescribes the appropriate human conduct with a keen awareness of the principle of *ren* and genuine concern for others. Only through following *li* can people discipline their mind and action until the proper principles can be enacted in a genuine nature.

Confucianism views the human community as an intrinsic part of people's quest for self-realization. Self-cultivation is understood as a social or communal act that does not happen in seclusion. Self-cultivation is essentially to transcend all forms of human insensitivity, such as egocentrism, selfishness, nepotism, parochialism, and ethnocentrism, and to learn to be sensitive to an ever-expanding

network of relationships. Through self-cultivation, one makes oneself available to the human community and contributes to a social order that enables and encourages self-cultivation.

Confucian View of Language

Based on her close reading of the classical text the *Analects* of Confucius, Hui-Ching Chang explicated Confucius's view of language in human interactions and social affairs. Confucius envisaged the purpose of communication as ethical, that is, to adhere to and sustain the moral order of the human community. Communication is necessary for people to learn and experience their connection and commonality with others and thus to develop sensitivity to them. In this sense, communication is not a functional instrument to accomplish certain tasks. Rather, it is the means of facilitating and reflecting a person's self-cultivation or moral development. Proper speaking ought to follow the principle of *li* (propriety) and should be appropriate according to the particulars of the context. The moral imperative in Confucianism distrusts and discourages overly ornamented words that do not have substance and do not correspond to the person's morality. Confucius weighted actions more than words in his assessment of a person's integrity.

Confucian Influence on Interpersonal Relationships

Because Confucianism has had a lasting impact on the society, government, education, and family in East Asia (e.g., Japan, mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, North Korea, and Vietnam), interpersonal relationships in these countries are conceived and developed in ways that differ from those of the cultures informed by individualism. June Ock Yum has discussed Confucian influences on interpersonal relationships and communication patterns in East Asia. According to Yum, East Asians are more attentive to relational contexts in social interaction. Instead of employing universal rules in interaction with all people, East Asian people are more conscious of the position of a person in the complex web of human relations. Socialized in the Confucian tradition that places ultimate emphasis on sensitivity to human relations, as expressed in all three cardinal principles, East Asian people are apt to relate to

others differently in accordance with their relationships with them and different communicative contexts.

In East Asian cultures, reciprocity is envisioned as long-term and asymmetrical. People in individualistic cultures, such as Canada and the United States, largely define their commitments and obligations to others and to organizations as short-term, symmetrical, or contractual. In the Confucian view, every person is connected with all other beings across time and space as defined by the principle of *ren*. The very existence of a person is indebted to other beings. Thus, East Asians do not try to "keep score" or "make it even" as soon as possible in their interactions with others. Instead, reciprocity as the organizing principle of relationships entails a never-ending project of self-cultivation. It is precisely because in East Asia relationships are recognized as long-term and all encompassing in social affairs that the distinction between public and private domains disappears. People in East Asian cultures tend to develop relationships across the public and private spheres to ensure mutual trust and reciprocity. On the other hand, the long-term relationships in almost every aspect of life may result in a sharp distinction between in-group members and out-group members.

Another distinctive characteristic of East Asian relationships is the employment of informal intermediaries. In East Asian cultures, with their emphasis on the principles of *yi* and *li*, it is not what is said but who says it that is more important. East Asians prefer mutual acquaintances who have proper relationships with both parties concerned instead of contract professionals (e.g., lawyers, negotiators, marriage counselors) when mediating, negotiating, or resolving conflicts.

Confucianism and Communication Patterns

The influence of Confucianism can also be observed in communication patterns in East Asian cultures. The Confucian concern with morality and ever-expanding relationships is reflected in the process-oriented view of communication in East Asia. Communication is viewed as an infinite process of interpretation and interaction. Grounded in the Confucian awareness of particularity in

relationships, East Asian people prefer a differentiated linguistic code that is responsive to different relational contexts in communication. For instance, East Asian languages have more elaborate honorific linguistic systems than English does. Communication competence in East Asian cultures thus includes the ability to correctly assess where one stands in relation to the other and to make the appropriate linguistic choice accordingly. The care for harmonious relationships in Confucian teaching steers East Asians away from overreliance on direct communication. Indirect modes of communication are valued precisely because of the concern for the other person's face. Finally, communication in East Asian cultures is more receiver centered than sender centered, which is the dominant model in Western cultures. The use of indirect communication leaves more room for interpretation. Receiver-centered communication requires the listener to attend to different situations and relationships as well as to the speaker's emotional and material needs in order to discern the implicit meanings the message contains. This mode of communication is a practice of the Confucian cardinal principle of *ren*, ultimate sensitivity toward others.

Jing Yin

See also Asian Communication Theory; Chinese Harmony Theory; Taoist Communication Theory

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CONSEQUENTIALITY OF COMMUNICATION

Consequentiality is a framework for understanding the features and dynamics of the communication process that enable it to have an impact on social and cultural life. It focuses attention on the continuous production of behavior by communicators, the coordination required as each communicator adjusts to the unfolding scene or situation, and the meanings that arise in and through this process. Consequentiality serves as a contrast to alternative frameworks that study the effects of particular behavioral acts (“independent variables”) on other behavior (“dependent variables”) or the effects of mental or emotional states on behavior.

The consequentiality framework acknowledges the contingent and unpredictable quality of communication. The behavior communicators produce at any one time is dependent on what else is happening in the immediate circumstances: what all the participants have contributed to the scene up to that point; what is occurring simultaneously; and participants' calculation of what might happen next in the sequence to confirm, clarify, or even reshape the meaning and direction of the event. However, unpredictability does not mean that the communication process occurs randomly. Rather, it is recognition of communicators' ability to deploy selectively various resources for behavior (e.g., language, cultural expectations, social obligations) and, in doing so, to bring order and meaning to each unique communication event. Thus, the framework posits that the communication process makes use of cultural, psychological, and social resources but is a phenomenon *sui generis*, requiring its own explanations.

Consequentiality is not a single theory or research approach. Rather, the consequentiality framework permits study of the communication process by means of a wide variety of theories and methods, including conversation analysis, coordinated management of meaning, the ethnography of speaking, and social communication.

The framework was initially proposed as a direction for communication theory in an anthology titled *The Consequentiality of Communication*, edited by Stuart J. Sigman in 1995, with contributions from scholars representing a variety of perspectives. It developed from the concern that

communication scholars began to address in the late 1970s and early 1980s that the communication discipline borrowed extensively from psychology; focused on the cognitive, emotional, and personality traits that appeared to influence the production of behavior; and did not consider how the ongoing process unfolded and was managed by communicators. Rather than provide a single communication theory, the initial articulation of consequentiality was intended to serve as a unifying framework for theory development and as a pointer to a set of observations about communication that theorists should attempt to explain.

The aforementioned studies from the 1970s onward acknowledged that the communication process itself, rather than cultural, psychological, or social antecedents to communication, is the proper study for the discipline. These early studies on the “doing” of communication primarily focused on the cultural and social resources that membership in a community makes available to communicators—the “codes,” “rules,” or “scripts” for behavior. The consequentiality framework acknowledges the important direction in the discipline’s history represented by a rules approach. Consequentiality pushes the analysis further by focusing on the use and appearance of code resources in actual situations and on the constitutive role played by communication in bringing into existence social categories, cultural patterns, and psychological conditions.

Research within the consequentiality framework asks what is done *with* the codes and *how* behavior produces social reality. As such, the framework acknowledges the following observations about communication and encourages investigation of their structure and import:

Diversity: The consequentiality framework notes that in any given situation, there may be multiple codes that are appropriate and may be invoked. As such, communicators may face uncertainty as to which goals, purposes, and roles are operative at any one time and may need to negotiate the definition of the situation and adjust their unfolding behavioral contributions accordingly.

Optionality: Even in those situations in which the range of applicable codes is minimal (or a single script from multiple possibilities has apparently been invoked and made operative), the rules may be

structured with *choice nodes*—moments when a collection of behaviors might be selected from and when each particular selection may move the scene in one direction or another. As Ferdinand de Saussure taught, scripts and rules have multiple levels and paradigmatic options for behavioral production, and it is only in the actual behavioral moment that the codes exact normative force.

Fluid contextuality: The definition of a situation and the associated codes for behavior may change during the unfolding event. Communication acts may not only establish a normative trajectory for the encounter but may also retrospectively formulate the meaning and import of earlier behavior. This may require communicators to confirm their understanding of their communication engagement and produce new entailments for subsequent action. Thus, according to Saussure, behavioral units can be seen in syntagmatic relationship, that is, as part of patterned sequences that unfold across time.

Metacommunication: Human beings exhibit the capacity to engage in communication with their fellows and to engage in communication about their communication. They may be called on to account for their behavior and to engage in repair work when misunderstanding, offenses, and misalignments have been produced. New rule systems, role relationships, and institutional structures may emerge from the alignments that communicators make as part of this metacommunication.

Consequentiality cannot be studied apart from particular communication situations and the license that persons may exercise in shaping the significance and direction of those situations. Communication theorist Robert E. Sanders offers a useful heuristic for considering the extent to which the consequentiality framework can be applied to any particular situation. Sanders, who refers to his approach as *neo-rhetorical*, suggests a distinction between weak and strong senses of consequentiality. Focusing on communicators’ identities, Sanders suggests that in the *weak sense of consequentiality*, communication is used to provide information about the communicators’ social identities and relationships and their behavioral obligations in the situation. Events in which the communication process is weakly consequential are those with normatively rigid cultural and social codes; the codes

must be taken for granted and require communicators to confirm and inform each other about their unquestionable roles. In contrast, the *strong sense of consequentiality* is relevant to those situations for which identities are unknown, ambiguous, and/or contested, and considers the process by which identities, relationships, and roles are actively constructed and negotiated—and not merely conveyed—by the participants.

Broadening the view from communication about identity, weak consequentiality refers to those events for which there is a rigid behavioral script, with minimal choice nodes and severe penalty for deviations and modifications. A church service might serve as an example of an event for which the communication of the participants is weakly consequential. Communicators must be able to know what scene is being enacted and what the obligations for their specific behavioral contributions to that scene are, but adherence to the script is paramount.

Strong consequentiality encompasses situations for which the behavioral script is multifaceted, with opportunities for multiple actors, intentions, and behavioral options to develop and be acted on during the course of the event. The trajectory or outcome of an event with strong consequentiality is not determined at the outset and instead unfolds through moment-by-moment behavioral production. Initial encounters such as dating, job interviews, and unplanned conversations are examples of this type of situation.

The weak-versus-strong distinction is not intended to lead to the characterization of situations as absolutely one or the other. The heuristic assumes that communication across acts and situations is consequential. In the case of the church service, for example, the demonstrated skill of the priest during a religious service, the attentiveness of the parishioners, and other acts that transpire may result in differing spiritual feelings being generated. Thus, the existence of a prescribed liturgy does not detract from the fact that the liturgy must be enacted and that enactment may evidence communication consequentiality. Conversely, while first social encounters such as a romantic date or professional interview may not have a clear end state or narrative arc, they are bound by protocols and expectations. Thus, even strong consequentiality is constrained by codes for behavior.

The notion of consequentiality harkens back to earlier distinctions within the field of structural and sociolinguistics, that between *langue* (language) and *parole* (word; Ferdinand de Saussure) and *competence* and *performance* (Noam Chomsky, Dell Hymes). These pairs of distinctions posit, respectively, a grammar consisting of an idealized set of rules for behavior—both verbal and nonverbal—and the actual, moment-by-moment behavioral production that inexactly manifests the grammar. However, for the consequentiality framework, performance (the communication process) is not a lesser manifestation of codes but rather the selective and strategic employment of codes. Humans make selections from a repertoire of symbols, values, and strategies, and these selections shape subsequent behavior, institutional commitments, and social identities. Equally, meanings and patterns may emerge from communication situations, and these may yield new institutional and relational arrangements and thus new codes for subsequent behavior.

Though primarily concerned with interpersonal (face-to-face) communication, the consequentiality framework has been employed in journalism, mass communication, and organizational communication scholarship. Research has examined the writing process, in which each draft produces a rhetorical strategy and logic that may influence and be refined by subsequent drafts. Others have studied how organizations invoke their cultural narratives and subtly shape their future course through ritualized reenactment and modification of these narratives and the creation of new ones. Another direction that has been taken is the application of consequentiality to the development of a theory of *ludicity*, the human capacity for play and recreation. Complementing earlier scholarship on the universal and biological origins of play, this work suggests that individual acts of playmaking, while subject to rules of engagement, exhibit ludic consequentiality, or the capacity for play to establish (and not merely reflect) identities and relational meanings for the participants.

In brief, while theorists may refer to the *consequences* of any single act of behavior or cognition, one does not generally refer to an act's *consequentiality*; the latter term is applicable to the more inclusive communication process.

Stuart J. Sigman

See also Conversation Analysis; Coordinated Management of Meaning; Ethnography of Communication; Metacommunication; Rules Theories; Sense-Making; Social Construction of Reality; Social Interaction Theories; Variable Analytic Tradition

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CONSISTENCY THEORIES

See Attitude Theory; Cognitive Dissonance Theory; Co-Orientation Theory; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories

CONSTITUTIVE VIEW OF COMMUNICATION

To take a constitutive view of communication means to presume that communication, or interaction, is a process of meaning creation or social construction. The fundamental idea of *constitution* has had enormous influence on the field of communication, especially in the areas of interpersonal communication and organizational communication. An important implication of a constitutive view is that communication is assumed to be the basic building block for social entities, such as personal relationships and organizations. This entry provides a brief history of the origins of the constitutive view, explains its basic assumptions, and examines examples of applications in interpersonal and organizational communication.

Background: Communication Models

Early communication theory took the form of models. In a classic communication theory textbook published in 1972, C. David Mortenson defined a model as a systematic representation of an object or event in idealized and abstract form. A model of communication is a still picture of a moving process. Models of communication are useful in identifying the basic components of the communication process and how they are related. A model aids in conceptualizing processes of interest and in generating questions for richer forms of theory. Models are helpful as metaphors that guide our ability to visualize concepts of interest in terms of one another as they help us to clarify complex processes. However, communication models are oversimplified and mask complex processes that cannot be modeled, often leading to premature conclusions. Models are very limited and thus are best thought of as only a most rudimentary form of theory. The earliest known models of communication were developed by Aristotle in his theories of rhetoric and proof. Aristotle's purpose was *prescriptive*—to instruct others to be effective persuasive speakers.

Contemporary communication theory is *descriptive*—its purpose is to describe, explain, predict, and/or control communication phenomena. Early-20th-century views of communication were highly mechanistic, treating communication as a machine-like process wherein information or messages are depicted as traveling through channels. These mechanistic models are also known as *linear models* because the communication process is depicted as a line. The most influential linear model is Shannon and Weaver's mathematical model, developed to help telephone engineers design efficient ways to transmit electrical signals from place to place. The Shannon–Weaver mathematical model was essentially a line from left to right that traveled through boxes, depicting an *information source* sending a *message* through a *transmitter* (encoder), which transforms the message to a *signal*, sending it through a *channel* that is affected by *noise*. The *signal* then passes through a *receiver* (decoder), which transforms the signal back to a *message* that finally reaches its *destination*. The Shannon–Weaver model was not meant

to describe face-to-face human communication, but it provided a baseline from which to do so.

Numerous models of face-to-face human communication were based on the Shannon–Weaver linear model. Scholars of human communication took a message-centered approach in modeling communication. The most basic form of linear communication models is often called a model of *communication-as-action*, depicting a *sender* (or a source or a speaker) transmitting a message through some *channel* to a *receiver*—still a line drawn from left to right. In 1960, communication scholar David Berlo coined the term *SMCR* to describe this type of linear model, denoting the model components of sender (or speaker or source), message, channel, and receiver. Models that depicted communication-as-action were unsatisfactory because they were too heavily focused on the sender or source of the originating message.

In 1954, Wilbur Schramm created one of the first models of face-to-face human communication. Rather than a sender and a receiver, Schramm's model depicted *interpreters* who were simultaneously *encoders* and *decoders*. Though messages were still depicted as traveling along a line, the line was circular, beginning with the first interpreter as an encoder, traveling to the second interpreter as a decoder, and then returning from the second interpreter as an encoder back to the original interpreter as a decoder. Schramm was the first scholar to model communication as an interactive process. This form of model is known as a *circular model*, also called a model of *communication-as-interaction*. Schramm's inclusion of the notion of *interpretation* is the conceptual basis for the meaning-centered approach at the heart of the constitutive view.

These basic models of communication (linear/action and circular/interaction) are often referred to as a *transmissive view of communication* because they depict communication as a process by which something (a message, information, etc.) is *transmitted* from person to person. But even models of communication-as-interaction quickly became unsatisfactory as our thinking became more sophisticated and our focus shifted from messages to meaning. Communication scholars began to focus on the communication process not as the *exchange* of messages or mere *transmission* of meaning but as the *creation* of meaning.

The third generation of communication models was *nonlinear* models, also called models of *communication as transaction*. Transactional models focus on the functions of communication and represent the origins of the *constitutive view of communication*. The most famous of these models was developed by Dean Barnlund in 1970. Barnlund used a complex graphic representation of spirals and curved arrows to represent the continuous, unrepeatable, irreversible nature of communication. Meaning was seen as assigned or attributed rather than received. Along with *interactants*, *decoding*, *encoding*, and *messages*, Barnlund's model included a set of valenced cues: *public cues* (in the environment), *private cues* (in or on the persons), and *deliberate behavioral cues* (nonverbal and verbal). All these components were depicted as interrelated and constantly evolving.

The idea of communication as a transaction through which communicators created meaning had a profound effect on the field. Scholars quickly moved beyond creating additional graphic representations of communication processes in the form of pictorial models. The rudimentary nature of pictorial representation can only roughly approximate the process of meaning creation. This shift from linear to nonlinear modeling represents a shift in thinking from a transmissive to a constitutive view of communication.

First-Order Model or Metamodel

In 1999, Robert Craig described the constitutive view by distinguishing first-order from second-order phenomena. A *first-order phenomenon* explains *second-order phenomena*. According to Craig, the constitutive view of communication posits that communication is not a secondary phenomenon that can be explained by antecedent factors (such as psychological, sociological, cultural, or economic factors). Instead, communication is the primary, constitutive social process that explains all these other factors. Basically, communication is the root of other social processes rather than the result.

Craig also distinguished between *first-order models* and *metamodels*. A first-order model is a symbolic representation of communication processes themselves. A first-order model describes the characteristics of phenomena in the world. A

metamodel is a model of communication models. A metamodel describes the characteristics of theoretic representations of phenomena. Craig argued that the constitutive view should be seen both as a first-order model of communication processes themselves and as a metamodel that explains the process of theorizing.

As a first-order model, the constitutive view depicts communication as a process of meaning making, as described above. As a metamodel, the constitutive view allows us to think of different communication models as different ways of constituting the communication process symbolically for particular purposes. The advantage of this way of thinking is that first-order constitutive models do not necessarily mean the rejection of transmissive models, as had been traditionally thought. As a metamodel, the constitutive view does not address the nature of communication itself but rather the ways in which we think about it as theorists. Hence, we can comfortably constitute communication as constitutive (as in a transactional model) for one purpose and constitute communication as transmissive (as in SMCR models) for another. For example, when we seek to understand the creation of complex organizational systems, a constitutive view suits our purposes. However, when we seek to understand how information originates, is disseminated among people and groups, and achieves goals within these complex organizational systems, a transmissive view may be more fruitful. Craig's views were somewhat controversial and sparked a great deal of debate. However, his careful conceptual distinctions were important for the field.

Communication Theories

We will now turn our attention to two theoretical perspectives grounded in a constitutive view of communication: the relational perspective and communicative constitution of organization (CCO). Both of these traditions take the constitutive view further than simple meaning creation. Communication is seen not only as creating meaning but as creating, or constituting, social entities (personal relationships and organizations, respectively). In other words, personal relationships and organizations are seen as made of or made from communication. This is a fundamentally constitutive view because communication is theorized not

as merely one factor that influences the formation of the social entities but rather as the very essence of their nature.

The Relational Perspective

The relational perspective is also known as *the interactive view* and as *pragmatics*; it rests on systems theory. Because this volume has entries devoted to pragmatics and systems theory, our treatment here will be quite brief, focusing only on the way in which this perspective is grounded in the constitutive view. Because it stems from a constitutive view, the relational perspective was able to accomplish three basic analytic shifts from earlier theories of relationships. First, the focus of analysis changed from the individual to interaction. Second, observation shifted from psychological processes to systemic processes. Finally, whereas previous perspectives on relationships studied individuals in the context of relationships, the relational perspective studied relationships themselves. In short, a constitutive view allows the assumption that a relationship is *between* people, not within them. Pragmatics scholars define *relationship* as an emergent social structuring created by and defined by communication patterns. As such, relational process and relational form are seen as mutually constitutive—each creating and defining the other. As things or entities, then, relationships are communicatively constituted (made of or made by communication).

Communicative Constitution of Organization

CCO theory is a relatively recent and rapidly growing body of organizational communication theory grounded in a constitutive view. The notion of CCO has a variety of theoretic roots, among them (in alphabetical order) critical discourse analysis, critical theory, ethnomethodology, Marxist theory, narrative theory, philosophy, pragmatics, rules theory, semiology, speech act theory, structuration theory, and systems theory. In 2000, a special issue of the *Electronic Journal of Communication* focused on communication as a constitutive process in organizations and organizing. This issue focused attention on CCO as a particular theoretic tradition. One of the most prolific scholars in the CCO tradition is James R. Taylor,

emeritus professor from the University of Montréal. Taylor's work has been so influential that it has initiated a focused theoretical perspective in CCO, which has come to be known as the Montréal School. Scholars affiliated with the Montréal School include François Cooren, Daniel Robichaud, Hélène Giroux, Boris Brummans, and Mathieu Chaput, among others. One of the key constructs focused on by Montréal School scholars is *agency*—the ability to act on the world. One of their more controversial claims is that nonhumans (such as documents and road signs) have agency. Other organizational communication scholars pursuing CCO theory include Linda L. Putnam, Robert D. McPhee, Gail Fairhurst, Lawrence D. Browning, Timothy Kuhn, Karen Ashcraft, Anne M. Nicotera, and several others. There is a great deal of variation and debate among CCO scholars, but all are united in the constitutive view of communication. It must also be noted that CCO theory is not unique to the discipline of communication; *organizational studies* is a multidisciplinary and international body of work that spans many social disciplines, each of which makes contributions to CCO theory. Some of the most influential CCO research has originated in other disciplines.

Two Specific CCO Theories

Although many communication scholars theorize about CCO processes, two theories stand out as most influential: Taylor's conversation and text theory and McPhee's four flows. Each of these is described briefly, highlighting their grounding in the constitutive view. Taylor's *conversation and text theory* rests on a simple distinction between two key concepts: conversation and text. *Text* can be defined as both the content and the outcome of interaction. A text can be in written form (such as policy manuals) or unwritten form (such as decisions made in a meeting that are repeated to others). *Conversation* is the communicative interaction itself. Text is meaning and outcome; conversation is activity. Conversation is about text and produces/reproduces text. Taylor and his many coauthors, most notably Elizabeth VanEvery, discuss the translation process from conversation to text. Conversations must be interpreted through processes of punctuation and sensemaking. Sensemaking will depend on the interactants' interpretive frames. This sensemaking could occur

psychologically (in the minds of the interactants) or might be formalized (such as providing a glossary of terms to an audience).

Organizational communication is *created by interaction* in this way. In mutually constitutive fashion, organizational communication then defines the context through which we transform text into conversation. Organizational communication becomes formalized through processes of *distanciation*—the distance between the intended meaning of the speaker(s) and what is created and retained in interaction. Taylor and his colleagues posit “six degrees of separation” by which text and conversation become translated to complex organizational forms. The capsule summaries here appeared in Katherine Miller's communication theory textbook published in 2005.

First degree: Intent of the speaker is translated into action and embedded in conversation.

Second degree: Events of the conversation are translated into a narrative representation, making it possible to understand the meaning of the exchange.

Third degree: The text is transcribed (objectified) on some permanent or semipermanent medium (e.g., the minutes of a meeting).

Fourth degree: A specialized language is developed to encourage and channel subsequent texts and conversations.

Fifth degree: The text and conversations are transformed into material and physical frames (e.g., laboratories, conference rooms, organizational charts, procedural manuals).

Sixth degree: A standardized form is disseminated and defused to a broader public (e.g., media reports and representations of organizational forms and practices).

In this way, organization—both as a process and as a social entity—can be seen to be communicatively constituted.

Robert D. McPhee takes a very different approach, suggesting that communication processes are comprised of four *flows* that constitute organization. The four flows are membership negotiation, organizational self-structuring, activity coordination, and institutional positioning (in the social order of institutions). The flows are separate only for the purposes of analysis. Any message or episode of interaction can contribute to multiple flows, and processes identified with a specific flow can overlap with those identified with one or more other flows.

The four are distinct because any one is constitutive of the organization. Flows are multidirectional and topically variable. Communication in the *membership negotiation* flow focuses on the relationship of members to the organization. The *organizational self-structuring* flow includes communication related to the organization's form, boundaries, goals, policies, procedures, and any other process related to its identity. The third flow, *activity coordination*, includes all interaction related to connecting and shaping work processes and joint actions. This includes both cooperative and conflicted interaction. Fourth, the *institutional positioning* flow is comprised of communication related to the organization's relationship to other organizations in its societal environment. In each flow a social structure is generated through interaction. The flows can control or condition one another. Together, these communication flows constitute organization—both as a process and as a social entity.

Conclusion

The relational perspective and CCO theory are only two examples of theoretic traditions in communication that are grounded in a constitutive view. The field of communication has numerous theories grounded in this view. Any scholar who defines communication as a meaning-making process is following a *constitutive view*, quite distinct from a *transmissive view*, which defines communication as a process by which something is transmitted or exchanged.

Anne Maydan Nicotera

See also Cultural Studies; Language and Communication; Meaning Theories; Narrative and Narratology; Organizational Culture; Pragmatics; Process of Communication; Relational Communication Theory; Rules Theories; Semiotics and Semiology; Sense-Making; Social Construction of Reality; Social Interaction Theories; Speech Act Theory; Structuration Theory; Symbolic Interactionism

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CONSTRUCTION-INTEGRATION MODEL

See Cognitive Theories

CONSTRUCTIVISM

In its original form, constructivism refers to the study of how individual human mental structures are constructed over time and how neuronal networks previously trained to perform given symbolic actions become conditions to subsequent ones. As mental structures develop, they define a person's ability to engage in other actions in the future. This means that certain symbolic actions cannot be performed if certain previous ones have not matured. For example, abstract hypotheses such as those found in mathematics or physics can be formulated only if the individual has previously learned to formulate hypotheses based on empirical data emerging from concrete experiences. Therefore, the mental exercise leading the person to perform a symbolic action takes place only if necessary (organic) and sufficient (experiential) conditions for further construction have previously been met.

As with many other schools of thought that produced fertile terms that became fashionable and lost their original meanings, many variations on the use of the term *constructivism* unrelated to its original formulation have arisen over the years. There are, thus, many constructivisms, each proposed by different authors and anchored in different epistemologies. This entry provides an overview of various uses of this term in different disciplines, such as biology and psychology, that contributed to communication theories.

Historic Context

Constructivism, originally known as genetic epistemology, was first introduced and coined by the Swiss thinker Jean Piaget, who studied the biological roots of knowledge. He was interested in unveiling how human beings know the world and empirically investigated how knowledge emerges and progresses through individual mental transformations in social environments. The human process of knowing, according to Piaget, can be understood only through a carefully designed research program aiming to unveil how knowledge develops over time through biological processes of assimilation and accommodation, leading to adaptation. Although these terms are common in general biology, Piaget proposed a biology of knowing, in which assimilation, accommodation, and adaptation are considered stages of the symbolic processes, necessary for knowledge learning that will enable people to make sense of the world.

In cognitive terms, *assimilation* accounts for absorbing the meaning related to a given content without changing structured knowledge previously embedded in the neural networks, while accommodation leads to reorganization of neural systems and conceptual change. Both assimilation and accommodation processes are necessary for symbolic adaptation to or sense making about the environment. Piaget chose to study children of all ages and use the methodological tools of psychology in order to verify the hypothesis that knowledge is constructed over time through complex interactions in which the individual makes sense of self and of the world. Construction, then, occurs when the neural pathways of the mind are progressively shaped

through interactions with the world. Once knowledge is achieved (learned), the individual cannot unlearn it unless there is brain injury or a degenerative mental illness. This developmental process starts with the body. Movements translate a logic of brain functioning (logic of actions) that lies below the surface, followed by language acquisition and the development of logical reasoning founded on empirical experiences (concrete logic), followed by the development of reflective abstraction—or metacognition—that enables the individual to solve complex symbolic problems in the absence of empirical verification (operatory logic).

Piaget's ideas turned out to be very influential in many fields. Unfortunately, his contributions to communication were overshadowed by the revolution triggered by his theory in psychology and education. Piaget also provided epistemological contributions to sociology, biology, mathematics, physics, and, to a lesser extent, logic. His work resonated with certain “ecological” approaches in cybernetics that would later lead to systems theory, and it also had a direct impact on cognitive science.

These two main developments (ecological-systemic and cognitive approaches) helped to shape the ideas of certain scholars in the emerging field of communication studies who called themselves constructivists and their theories constructivism. Ecological-systemic theorists borrowed the term *constructivist* that gave academic celebrity to Piaget's scientific discoveries while taking away its original meaning. In contrast, the cognitive scientists translated concepts issued from constructivist epistemology and its qualitative and logical approaches into empiricist epistemology, thanks to the introduction of neobehaviorist experimental methodologies.

Common to all these approaches was the importance given to biology—the idea of organic development and organic systems—and the interest in discourse, in terms of both structure (logics, argumentation) and content (meanings).

The Constructivist Communication Schools

The School of Neuchâtel

Jean-Blaise Grize, a Swiss logician of the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland who collaborated on

Piaget's research, assumed the challenge of developing the field of communication from a genetic standpoint. Trained as a logician and mathematician, Grize became particularly interested in unveiling the logic behind everyday communication that enables human beings to reason and make sense of the world. His communication theory, *schematization*, derives from the Piagetian notion of *scheme*, later incorporated by cognitive science. In Grize's theory, all communication actions are schematizations because interlocutors base their communication efforts on constructed symbolic schemes.

These constructed schemes have a natural logical structure that carries meaning resulting from complex psychosocial processes. Each word uttered in a sentence carries with it individual motivations that are translated into action as goals. Individual and social representations formed in the mind of the communicator are made available to others to be reinterpreted and rebuilt. In addition, sociocultural constructs enable those representations to be translated as words and sentences. Language is understood as a permanent sociohistorical building process that individuals rebuild constantly while communicating.

In addition to schematization, Grize and his collaborators, Denis Miéville and Marie-Jeanne Borel, developed a new branch of logic, *natural logic*, to focus on how the mind reasons through language. Natural logic studies the thinking operations that enable the construction of meanings in argumentation processes, distancing itself from both formal logic and empiricist informal logic approaches such as those of Stephen Toulmin, John R. Searle, and John L. Austin. In addition to being a specific branch of logic, natural logic can also be seen as a *method* to study schematizations in the communication process. In addition to previous developments in Europe, the study of natural logic, under the coordination of Grize and Miéville, has recently been expanded by the research of Emilio Gattico in Italy and Milton N. Campos in Canada.

The North American Constructivist School

North American communication constructivists base their use of the term *constructivism* on George Kelly's influential psychological work,

namely, *The Psychology of Personal Constructs*, published in 1955. Kelly postulates that people understand experience in terms of categories that distinguish one thing from another in sets of opposites. These contrasts (black–white, tall–short, fast–slow) are constructs that comprise a system of ideas with which individuals come to understand their experience and anticipate future events, an idea quite distant from Piaget's original constructivist epistemology.

Certain scholars in the interpersonal or "speech" branch of communication studies were strongly influenced by Kelly and developed an openly constructivist perspective in their research. The most influential is Jesse G. Delia, who inaugurated what is known as the *communication constructivist school*. Delia and his colleagues (James L. Applegate, Brant R. Burleson, Ruth Anne Clark, and Daniel J. O'Keefe, among others) promoted the core functionalist idea that people develop personal constructs out of experience and apply these when they face new experiences. The repetitive character of *constructs* borrowed by Delia from Kelly is very similar to the notion of *scheme* in Piagetian theory. In fact, constructivist scholars in the Delia tradition refer to sets of constructs as *interpretive schemes*. What is different and very original is that this research program, borrowing procedures from neobehaviorist experimental science, focuses on how constructs lead the individual to anticipate and respond to situations in terms of the communicative messages that will be used.

A person's communication is influenced by his or her *cognitive complexity*, related to the number of constructs in a person's cognitive system, or the degree of differentiation a person is able to make. Cognitive complexity is developmental. As individuals mature, the cognitive system moves from relative simplicity to relative complexity, but some persons are more complex than others, so cognitive complexity is dependent as well on the individual. In addition, a given individual will have greater complexity in some subjects than in others. The primary claim of this version of constructivism is that the increased differentiation that comes with cognitive complexity enables individuals to craft messages that adapt more effectively to listeners, so-called *person-centered* messages.

The Ecology-of-Mind Constructivist Scholars

Information processing theory and other theoretical approaches influenced by cybernetics have presented themselves as challenges to traditional behaviorism in that they all converge to the idea that it is possible to study mental processes, considered doubtful by behaviorist thinkers such as John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner. This was the approach of the North American scholars who developed different versions of *mind ecology*, also known to be constructivists.

Although in many ways the different constructivists discussed previously were connected with the cybernetic movement and considered biology fundamental for understanding communication, the constructivism that is presently mainstream is the one derived from the works of Gregory Bateson, a British anthropologist who immigrated to the United States, and is to a certain extent epistemologically consistent with the *constructionism* of Bruno Latour, a French sociologist of science. Later, others such as Ernst von Glasersfeld from Germany and Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela from Chile also developed mind-ecology approaches that were rapidly adapted to communication studies. The phrase *ecology of the mind*, however, was coined by Gregory Bateson.

Bateson is the most influential of the ecology group and helped shape the destiny of communication studies from an empiricist system perspective. He argued that both logical and quantitative accounts were inappropriate to study how communication systems evolve. His work influenced communication schools such as the Palo Alto group, whose main theoretician is Paul Watzlawick.

In contrast to Bateson, Ernst von Glasersfeld, a German psychologist, cyberneticist, and journalist, proposed the term *radical constructivism* as a way to counter the growing influence of ecology-of-mind constructivists who reduced communication to meanings. For von Glasersfeld, the construction of communication is revealed by its formal structure and dynamics, that is, signals on which meanings are molded. People attribute meanings to words by interpreting the signals of language, translating them in the context of their experiences, and constructing communication structures that are both syntactical and semantic. From this viewpoint, von Glasersfeld was indebted to Piaget, who

highlighted that interaction occurs between the structuring activity of the subject (neural networks) and his or her subjectivity (the content of experience). However, and differently from genetic epistemology, von Glasersfeld tended to agree with the lack of differentiation between subject and object advanced by phenomenological epistemology.

Humberto Maturana, and later Francisco Varela, both phenomenologists, not only contributed to von Glasersfeld's radical constructivism but also had a huge influence in what became known as *second-order cybernetics*, a movement with direct consequences for communication studies. Maturana, who considered cognition as the other side of perception, was decidedly phenomenological. His biological phenomenology, which was later theorized by Varela as *naturalizing phenomenology*, kept subject and object indistinct from one another. Applied to communication theory, naturalizing phenomenology sees interaction as totalities of forever-emerging subjects. These phenomena form *autopoietic systems*, or the autoproduction of communication systems in which subject and object are dissolved into one another, and boundaries traditionally attributed to the subject-object pair by all other epistemologies are destroyed. *Autopoiesis* is consistent with philosophical phenomenology, according to which reality is a totality in which no part can be studied separately to understand the whole.

This view has very little to do with any idea of construction, genetic or otherwise, because it is based on the premise that communication is an emerging process of living, denying any possibility of studying parts such as what is communicated (message), the timing of the communication (dynamics of interaction), and the parties transmitting or receiving the communication (subjects). All the preceding perspectives demand that the researcher assume a separation between cognitive representations, or mental entities, and the subject or object being represented. In contrast with this view, phenomenologists, and more recently empiricists in the pragmatic tradition, completely deny representation as being possible. In the "place" of representation (or better put, the "absence of a possibility of place"), Maturana and Varela propose *enaction* as the process of the emergence of living that enables the possibility of communication.

What is curious in Maturana and Varela's constructivism is that although it inspired many thinkers to reconceptualize communication in autopoietic terms, these same thinkers would probably answer a resounding no to the question, Are you a phenomenologist? The second-order cybernetics is, thus, an "unframed" school of thought that invented *phenomenological constructivism*.

Recognized authors working from this perspective in communication studies include Klaus Krippendorff, who proposed the *recursive communication theory*. According to Krippendorff, communication is a reflexive process, meaning that each aspect of communication can be understood only in terms of other aspects of communication. Therefore, communication needs to be studied from within itself. In other words, communication can be studied only from the perspective of the discourse it produces. According to the theory, individual practices are fed by constructions of reality that, in turn, feed practices, both issued from human understanding. The main elements of the theory are the following:

1. Understanding is the core of communication processes; "construction" is to be found in the way individual practices lead to how reality is understood.
2. Communication processes are social phenomena that are reflexively built.
3. Language is constitutive of communication construction.
4. The recursive theory has no fixed model of communication, and participants in the communication process do not need to be in agreement with any given theory.
5. Communication makes possible virtual construction of "others" in the mind.

Krippendorff's theory, consistent with the core idea of Bruno Latour's sociology of science (in that theories are social constructions), inspired followers such as James Taylor, who helped establish the field of organizational communication; Niklas Luhmann, who influenced the social sciences in general and communication in particular, from a system perspective; and Pierre Levy, who developed the notion

of collective intelligence in the field of cybercommunication.

Milton N. Campos

See also Argumentation Theories; Cognitive Theories; Communibiology; Critical Constructivism; Cybernetics; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Language and Communication; Learning and Communication; Palo Alto Group; Phenomenology; Speech Act Theory

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CONTEXTUAL THEORY OF INTERETHNIC COMMUNICATION

Ethnic diversity has become an increasingly salient and significant social issue in many societies around the world. Even as individuals of differing ethnic backgrounds live and work more closely than ever before, issues of ethnicity continue to invoke intense and often volatile responses. Young Yun Kim's contextual theory of interethnic communication addresses a full spectrum of behaviors displayed by individuals at their grassroots-level encounters with people who are ethnically different from them.

Applying a psychological perspective, Kim defines *interethnic communication* as an event, or a series of events, that occurs whenever at least one of the participants sees himself or herself and an interaction partner according to ethnic group categories. In this approach, not all communication encounters between individuals of dissimilar ethnicities are to be considered *interethnic* in character. The term *ethnicity* is broadly employed as a social category associated with some combinations of common national origin, race, religion, culture, and language. Ethnicity thus differentiates one group from another based on *extrinsic ethnic markers* such as physical features and speech patterns, and *intrinsic ethnic markers*, including cultural norms, beliefs, values, and thought patterns.

This theory grew out of Kim's research on the cross-cultural adaptation phenomenon of cultural strangers striving for a successful functional and psychological relationship with the host environment. During the 1980s and 1990s, Kim broadened her cross-cultural adaptation research to include the general phenomenon of interethnic communication involving all individuals living in an ethnically diverse society, regardless of their native-born or foreign-born backgrounds. Several initial theoretical papers on interethnic communication were published in the 1990s, followed by a formal presentation of the theory in 2005.

Interethnic Communication as a Dynamic System

Kim's theory is built on a keen recognition that specific interethnic communication events cannot

be meaningfully understood without taking into account a set of historical, situational, and psychological forces that make up the context for particular interethnic behaviors. Kim conceives the behavior and the context as together co-constituting the basic interethnic communication system, operating simultaneously in a dynamic interplay, each affecting the other. Interethnic communication is thus treated not as a specific analytic unit (or variable) but as an entire system in which the behavior and the context are taken together into a fusion. Kim further conceives the interplay between the behavior and the context not as a one-directional cause and effect but as what Gregory Bateson described as a back and forth or circular stimulus and response.

Accordingly, the theory offers an integrative model of a basic interethnic communication system, a hierarchical arrangement that includes the behavior and a progression of three levels of context: the communicator at the center, the immediate social situation at the next level, and the larger environment at the macrolevel. The model serves as a matrix of transactions among these levels that can be thought of visually as a set of concentric circles that surround the behavior.

Levels of Context

With the integrative model, the theory places the behavior within three contextual layers: the communicator, the situation, and the environment, thereby offering a comprehensive account for the nature of the relationship between interethnic behavior and key factors of the surrounding context. In varying degrees of salience and significance, all contextual forces are regarded in Kim's theory to operate in any given interethnic communication event, potentially influencing, and being influenced by, the nature of individual behaviors.

Although these three levels are used to capture the major parts of the process, the outermost environmental context actually can include many sub-levels, such as international settings, nations, regions, cities, neighborhoods, institutions, organizations, and other social entities. Within this organizing framework, the theory examines interethnic communication in its simplest and most general form, a single person communicating. The behavior (or activity) constitutes the stuff of an interethnic

communication event, or the “what and how” of the messages sent and received.

At the same time, the conditions that surround the communication behavior comprise the contextual layers, or covert factors, that shape, as well as are shaped by, the behavior. Silently present in the context of this single-person interethnic communication system is one or more persons with whom the focal communicator interacts. Temporality also is built into this communication system, even though it is treated as frozen in time for the sake of analysis—rather like a motion picture is stopped so that it can be studied one frame or a set of frames at a time.

The Behavior: Association–Dissociation Continuum

The behavior, the focal point of this contextual theory, consists of a full spectrum of interethnic communication behaviors and actions. Included in this behavior spectrum are not only overtly observable verbal and nonverbal encoding activities but also intrapersonal decoding activities taking place within the person and hidden from other communicators. Encoding and decoding behaviors lie along a bipolar continuum between association and dissociation and vary in the extent to which they facilitate mutual understanding, cooperation, and convergence (the coming together of the involved persons, or *association*) or cause misunderstanding, competition, and divergence (the coming apart of the relationship between interactants, or *dissociation*). Behaviors seldom do one or the other exclusively but display some degree that may be more or less associative/dissociative.

Based on an extensive array of research findings, Kim explains that communicators in interethnic encounters behave associatively when they perceive and respond to others as unique individuals rather than as representatives of an out-group category; when they focus on others as unique individuals; and when they are attentive and display friendly facial expressions, complementary or mirroring bodily movements, and personalized (rather than impersonal) speech patterns. In contrast, a communication behavior is characterized as dissociative when it is based on a categorical, stereotypical, and depersonalized perception that accentuates differences. Dissociative behaviors

also include many forms of divergent verbal and nonverbal behaviors that indicate psychological distance and emotional intensity, from subtle expressions to blatantly dehumanizing name-calling, ethnic jokes, and hate speeches. Nonverbally, a communicator acts dissociatively through a range of behaviors, from subtle facial, vocal, and bodily expressions of lack of interest, disrespect, arrogance, and anger to more intense expressions of hatred and aggression, such as rioting and acts of violence.

The Communicator

Associative/dissociative interethnic communication behaviors are directly linked to the internal characteristics of the communicator. Incorporating various pertinent theoretical ideas and related research findings in the literature, the theory presents two communicator factors: (1) *identity inclusivity/exclusivity* and (2) *identity security/insecurity*. The theory argues that, as functionally interrelated but conceptually distinct concepts, these identity orientations are significantly and reciprocally linked to an individual’s associative/dissociative interethnic behavior.

Identity inclusivity/exclusivity refers to the tendency of individuals to categorize themselves and others as in-group or out-group members. Inclusive identity orientation serves as a cognitive and motivational basis of associative behavior, whereas exclusive identity orientation is closely linked to a more rigid differentiation of oneself from ethnically dissimilar others. A substantial body of studies supports this theoretical claim. In interviews with Native Americans throughout Oklahoma, for instance, Kim and her coauthors found that those interviewees whose identity orientations were more inclusive (or less exclusive) were more actively engaged in interpersonal relationships with non-Indian acquaintances and friends. These interviewees also reported greater psychological health and functional fitness with respect to American society at large.

Identity security/insecurity is reflected in the degree of self-confidence and the sense of self-efficacy. The level of *identity security* indicates an individual’s overall sense of self-confidence, or internal strength, with which to react to stressful situations with composure and clear and rational thinking. Identity

security, as such, is a kind of personal resource that accords the capacity to empathize with others and to be creative in responding to impending problems. Identity security is also expressed in a sense of self-assuredness and positive attitudes toward others. In comparison, identity insecurity often manifests itself in feelings of inferiority or defensiveness when interacting with ethnically dissimilar others.

The Situation

Next to the communicator layer is the situational layer in which an interethnic encounter takes place. The theory identifies three key situational factors as being significant to understanding the nature of the communicator's interethnic behavior: (1) *ethnic proximity/distance*; (2) *shared/separate goal structure*; and (3) *personal network integration/segregation*.

Ethnic proximity/distance refers to the level of homogeneity or heterogeneity between the interactants. This situational factor arises from the degree of *extrinsic ethnic markers*, such as physical features and speech accents, and from the degree of compatibility or incompatibility stemming from *intrinsic ethnic markers* such as internalized beliefs and values associated with a specific ethnic group. The theory argues that ethnic proximity encourages associative behaviors, whereas ethnic distance increases psychological distance between the interactants and keeps them from noticing their underlying similarities.

Shared/separate goal structure is defined as the extent to which the communicators come together with mutuality of interests. Shared goals foster and are fostered by associative behaviors and cooperative relationships between the involved parties. In contrast, communicators who see in the other interactant(s) few shared goals are less likely to be motivated to engage in associative behaviors. In ethnically diverse athletic teams, for instance, team members with a strong commitment to the collective goal of achieving a winning season tend to subsume their ethnic group interests more willingly to those of the team.

Personal network integration is identified in the theory as having a significant relevance to interethnic behavior. *Personal network*, also referred to by network analysts as *interpersonal network*, *egocentric*

network, and *personal community*, is largely a product of voluntary association. Accordingly, the ethnic composition of a given communicator's personal network is indicative of the extent to which he or she has, or has not, already participated in associative activities with ethnically dissimilar others. Hence, the theory argues that communicators whose personal networks are already more integrated are likely to act more associatively in dealing with other ethnically dissimilar others.

The Environment

Surrounding the situational contextual layer is the environment, the outer social milieu, which is comprised of multiple sublevels as described earlier in this entry. Directly or indirectly, strongly or weakly, certain conditions of each environmental layer potentially influence, and are influenced by, the associative–dissociative interethnic behavior of the individual communicator. The theory identifies three factors of the environment: (1) *institutional equity/inequity*, (2) *in-group strength*, and (3) *environmental stress*.

Institutional equity/inequity addresses issues of fairness and justice. Through the activities of social comparison, individual communicators are less likely to act associatively if they perceive, correctly or not, some form of unfair rules or practices directed against their own ethnic group. Many of the contemporary incidents of institutional inequity can be traced to the history of subjugation of one ethnic group by another in various forms, including slavery and colonization. Societies such as the United States have undergone a significant transformation toward greater institutional equity, thereby rendering a substantial increase over time in interethnic associations across ethnic boundaries.

Interethnic behaviors are further linked to *ethnic group strength*. The overall strength of an ethnic group is closely tied to objective properties such as its relative size, economic resources, and institutional and organizational strengths. Individuals in a large, active, and well-organized ethnic community (such as the Cuban American community in Florida) are more likely to maintain ethnic relational ties than to reach out actively to individuals outside their ethnic community. Conversely, an individual whose ethnic community is small and less institutionalized tends to be more

motivated to associate himself or herself with out-group members.

The third environmental factor, *environmental stress*, pertains to the tension in an organization, community, or society at large. Interethnic tension is also likely to increase when the environment is under duress because of events that are linked to a particular out-group. Such was the case when violent or otherwise dissociative acts increased against individuals of Middle Eastern origins following the acts of terrorism on September 11, 2001. Dissociative behaviors also tend to increase when a society undergoes certain challenging circumstances caused by economic hardship, shortage of resources, or involvement in an international crisis.

Theorems

As outlined above, Kim's theory identifies eight contextual factors of the communicator, the situation, and the environment as being significant to understanding interethnic behavior. Conversely, the theory argues that specific associative or dissociative interethnic behaviors can influence the nature of the eight contextual factors. Linking each of the contextual factors to associative/dissociative behavior in a reciprocal functional relationship, the theory proposes eight testable theorems.

Theorems 1 and 2 propose a profile of a communicator who is likely to act more associatively as someone with a more inclusive and secure identity orientation. These two theorems further predict that a communicator who acts associatively is likely to find his or her identity orientation becoming more inclusive and secure.

Addressing three situational factors, Theorems 3 through 5 predict that interethnic behavior is likely to be more associative when the communication situation created by the communicator and the other interactant(s) presents greater ethnic proximity (similarity and compatibility) and shared goals (common interests) and when the communicator's existing personal network is ethnically more integrated. Conversely, these three theorems suggest that the same situational factors of cultural proximity, shared goal structure, and integrated personal network can be fostered through associative behaviors.

Theorems 6 through 8 posit that the communicator is likely to behave more associatively when

the larger environment offers him or her a system of law, rules, policies, and practices that are, or are perceived to be, more equitable; when the communicator's own ethnic group is smaller in size and weaker in collective strength; and when the relevant environment is calmer and more prosperous. At the same time, the theorems also predict that, directly or indirectly, associative behaviors of individual communicators can help foster greater fairness for all parties involved; counter potentially adversarial conditions stemming from unequal strengths of the ethnic groups involved; and mitigate the potential dissociative impact of serious economic, political, or social challenges confronting the surrounding environment on the interethnic relations between individuals.

The Theory and the Reality

In addition to the generalizable patterns of behavior-context relationships identified in the eight theorems, the theory provides a broadly based conceptual roadmap that can guide case studies of specific interethnic communication events. The theory offers an integrative analytic framework with which to survey the entire field of behavior-context interface in a given case, directing an analyst's attention to the particularities of behavioral and contextual forces operating in a given interethnic event or a series of related events.

The theory allows that each event presents a unique circumstance in which some factors may be of greater relevance and play a more prominent role than others. Once all the constituent dimensions and factors are identified, the analyst may zero in on those factors that are most salient and significant to understanding and explaining that event. Even a single factor may be so powerful as to overshadow every other force operating in a given encounter. Such would be the case when two individuals respond to an identical set of situational and environmental conditions in vastly different manners or when commitment to a shared goal (a situational factor) is so strong that interactants are able to overcome many of the adversarial environmental factors and manage to engage in associative behaviors and activities.

For everyday practitioners of interethnic communication, the systemic conception of interethnic communication depicted in this theory suggests

that change in the status quo in interethnic relations can be initiated at any level. Those who desire change may begin by looking inwardly and reflecting on the extent of inclusiveness and security in their own sense of who they are and how they orient themselves to ethnically dissimilar others. By practicing associative behaviors at the individual level, they may work to improve the quality of interethnic relations in organizations and communities around us. They may further anticipate that, by creating a situation around them in which all involved parties see the mutuality of their respective interests and aspirations, they can engender a strong sense of community and active interpersonal associations that transcend ethnic categories.

Ultimately, the contextual theory of interethnic communication speaks to the real possibility that a single communicator can make a difference for all others involved in an interethnic encounter. When sufficiently multiplied by many others, a communicator's behavior can resonate broadly to help shape the quality of interethnic communication in a given neighborhood, organization, community, society, and beyond. It is this grassroots-level reality of individual communicators that the theory illuminates in its full complexity.

Young Yun Kim

See also Accommodation Theory; Actor–Network Theory; Communication Theory of Identity; Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory; Culture and Communication; Intercultural Communication Theories; Interracial Communication; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Theory; System Theory

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CONVERGENCE THEORY

The convergence theory of communication was developed in 1979 by D. Lawrence Kincaid to provide a general model of communication that would overcome the criticisms and shortcomings of prevailing models, especially information transmission models such as the one used in Shannon and Weaver's mathematical theory of communication. The model represented communication as (a) a process rather than a single action; (b) sharing or exchange of information rather than one-way transmission; (c) two or more participants in dialogue; (d) a means to clarify the confusion between information, knowledge, messages, symbols, and meaning; and (e) a self-correcting feedback process, defined dynamically as a diminishing series of corrections that enable communicators to *converge* on a goal. The theoretical implications of the convergence model became readily apparent, leading to theoretical propositions that could be tested empirically. It also became apparent that *convergence*, the general principle underlying the model, is central to many specific theories found in the field of communication.

Convergence is often mistakenly equated with consensus. Convergence is *movement* toward one point, toward another communicator, toward a common interest, and toward greater uniformity, never quite reaching that point. It is assumed, for example, that no two people can ever reach the same meaning for information, only a greater degree of similarity. In communication, the goal of this feedback process is mutual understanding, a reduction in the set of all possible individual understandings to a more limited one that is shared.

The Convergence Model

The latest version of the convergence model depicts a cyclical, iterative process involving at least two participants. Participants are connected by sharing the same information with one another. Information, lying at the central core of the model, is physical—something endowed with form. Sound waves created by the vocal chords, text messages on paper or sand, patterns on a television monitor, tone of voice, body language and position, and so forth are physical phenomena and hence potentially sources of information for communication. Limiting the concept of information to its physical manifestation makes it possible to treat it as the *means* by which thoughts and meaning are expressed and shared with others. Thoughts and meaning are defined purely as cognitive phenomena, which are *psychological*. The psychological realities toward which communicators converge consist of perceptions, interpretations, understandings, and beliefs. Emotional responses to information can affect each one of these cognitive processes. The relationship formed between participants by sharing information is *social*. Information is created and/or shared by the actions of two or more participants, groups, organizations, or cultures engaged in intergroup, inter-organizational, and intercultural communication. The collective action of individuals, including the coordinated actions required for communication itself, is also a source of information.

Power—the capacity to exercise control over others—is not an inherent part of communication per se but rather an attribute of the relationship between participants. To have an effect on communication, power must first be made

apparent by means of information. Physical size, posture, tone of voice, clothing, titles, signs of wealth, and so forth provide information about the respective power of each participant. Power can also be communicated by overt threats of positive and negative sanctions, and ultimately by physical action (force) itself. Information that reflects power can also induce an emotional response, such as respect or fear, which in turn is expected to influence the communication process, increasing the likelihood that the position of the one with more power will be accepted.

In 2002, Kincaid introduced an extended model that allowed for divergence and conflict as well as convergence and cooperation. Communication as convergence or divergence consists of six phases: (1) a *scene-setting* phase that creates an informationally closed system for dialogue; (2) a *buildup* phase leading to final positions taken within a common frame of reference (mutual understanding); and (3) a *resolution* phase, in which participants mutually agree on a common position they trust each other to implement. Mutual understanding helps to ensure each participant's trustworthiness, but if flaws are revealed in the resolution stage, mistrust can arise and throw participants back into a new buildup phase with an increased possibility of (4) a *climax* phase, when emotion and reason do not lead to changes in position and mutual understanding, leading to (5) a *conflict* phase, in which neither participant will change and hence must resort to their threatened fallback positions. In the final (6) *resolution* phase, either cooperation or conflict is implemented. If participants agree on a *common position* that they can trust each other to implement, then the outcome will be cooperation.

Following this new model, *communication* is defined as a process in which two or more participants share information and converge toward a state of greater mutual understanding and agreement leading to cooperation or, as explained later in this entry, diverge toward a state of incompatible viewpoints and disagreement, leading to conflict. Cooperation requires some minimal level of mutual understanding and agreement. Even when conflict occurs, communication has still created a state of greater mutual understanding of each participant's point of view.

Convergence Theory at the Aggregate Level of Analysis

The most important principle of semantics is that there is no one-to-one correspondence between symbolic information and its meaning. If that were the case, a new symbol would be required for every different circumstance in which communication occurs. There are no perfectly equivalent circumstances, only variety. Meaning is possible because of variation, and that variation includes silence and the nonoccurrence of other symbols (e.g., “no” instead of “yes” or “maybe”). This semantic principle implies that information is a physical difference (pattern) that affects uncertainty in a situation in which a choice exists among a set of alternatives. When uncertainty is too high to permit one to decide (interpret or understand), then additional information is sought. This feedback process reduces the initial levels of uncertainty regarding each participant’s interpretation and understanding, leading to an increased level of mutual understanding.

When the convergence model is applied at the *aggregate level of analysis* to groups, organizations, and cultures, then theoretical propositions can be proposed that use formulas for statistical averages and variances. Here the theory predicts that when messages constructed with multiple concepts are shared, the average position of each concept will converge on the statistical center. Thus, the association of concepts in a message leads to the mutual convergence of all concepts toward one another. The average position of a set of measured concepts of two or more local subcultures that share information is expected to converge over time toward a global mean. This hypothesis was tested by measuring the average difference in the multidimensional space of Eastern and Western cultural values (e.g., individual freedom, saving face, happiness, success) of Korean immigrants who had lived in Hawaii from 1 to 15 years. During this period, a statistical measure of meaning of successive Korean immigrant cohorts converged toward that of the host culture in the form of damped harmonic motion, which is a statistical concept related to changes in variation. The results were also expressed mathematically as a convergence toward a state of greater uniformity (less diversity) of values, as measured by the reduction in the statistical variance.

This work led to the following two complementary convergence theorems for the aggregate level of analysis of communication in social networks, groups, organizations, and subcultures in a population:

Theorem 1: In a relatively closed social system in which communication among members is *unrestricted*, the system as a whole will tend to converge over time toward a state of greater cultural *uniformity*.

Theorem 2: In a relatively closed social system in which communication among members is *restricted*, the system as a whole will tend to diverge over time toward a state of greater cultural *diversity*.

Homogeneity of information leads to uniformity of belief and behavior; heterogeneity leads to diversity. For initially diverse subgroups who share information within a relatively bounded social system, the statistical variance around the mean of a continuous measure is expected to decrease over time, as the Korean immigrant case confirmed. If a boundary is imposed between two groups (restricting information sharing), then the variance of the system as a whole is expected to increase over time (toward greater diversity) and *simultaneously* decrease within each subculture around its local mean. Boundaries can be created by the lack of interpersonal contact (social network clustering), by lack of a common language, by the use of different channels of mass media, and by geographical barriers. Conversely, with less restricted information sharing, *diversity decreases over time* (hence, uniformity increases).

In 1983, before the theorems were formally proposed, Everett Rogers and Kincaid measured the diversity of contraceptive behavior among women in 24 Korean villages. Because contraceptive practice is a discrete behavior, it was possible to calculate the percentage of adoption of each contraceptive method within the relatively bounded *social networks* of each village and then compute the average degree of diversity–uniformity. Surprisingly, the most popular method of birth control varied across the 24 villages: Some were predominantly oral-pill villages, others IUD villages, others condom villages, and so forth. In other words, the distribution of behavior within each village’s social network appeared as if it had been a collective

decision rather than the sum of many individual choices. The average uniformity–diversity was positively correlated with the degree of interconnectedness of the social networks within the village, a measure of the degree of restriction of information flow and absence of bounded clusters. Villages with less connected communication networks had a flatter, more diverse distribution of behavior; those with more densely connected networks had a narrower, more uniform distribution, which is characteristic of a prevailing social norm.

Bounded Normative Influence

The two convergence theorems are valid because of the nature of information processing and the role played by boundaries. When the boundary of a group expands to include new members with different points of view, diversity increases. When people who disagree leave, uniformity among those who remain automatically increases. At the same time, the group becomes more diverse with respect to outsiders. This convergence process is enhanced by *bounded normative influence*—the tendency of social norms to influence behavior within relatively bounded local subgroups of a social system rather than in the system as a whole. This cultural and social network principle resolves the paradox of how *innovation* (a new minority position) can survive the social pressure of the majority and eventually grow to become the new majority: subgroups insulate themselves by forming boundaries within which they are the majority, and they then expand by recruiting new members from the outside.

Bounded normative influence is evident in Gerry Mackie's explanation of how the deeply embedded social norm of women's foot binding in China was totally overcome in one generation at the beginning of the 19th century by the organization of cohesive, local societies in which families pledged to raise girls with natural feet and have their sons marry only girls with natural feet. In a recent network analysis of the 30-year decline of smoking in the United States, Nickolas Christakis and James Fowler discovered that while smoking declined overall, the size of clusters of those who continued to smoke remained the same across time (appearing progressively in the periphery of social networks), suggesting that clusters of connected people were quitting together. In their recent book

The Big Sort, Bill Bishop and Robert Cushing described the profound ideological clustering and polarization that has been taking place in the United States over the past 30 years as a result of geographical mobility to places of like-minded people, a voluntary narrowing of exposure to cable television channels and Internet sites, and a growing unwillingness of people to be exposed to contrary points of view. All three societal changes can be explained by—and could have been predicted by—the two basic theorems of the convergence theory of communication.

D. Lawrence Kincaid

See also Cybernetics; Information Theory; Semiotics and Semiology; Symbolic Convergence Theory; System Theory

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CONVERSATIONAL CONSTRAINTS THEORY

Culture-based conversational constraints theory, developed by Min-Sun Kim and her colleagues,

explains why people from different cultures say what they say. In contrast with mostly descriptive research on cross-cultural strategy choices, the major goal of this research program has been to understand, from a goals perspective, why a particular conversational strategy is chosen cross-culturally. This theory derives, in part, from research on metagoals in interpersonal communication contexts. However, the focus of the culture-based conversational constraints theory has been to understand the cognitive underpinnings of message production across cultures.

Most cross-cultural studies explain away the stereotypical communication differences as some “cultural” difference, such as being Asian or being American. The influence of norms, customs, and rules can be applied only according to a given situation and thus has limited explanatory power. The central focus of conversational constraints relates not to what is said but rather to how what is said is to be said. Kim proposes the existence of five interactional concerns (i.e., conversational constraints) that are assumed to guide message production: (1) concern for clarity, (2) concern for minimizing imposition, (3) concern for avoiding damage to the hearer’s feelings, (4) concern for avoiding negative evaluation, and (5) concern for effectiveness. Although this line of research does not directly assess message production, a likelihood-of-use measure is usually included that is intended to capture a portion of individuals’ implicit theories of interaction goals.

Genesis of Culture-Based Conversational Constraints

As people pursue interaction goals such as gaining compliance, seeking information, or altering relationships, they generate messages within a variety of constraints. In conversation, actors face constraints on how they speak. This is the backdrop against which people pursue their conversational goals. These higher-level constraints have been named *supergoals*, *cross-situational goals*, *supermaxims*, *metastrategies*, *metagoals*, *metaplans*, *ritual-constraints*, and *sociopragmatic interactional principles*. The main implication is that, regardless of one’s interaction goal(s), there exist higher-level concerns regarding how one will achieve the goal(s).

Researchers from communication, artificial intelligence, psychology, linguistics, and other related fields have suggested two major dimensions that may serve as global constraints in conversational and planning situations—appropriateness and effectiveness. In the past, several authors have suggested similar dualities that are motivating forces in communication: being clear and being polite, concern for clarity and concern with support, directness and politeness, and efficiency and social appropriateness. Grice put forward the *maxim of manner* in the use of language (e.g., be clear, be brief, try to avoid obscurity), which can be seen as offering guidelines for direct communication. Brown and Levinson also posit such wants as (a) the want to be efficient or indicate urgency and (b) the want to maintain the hearer’s face to some degree.

Based on the above literature, most theorists in interpersonal communication seem to have accepted, either implicitly or explicitly, the importance of appropriateness and effectiveness (or efficiency) in defining communication competence. The notion of social appropriateness as a communication constraint, however, presupposes some accepted standards of what constitutes appropriate communication performance. It inherently requires a culturally homogeneous community. Thus, appropriateness runs the risk of being meaningless in cross-cultural comparisons. When people do not share social conventions, their notions of appropriateness are different. For instance, a use of a request strategy by a person from one culture, where the choice would be appropriate, may be considered inappropriate when used with a person from another culture.

Contents of Culture-Based Conversational Constraints

Kim proposed a set of culture-based conversational constraints to account for the use of different conversational strategies in different cultures. The previous set of two interactive constraints (i.e., social appropriateness and efficiency) is broken down into three more specific social-relational categories (imposition, other’s feelings, and negative evaluation). Two other task-related constraints are added (clarity and effectiveness). This section

defines each dimension (see Figure 1) in the context of requesting behavior.

Clarity

Clarity is defined as the likelihood of an utterance’s making one’s intention clear and explicit. Clarity is discussed frequently in the literature on conversation. For instance, Grice’s maxim of manner (e.g., be clear, be brief, avoid obscurity) can be seen as a guideline for clear communication. The current typology of request strategies varies on a clarity dimension. If one’s primary goal is to request an action, direct imperatives (e.g., “Repay the loan” or “Lend me your book”) make the speaker’s illocutionary point—his or her intent—explicit. The hint strategy—the other end of the continuum—should be least clear, since clarity of intent is not necessarily derivable from the literal meaning of the utterances.

Minimizing Imposition

This dimension pertains to the degree to which an utterance avoids imposing on the hearer’s

autonomy or interfering with the hearer’s freedom of action. This type of concern has been referred to in more abstract terms as *negative politeness* or *deference politeness*. What is desired is to avoid imposing on others. Concern for minimizing imposition has primarily been conceived as a means of protecting the hearer’s face. Several authors argue that in the Western world, the notion of politeness usually is associated with showing deference by not expecting the hearer’s cooperation and by leaving the hearer the option of noncompliance. While the salience of this constraint might differ across cultures, prior research confirms the importance of minimizing imposition in many cultures.

Consideration for the Other’s Feelings

When making a request, people also may consider how their projected action will affect the hearer’s feelings. “Concern for the other’s feelings” relates to the speaker’s perceived obligation to help the hearer claim and sustain a positive self-image. The degree to which a strategy shows a consideration for the hearer’s

Concern for clarity

1. In this situation, I feel it is very important to make my point as clearly and directly as possible.
2. In this situation, I want to directly come to the point while conveying my message.

Concern for not hurting the other’s feelings

1. In this situation, I feel it is very important to avoid hurting the other’s feelings.
2. In this situation, being considerate toward the other’s feelings is a major concern to me.

Concern for nonimposition

1. In this situation, it is very important *not* to intrude on the other person.
2. In this situation, it is very important to avoid inconveniencing the other.

Concern for avoiding negative evaluation by the hearer

1. In this situation, it is very important that the other person does *not* see me in a negative light.
2. In this situation, it is very important that my message does *not* cause the other person to dislike me.

Concern for effectiveness

1. In this situation, it is very important to get the other person to do what I want.
2. In this situation, making the other person comply with my request is very important.

Figure 1 List of Culture-Based Conversational Constraints: Scale Items

Source: Kim, M. S. (1992). *Cross-cultural variations in implicit theories of requesting behavior*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University.

feelings has been proposed under various labels, including *positive face*, *identity goals*, and *concern with support*. Direct statements with a lack of request mitigation (e.g., “Do X!”) may risk a higher chance of hurting the other’s feelings than hints that communicate the implicit message that the speaker is not concerned about the relationship but only with accomplishing the instrumental outcome.

Risking Disapproval for Self

This dimension represents the desire to avoid negative evaluation by the conversational partner. This constraint is consistent with Brown and Levinson’s notion of a speaker’s desire to save his or her own positive face. In recent years, several authors have suggested similar interactive constraints in communication, including *impression-management goals* and *approval-seeking strategies*. The direct-statement strategy potentially could risk devaluation for self since it is more demanding than the hint strategy.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is another major dimension that influences choice of conversational tactics and strategies. If speakers undertake communicative acts to accomplish a primary goal, then it seems likely that they are concerned with whether that goal will be accomplished. While effectiveness alone is not a sufficient condition of competence, it nonetheless indicates the importance of this constraint in social interaction.

Cultural Variability in Perceived Importance of Constraints

Kim’s conversational-constraints studies seek to generate knowledge about the cultural precursors of conversational concerns, in contrast to situational and individual difference predictors that have been the focus of most previous studies. Hence her research program is distinguished by its use of multiple-culture samples. Some of the research treats cultural membership as the independent variable and the importance of the constraints as the dependent variables.

A major issue that Kim and her colleagues have pursued involves linking the differences

between *individualist* and *collectivist* communication styles to the importance of the conversational constraints. Individualism–collectivism has been considered the single most important dimension of cultural difference in social behavior. Kim has investigated how cultural groups may differ in the structure and content of their perceptions about preferred communication behavior, focusing on the importance attached to interactive concerns in conversation. The results indicate that the dimension of individualism–collectivism (as operationalized by nationality) is systematically related to the perceived importance of clarity, avoiding hurting the hearer’s feelings, and minimizing imposition. For example, U.S. Americans perceive clearer tactics as more effective, whereas Koreans believe just the opposite. Elsewhere, Kim and her colleagues have attempted to trace the effects of cultural membership from self-concept variables through judgments of constraint importance.

Claims of cultural distinctions between East Asians and U.S. Americans on relationship orientation versus task orientation abound in the literature. This line of research shows that the popular claims regarding relationship orientation (East Asian) versus task orientation (U.S. American) in verbal styles may in fact be grounded in shared cognitive knowledge about communication behavior. Later, *self-construal*, how we depict ourselves, has been introduced into the research to account for both the between- and within-culture variation in the expression of communication behavior. By the use of this individual-level approach to cross-cultural differences in conjunction with the prior culture-level approach, hypotheses can be examined both intraculturally and cross-culturally so that explanatory variables may be tested at two levels.

This theory extends our knowledge about what kinds of general conversational constraints shape peoples’ beliefs concerning competent behavior. Because goals arise from culture and self-concept, the model highlights the goal formation portion of the message-production process. In addition, because conversational constraints limit message choice prior to enactment, the model speaks to the planning stage as well.

Conversational constraints are essentially cognitive generators of tactical preferences. Without

these overarching concerns, people's choice of tactics would appear as isolated entities without connection to the rest of their knowledge. The conversational constraints seem self-evident to native speakers but, in fact, are culturally specific, which helps to explain culture's effect on conversational behavior in different societies. The current theory, despite its obvious need of further testing and theoretical refinement, provides a theoretical framework that can systematically explain how the interactive constraints guide the cultural preference of communication tactics and the perceptions of intercultural communicative competence.

The main practical implication of the theory is that when speakers of different cultural backgrounds interact, the problems that develop in communication can be accounted for by the salience of global goals or constraints in conversation. Given that global constraints contribute to consistent performances across different contexts, the concept of the different restraining forces of various conversational constraints can provide a useful framework for explaining intercultural communication and misunderstandings.

Min-Sun Kim

See also Competence Theories

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CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

Conversation analysis (CA), initially developed by Harvey Sacks with Emanuel Schegloff, David Sudnow, and others, seeks to provide a descriptive study of human conduct via empirical data of naturally occurring interaction. CA attempts to provide an approach to investigating the sequential nature of social action from the perspective of the participants' display of methods and procedures utilized in the organization of their interaction. From its inception in the early 1960s, CA has developed a set of concerns centered on the observable features of interaction as they arise in a range of circumstances and situations and for undertaking various actions via talk. While originally presented as a means of extending sociological analysis, CA, as an approach to activity, has grown to be incorporated into numerous fields and explorations regarding human communication.

Early Development

Harvey Sacks initiated the idea of CA while a graduate student with Emanuel Schegloff and David Sudnow in the Sociology Department at the University of California, Berkeley. All three were students of Erving Goffman, who was developing his personal approach to examining the everyday social activities of individuals in an attempt to describe what he called the *interaction order*. Sacks and Schegloff were seeking to develop a new way, independent of then current sociological methods, for conceptualizing and approaching social activity. In so doing, they avoided the reliance on commonly employed sociological

concepts (e.g., culture, norms, organizations, or states) to provide means of describing and explaining data. Rather, they sought an approach rooted in the observable displays of what individuals do during interaction to make their understandings of the activity in which they were involved known to participants.

Sacks became a fellow at the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center in 1963. As part of the procedure of handling incoming helpline phone calls, the center routinely made audio recordings of these calls. These materials provided a set of naturally occurring data that Sacks could examine. While Sacks was not initially interested in studying conversation, the recorded phone calls provided a means to analytically investigate social action as undertaken via the interaction of caller and counselor. The recent developments of recording technology provided the ability to capture natural instances of human conduct without the direct intervention of the researcher to filter observations, such as through note taking. This noninterference of the analyst became one of the assumptions of CA data collection.

Even though the initial set of recordings was produced in an institutional setting (the Suicide Prevention Center), the focus was on the observable elements of conversation practice generally rather than on any situated features of the interaction. While these recordings provided the initial corpus from which Sacks drew his material as he developed his lectures on CA, the data set quickly grew to include instances of conversation that were not institutionally connected. These data allowed for the development of arguments regarding the general use of conversational devices (such as turn taking and sequential organization) across situations rather than in one particular institutional setting. As a faculty member, Sacks attracted several students, such as Gail Jefferson, Anita Pomerantz, and Jim Schenkein, among others, with whom (in addition to Schegloff) he would develop initial concepts of conversational practice and who would be among those carrying on Sacks's research tradition following his early death in a traffic accident in 1975.

Goffman's work investigating the ritual and social order of face-to-face interaction was one early influence on the development of CA as a sociological approach. Goffman created unique

and informative descriptions of routine activity that illustrated the social, rather than individual, organization of our interactions. For Goffman, the organization of activity and interaction was not independent of situation; the social organization provided a framework from which to examine situations and interactions within. Similarly *ethnomethodology*, developed by Harold Garfinkel, influenced the initial conceptions of CA. Ethnomethodology provided a specific approach to the investigation of the lived social world by problematizing the commonsense reasoning employed by individuals as they engage in their routine, day-to-day activities. In essence, ethnomethodology sought to illustrate how social actors' reliance on the procedures of social norms served as the manifestation of their understandings of those norms.

Basic Assumptions

As an investigation into human activity, CA seeks to discover and describe the routine competencies relied on by individuals to manage and display their understandings of the moment during interaction. It tries to develop accounts for how participants produce their own contributions and indicate recognition and understanding of contributions by others. As joint activity, interaction requires the coordination of participants to place their respective turns in a fitting and understandable manner relative to one another. Consequently, each turn of talk stands in relation to its prior turn, so that a subsequent turn may be observed as recognizing and responding to it, based on its display. CA examines the sequential nature of how participants display their ongoing comprehension of the interaction by considering the observable features of interaction to which participants orient themselves during sequences of talk. Features highlighted by participants during their interaction become examinable by the analyst.

Researcher emphasis on those features that participants display themselves highlights an important facet in the design and undertaking of CA work. Unlike approaches that make use of theoretical concepts and orientations to help unpack and understand the activities in which people engage and organize their social worlds, CA eschews theoretical constructs that do not

originate in the interactional realm under investigation. That is, CA does not promote or develop generalizable theoretical explanations for observed phenomena beyond (a) those concepts and explanations developed from prior empirical investigation into talk-in-interaction and (b) the commonplace understandings of how interaction works based on our engagement as conversational practitioners. Thus, analyst-selected categories of description are not used to identify or explain the undertakings within interactions; instead, the observable details indicated by participants as relevant to the present engagement in and understanding of the interaction are utilized as necessary and useful for comprehending the current moment. For example, from within the CA approach, the concept of power is not used as an explanatory concept to account for the unfolding of interaction among participants unless those involved display their orientation to that issue for the management of the unfolding interaction.

Topics of Investigation

Four basic topics represent the fundamental concerns of CA: membership categorization, turn design, turn taking, and sequential organization.

Membership Categorization

Membership categorization was an early focus of Sacks in his development of CA. *Membership categories* refers to the social types people may use to classify and describe one another. These include such things as the occupation a person may hold, such as teacher, doctor, secretary; a relationship one may have to another, such as mother, friend, coworker; and general types used to distinguish some aspect of a group, such as nerd, fan, or jock. Categories are consequential for interaction, for people design their contributions in part based on the categories into which they place their participants and themselves.

Participants use categories as a way to provide understandings about the various activities, rights, responsibilities, motives, and competencies that they attach to members of categories. This information is consequential for how one designs turns of talk, the selection of recipients for the talk, and for interpretations of the recipient's talk. For example,

a supervising physician may introduce himself or herself to a patient who has been examined by an intern in a way that shows the intern as an equal. Such a display may be taken to indicate the physician's assumption that interns are concerned about maintaining their authority in front of patients.

Turn Design

A second key topic for CA is the design of turns of talk. Turns are highly fluid creations, having no set size, topic, form, or order among speakers. Turns can be constructed out of many different types of units, from complete sentences to individual words or even sounds. The syntactic structure of a turn does not define the talk as a turn by the current speaker. Speakers select the form of a turn to help undertake the projected action (e.g., telling a joke). Given that turns are unpredictable in length or composition, a question arises as to how listeners know when a speaker is about to complete his or her turn of talk. Complicating matters is that, overall, a rule participants orient themselves to during talk is that one person speaks at a time. While the overlap of turns of talk of speakers is fairly common, these overlaps tend to be brief moments; additional speakers will stop speaking so that only one continues. In addition, analysts note that there are relatively minimal gaps and overlaps at points of speaker change.

Consequently, there must be ways that participants can determine when a current speaker will end his or her turn of talk. These points of possible completion for the current speaker, places the turn could be projected to end—even if it does not end at any one of them—are referred to as *transition relevance places*. Participants in interaction can note these upcoming places in a speaker's turn as a spot at which they could begin speaking if the speaker ends. This matters for the creation of turns; for example, if a speaker wishes to take a long turn of uninterrupted talk, perhaps to tell a story, the speaker will need to forestall listeners from beginning a turn of talk at a transition relevance point by indicating a desire for an extended turn. In such occasions, speakers may first create a *story preface*, such as "Did I tell you what happened yesterday?" to indicate that their upcoming turn will need to be uninterrupted by listeners. Routinely, participants negotiate their turns as

next speakers in part via the construction of their own turns of talk.

Turn Taking

The recognition of a basic rule for organizing turns of talk, that one speaker talks at a time, and that speakers can project where a current speaker's turn may end, connects to a third key topic of CA: Who talks when. Since more than one listener may wish to speak next, a system of *turn taking* arises in interaction to help distribute turns of talk among potential speakers. Early research established a set of three ordered rules participants utilize for allocating their turns of talk. The set is ordered in that the first takes precedence over the second and third, the second takes precedence over the third, and if neither of those two occurs, the third may.

The first turn-taking rule is that the current speaker may select the next speaker. Current speakers have numerous ways in which they may distinguish who is to talk next, from individual speakers ("Fred, what is that?") to any one of several fitting respondents ("Does anyone know the time?"). The second rule is that if the current speaker does not select the next speaker, a listener may self-select, often by being the first to respond. The third rule is that if neither of these first two occurs, the current speaker may continue as next speaker. In orienting to this feature of interaction, CA describes a fundamental organizing principle but also identifies a practice that speakers may exploit for immediate purposes, indicating their awareness of the system and its potential use. Speaker change indicates another key topic of CA investigation, the sequential organization of interaction.

Sequential Organization

A primary focus of CA is describing how the placement of a turn of talk is consequential for understandings and their display among participants. Certain turns seem fitting to occur where they do. For example, responding with "Bye" to someone's "Hello" would not seem fitting at the start of a conversation. The projection of an upcoming turn by a current utterance and the relation between utterances form a key organizational feature of explaining interaction.

A foundational structure in CA is the *adjacency pair*: two utterances (referred to as the *first pair-part*, FPP, and the *second pair-part*, SPP), each created by different speakers, that form a pair, with a particular relation of *conditional relevance* between them. Adjacency pairs occur in different types, such as *greeting-greeting*, *summons-answer*, and *request-response*. For example, many conversations begin with a greeting-greeting adjacency pair, in which one person offers a greeting and another responds with a similarly recognized turn. We understand that such a pairing does not obligate us to stop and have a conversation; we can simply exchange greetings and move on. In contrast, a summons-answer pair does create a situation requiring further talk. If someone issues a summons, such as a parent calling for a child, and an answer is not forthcoming (the child does not respond), the summons may be reissued until it is answered ("What?"). At that time the pair is closed and a reissue of the summons would be understood as not maintaining the structure of the pair. Unlike the greeting-greeting pair, once the summons is answered, the initial speaker is under obligation to continue the interaction or to account for issuing the summons in the first place.

CA explains the hanging together of the pair as *conditional relevance* of the SPP on the FPP. That is, given an FPP (such as a summons), the SPP is expectable (an answer to the summons is expected). Further, what follows the FPP in sequence will be heard as a second to that first. What follows the summons will be heard and interpreted for its relevance in relation to that summons. Finally, if the second does not occur—nothing understandable as an "answer" to the summons occurs—the second will be "officially absent": taken to be consequential for the developing organization by its absence as an SPP. Adjacency pairs highlight the sequential nature of interaction, that what precedes a turn is consequential for the recognition and comprehension of a subsequent turn and that a following turn is designed by speakers to display their understanding of the activity at hand.

The term *adjacency pairs* does not require a literal adjacency among turns of talk. The sequential ordering of pairs may be extended and momentarily suspended. For example, early work

identified *insertion sequences*—sequences of adjacency pairs inserted into another adjacency pair (e.g., a question–answer pair inserted into another question–answer so that the initial question and its answer are separated by another pair, Q-Q-A-A). Such organization points to the ability of participants to suspend a current activity to jointly orient to and complete another activity before returning to the original one. *Presequences* (pre’s) are adjacency pair structures in which the FPP is used to check on the conditions for performing a subsequent action. For example, we may want our invitation to be accepted, and to help avoid its being turned down, we ask before making the invitation, “What are you doing Saturday night?” If conditions are right (the other person is not busy), we can then go on and provide the invitation itself. Also, from the creation of the pre (the FPP), participants orient to the likely upcoming activity and display that orientation by offering a response to the pre that properly prevents its creation (for example, saying “I am busy” to the sample question).

Presequences and their strategic use displayed by participants bring up another organizational feature identified in CA work: *preference for agreement*. Here, the preference is of the speaker for responses that facilitate the undertaken activity and help to foster social solidarity among participants. Preference impacts sequential organization in that turns of talk may be constructed so as to facilitate a preferred response.

Sequential organization of interaction highlights the observable nature of human conduct for participants. Speakers are held accountable for their actions, the turns of talk created, by others and selves. Sometimes, turns do not readily illustrate the preferred action of the speaker, and *repair* of the utterance is needed, often in the form of *self-repair* (where a speaker “fixes” his or her own turn-construction problem). Such repair may be initiated (the momentary problem highlighted) by either the speaker or one of the hearers. The organization of repair indicates the awareness of participants of apparent expectations of the fit between the form of the utterance, the action being performed, and the location within the unfolding sequence.

Methods Applied

Typical Analytic Approach

While there is no one set way to undertake CA, there are aspects of the method that appear common. Applications of CA revolve around the comparative analysis of features drawn from a collection of samples. A description is developed to explain regular forms of organization from across a range of samples from different speakers in different settings. As samples are collected, deviations from the common structure appear. Developing accounts are broadened to include these forms, to provide an explanation of how the features of the performed interaction work within the sequences in which it appeared.

The approach to data is exemplary in that the researcher seeks to examine a collection of examples for their commonality in structure and difference in application. CA is empirical research, building claims about social organization among participants from materials available in the talk itself. It relies on the shared understanding of interaction to develop explanations: specific knowledge from prior investigations shared among analysts and the routine understandings shared by being members of the broader community.

Theory

CA does not seek to develop abstract, generalizable accounts of human interaction or activity. Such approaches would not adequately describe the consequential but mundane features of interaction relevant for participants’ understanding of their lived-in worlds. Rather, what CA seeks to uncover is the highly situated organization of members’ lived practices as they display them in day-to-day talk; these are the “theories” interlocutors employ to make sense of and respond to the activities they jointly undertake with others.

With its focus on human interaction and action, CA does relate to pragmatic examinations of communication. With other discourse approaches, it shares the move away from describing and explaining causes of human behavior and toward describing

how such conduct is created and recognized. At the same time, CA's unique focus on the sequential nature of interaction, the relations among turns of talk, and the reliance of CA on only those features observable to participant and researcher as sources of explanations, sets it apart from other discourse approaches that take a more social-situated focus for explanation (e.g., ethnography of communication or sociolinguistics) or that impose concepts and explanations from outside the source material (for example, critical theory and some forms of discourse analysis).

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See also Discourse Theory and Analysis; Ethnomethodology; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Language and Communication; Membership Categorization Analysis

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COORDINATED MANAGEMENT OF MEANING

The coordinated management of meaning (CMM) theory, developed by W. Barnett Pearce, Vernon Cronen, and their colleagues, explains how communicators organize interaction. Since its inception in the 1970s, this theory has been included consistently in the canon of communication theory and applied to a variety of settings. It is a wide-ranging

theory that touches many aspects of the field and presents a way of analyzing all kinds of human activity in terms of the *communication perspective*, or how reality is constructed in social interaction. The major tenets of the theory today can be summarized in the categories of meaning and action, coordination, and story telling.

The theory first appeared in print in the mid-1970s, with its first full-blown explanation following in 1980 in Pearce and Cronen's book *Communication, Action, and Meaning: The Creation of Social Realities*. Having undergone considerable expansion and refinement over the years, the theory continues to develop and has been influenced by thinking in social constructionism, cybernetics, philosophy of language, logic, rules theory, dialogue theory, action research, and other traditions. It originated as a general descriptive theory of communication but today is most often regarded as a practical theory.

Meaning and Action

Communicators do two things in every encounter. They interpret, or ascribe meaning, and they act—two functions closely tied to one another: *Meaning* leads to *action*, and action forms meaning. Communicators must coordinate their meanings and actions as they interact over time. In all social situations, then, communicators must manage their own meanings and actions, while responding to the meanings and actions of others. This is the central claim of the theory.

Contexts of Meaning and Action

Communicators interpret and act on the basis of their experience, and this experience forms a *context* that establishes a basis for meaning and action within the situation. Initially in CMM, contexts were presented in a hierarchy in which one context was always embedded within other contexts. In this classical version, the act is understood in terms of the relationship, the relationship in terms of the episode, the episode in terms of the self, and the self in terms of the archetype. However, contexts can shift so that, for example, the episode could be understood within the context of self, or the self could be understood within the context of the act. Even a single communicator

can shift back and forth among contexts from moment to moment and situation to situation.

Thus, contexts are fluid and dynamic. For this reason, CMM now most often uses the more powerful metaphor of *loops*, which emphasizes the mutual entailment, or *reflexive relationship*, among contexts. In the above example, self and episode form a reflexive loop. The loop metaphor is infused throughout CMM to capture the systemic nature of meaning and action.

Rules

Heavily influenced by the philosophy of language, particularly the language-in-use movement and the associated theory of speech acts, CMM explains meaning and action according to rules. A *rule* is a guideline that helps a person assign meaning and take action. There are two types of rules—rules of meaning and rules of action.

Rules of meaning, commonly called *constitutive rules*, tell what something should be taken to mean—what it “counts as.” Such rules help answer the question, What is going on here? or, What does this mean? For example, a smile may count as being pleased or amused, or it might be seen as a smirk implying cynicism, disagreement, or displeasure. The word *cool* might designate *not warm*, or it might mean *good*, *special*, or *nice*. People can assign meanings to virtually anything—language, actions, statements, behaviors, situations, events, episodes, groups, the self, other people, and so forth. Sometimes the rules governing one’s interpretations are quite stable, giving rise to tenacious meanings, and other times they are dynamic and shift around.

Rules of action, commonly known as *regulative rules*, tell what actions should be undertaken. For example, one common rule is that when someone smiles, the other person should smile back. If someone responds to a story with the word “cool,” the other person may be obligated to say “Thanks.”

Logical Force

In CMM, rules of meaning and action constitute a *logical force* that arises within salient contexts. A logical force is a cognitive connection among meanings and actions. Given a particular state of affairs, a certain meaning and/or action feels logically right. For example, if a person perceives

that a smile means pleasure, that person feels that it is right to smile back. If, however, the person perceives that the smile means displeasure, a different response may be called for. Four types of logical force are featured in CMM.

The first is *prefigurative force*. Here an antecedent event is believed to cause a consequent action. A communicator feels that his behavior is determined by something that happened before. For example, one might respond to criticism with an angry and defensive statement, feeling that one has no choice.

The second type is *contextual force*. This has the same deterministic tone but is less connected to specific prior acts and more associated with meanings in the context. The communicator feels that in a situation like this, he or she must act a certain way. For example, one might reason that within the context of “competent self,” criticism must be ignored.

The third type of logical force is *implicative force*, in which action is designed to transform the context. For example, one might decide to respond to criticism in a friendly, accepting way in order to shift the meaning of the episode from “giving criticism” to “providing mutual help.”

The fourth type is *practical force*. Also goal oriented, this force has achievement of practical outcomes as the aim. Here, for example, one might respond to criticism by criticizing the other person in return in order to be left alone in the future.

Logical force employs *deontic logic*, in which one state of affairs creates an expectation or obligation in if-then form. For example, one might think, “If you criticize me, I am obligated to defend myself.” Here, the context is “self as competent,” and in this context, a complaint is taken as illegitimate. Rules are not immutable but are socially constructed by the communicators over time as various contexts assume importance. CMM likens the individual to a daisy: The person at the center of the flower is surrounded by petals representing the many social worlds in which he or she participates.

Because every person lives in many social worlds, numerous “logics” of meaning and action are available to them. A set of rules in one situation or point in time may fade away completely as new ones take their place. Because individuals do use potentially contradictory rules of meaning and action, they can experience confusion from time to time. A person

can be torn between competing interpretations and actions. Other times, one experiences a high level of *coherence*, or consistency and clarity. Sometimes, as well, individuals feel unable to find any context or set of rules to make sense of a state of affairs, a condition called *mystery*.

Meaning and Action Loops

When meanings and actions are consistent and reproduce one another, a *charmed loop* exists. For example, when moral beliefs are rigid, one's actions may be limited to a prescribed set of behaviors, which in turn constructs moral rigidity. Here the contexts of moral belief and moral action reinforce one another in a highly coherent closed system. When meanings and actions are inconsistent and contradict one another, a *strange loop* is experienced. This happens when the contexts or the meanings within a context shift, causing a change in the rules of meaning and action. The alcoholic's paradox is a classic example: "When I drink, I am out of control, and when I am out of control, I must not drink; however, when I do not drink, this shows I am in control, and when I am in control, I should be able to drink." In this repetitive pattern, the drinker shifts meaning from "self as in control" to "self as out of control," and the rule connecting self to action then also shifts from drinking to not drinking.

Coordination

The second key concept in CMM, *coordination*, is the process in which two or more communicators organize their meanings and action into some kind of pattern that makes sense to them. When one person acts, the other person must interpret the action. The second person then will act or respond on the basis of this meaning. The first person must then interpret and act. Each is privately asking the question, What does this action mean, and how should I respond? If successful, the participants will feel that their interaction is coordinated or that it has some kind of logical pattern to it. In highly socialized situations in which standard patterns can be used, coordination is not a problem. Neither is it difficult when the parties themselves have worked out a clear set of expectations over time. However, coordination can be difficult in new situations, with new conversation partners, or in unexpected

circumstances. The basic task of all communication is to maintain some level of coordination.

A lack of coordination occurs when communicators cannot seem to mesh their actions in a meaningful way. Each believes the other's actions make no logical sense. They share no frame of logic that enables them to understand the pattern of interaction. Communicators achieve coordination when interaction feels appropriate and logical. They do not need to share a common set of rules of meaning and action in order for coordination to occur. Sometimes the parties do not understand an interaction the same way. This is not necessarily a problem, as long as partners are able to work together smoothly.

At the same time, however, coordination is not always a good thing. An *unwanted repetitive pattern* is a highly coordinated set of actions that neither person wants. Meanings and actions are tied in a tight loop that the parties cannot break. They seem unable to find new rules of meaning and action or new contexts in which a transformed pattern might emerge. Relational violence is a good example.

Story Telling

Providing a way to frame experience, *stories* are the means for achieving coherence in a situation. We create contexts, establish meanings, and define actions through story telling. Through stories, we codify our logics of meaning and action and explore our own and others' social worlds.

CMM uses a tool called LUUUTT to explore this idea. The LUUUTT model identifies six dimensions: stories *Lived*, stories *Untold*, stories *Unheard*, stories *Unknown*, stories *Told*, and story *Telling*. *Stories lived* provide the data of life experience, but we can never tell all our experience. Instead, we can tell only part of the stories we live at any given time, and the *stories we tell* construct a world of meanings and actions. *Unheard stories* are missed because communicators do not have mutual resources for engaging one another's stories sufficiently to get these. And stories that are either untold or unheard become *unknown stories* that might otherwise help add coherence and coordination to an otherwise confusing situation.

Story telling, then, provides the resources with which our social worlds are made—the rules of meaning and action and context that give life to these. When stories lived match stories told, a high level of coherence results. When stories told match stories heard, meanings come to be mutually understood. Patterns of communication can be changed and expanded and coordination achieved by telling and hearing different stories.

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See also Philosophy of Communication; Rules Theories; Social Construction of Reality; Speech Act Theory; System Theory

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CO-ORIENTATION THEORY

The original source of co-orientation theory is an article written by Theodore M. Newcomb, published in the *Psychological Review* in 1953, under the title “An Approach to the Study of Communicative Acts.” Newcomb outlined his framework of analysis in this way: Communication, in its essence, serves two ends, to establish a common orientation of two (or more) individuals with respect to each other and, *simultaneously*, to link them to a shared object of concern. The originality of his conception resides in this recognition of interpersonal adaptation as mediated by a joint interest in the state of an objective world, one that communicators are mutually connected *to* and *by*. Interaction is now seen through a new lens, that of some aspect of the world to which more than one person orients. This idea of social interaction contrasted with the then popular mathematical

theory of communication associated with Claude Shannon, commonly called *information theory*, which concentrated on information quantities in messages and how to encode messages most efficiently in linking a source to a destination. Shannon and his colleagues had denuded messages of reference to interaction. Newcomb’s innovation served to correct this abstraction from ordinary reality by reestablishing communicative acts as embedded within both a social and a material reality.

In taking this step, Newcomb was reflecting the influence of his mentor, Kurt Lewin, one of the great innovators in social psychology of the first part of the 20th century. Lewin came out of the tradition of Gestalt theory, and thus his attention was focused less on intrapersonal psychological states and more on how individuals fit themselves into fields of internal and external influences that are both social and material in nature. Newcomb’s innovation was to systematize this perception by mapping it onto a simple model that he called an *A-B-X system*: two individuals, A and B, and one object, X. The resulting triadic unit, he noted, could be regarded from two different perspectives, either that of the participants themselves, as seen from within their respective *life spaces* (a *phenomenal* view that sees attitudes as a state of mind), or that of an external observer for whom the whole A-B-X system is in view. Newcomb then identified what he called a *system*. An instance of communication can be depicted as an *A-to-B-re-X* system, in which A communicates with B about X. For example, professor and student communicate with one another about some aspect of the history of Canada. What the system amounts to, beyond an interpersonal relationship or a common group membership, however, remained largely unexplored in his essay. He did not probe the organizational implications of co-orientation, and yet presumably in any moderately complex system, there are many concurrent instances of A to B re X (people speaking to people about topics of mutual interest). How they link to each other to compose a more complex system of communicative acts was left to later theorists to elaborate.

Newcomb did probe, to some extent, the unfolding dynamic of A-B-X relationships. The key factor, as he saw it, is attitude, although his article appeared before the word *attitude* became identified as a strictly cognitive state. In earlier work, it

also meant something closer to the positioning of someone in an encounter, or a visible orientation. Attitudes might be positive or negative, A to B, B to A, A and/or B to X. In our example, the professor and student have attitudes toward one another, and they have attitudes toward the historical topic of mutual interest. Co-orientation, which is to say the lining up of attitudinal orientations in a compatible way, is an essential aspect of human life.

Systems of relationship that are in equilibrium (e.g., A and B share compatible orientations to each other and to the object X) tend to be stable. This would be the case, for example, when the professor and student like each other and share a common attitude toward the historical topic. It would also be true, by the way, if they had opposing attitudes toward the topic and really did not like each other very much. In contrast, incompatibility provides an impulse toward resolving the tension—what Newcomb designated a *strain toward symmetry*. When facing an asymmetrical relationship, A and B could simply go their own ways, or perhaps they might find themselves progressively moderating their orientations in the interest of maintaining co-orientation. Imagine, for example, that the professor had a very favorable attitude toward the historical topic but found that a particular student, whom the professor quite liked, hated this topic. This would create a strain toward symmetry that could lead the professor to respect the student less, reevaluate the favorable opinion of the topic, or disengage from the student. The student, on becoming aware of the asymmetry, might go through a similar adjustment process.

Newcomb assembled a good deal of empirical evidence to support his thesis of a strain toward symmetry. Groups, he noted, tend to develop homogeneous attitudes over time through communicating frequently. The pressure on people to conform is also considerable since attitudes that are stubbornly incompatible with those of the majority will isolate their holders and eventually lose them their status as members. A good deal depends, however, on the salience of the object and the relationship: obviously, some things are more important than others. Newcomb termed this factor *valence*: not merely plus or minus, but more or less so. And this in turn implies that it is possible for people to agree to disagree since the bonds that hold people together involve multiple objects, not all of the same

valence. He also opened the possibility that the object might be less an object in the material sense than role prescriptions or norms. For example, the professor and student may be able to sustain a good relationship with mutual respect that allows for the norm of scholarly disagreement about history within their roles as student and teacher.

Newcomb's introduction to co-orientation left little imprint on the thinking of his contemporaries. Attitude research exploded in the 1950s, but it was largely impelled by other influences. Newcomb's article did influence the thinking of one of his students, Bruce Westley, who, in collaboration with Malcolm MacLean, published an article in 1957 that explored the topic of *gatekeeping*. They adapted A-B-X theory by adding a C, the *gatekeeper*, who intervenes to bias the A to B channel by inserting an alternative reading. Although this addition to the co-orientation model provided additional detail, the full potential of the model was not seen until many years later, when it was taken up by organizational communication scholars as part of complex systems of communication.

James Taylor

See also Attitude Theory; Organizational Co-Orientation Theory

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CORPORATE CAMPAIGN THEORIES

The concept of corporate campaign theories can be discussed from at least two major perspectives: promotional product or service advertising campaigns, most relevant to the field of marketing, or the less visible corporate issues campaigns, most relevant to the field of public relations and issues management. This entry explores the corporate issues campaigns perspective and associated theoretical frameworks.

In the corporate environment, issues campaigns focus on either opportunities or threats. Every corporation wants to function as autonomously as possible in its economic environment. In that environment, an issue that could result in additional regulatory, legislative, or legal restriction is perceived as a threat to the organization's ability to function, and the organization attempts to resolve the issue before these restrictions become necessary. In a parallel scenario, when the regulatory, legislative, or legal outcome is perceived as beneficial to the organization, the organization will attempt to further these actions. Whether beneficial or restrictive, corporate efforts frequently take the form of management-level information campaigns that could involve coalition building, mass media or interpersonal contact, and usually behavior change in the relevant organization.

Because these issues campaigns frequently involve or potentially involve regulatory agencies, legislative bodies, or court decisions, the issues both attract and compete for attention in the public arena, including media coverage. An issue may also attract activist interest groups. Management of these corporate issues campaigns therefore involves negotiation with activist groups, included in the theoretical framework of powerful stakeholders. The concept has been tied directly to at least five theoretical frameworks: systems theory, issue life-cycle theory, legitimacy-gap theory, powerful stakeholder theory, and social exchange theory.

The concept of corporate issues campaigns and their resolution draws on several disciplines, most notably the public policy side of political science and business management, and includes much of public relations' emphasis on management-level communication that prepares and negotiates. But the concept as a unit was strongly positioned theoretically in the field of communication first through Robert Heath and Richard Nelson's 1989 book, *Issues Management: Corporate Public Policy Making in an Information Society*. Heath's 1997 book, *Strategic Issues Management: Organizations and Public Policy Challenges*, brought the concept into the management boardroom through concern for issue anticipation and established corporate issues management campaigns as an academic field in communication. The emphasis moved to corporate campaigns in anticipation and prevention of issue development, including negotiation with

relevant stakeholders, changes in corporate behavior, and communication of these changes. This latter academic approach is of interest here.

Systems Theory

Systems theory is based on a generic concept that has been applied to organizational communication, public relations processes, and corporate issues management and campaigns. Applied to corporate campaigns, the premise of systems theory is simply that no corporation or part of the corporation exists or functions by itself. The corporation is a complex system of connected, interdependent internal parts connected to a broader external suprasystem that encompasses not only other similar units but also interdependent organizations that influence and are influenced by the original corporation. Whether internal or external, these interdependent units are potential *stakeholders* that have the ability to affect the corporation in a positive or negative way. Thus the systems environment is broader than one corporation and has the potential to create a turbulent setting where the corporation attempts to survive and prosper. Turbulence can result from social, political, or economic change. Change in the external environment generally requires change in the internal environment that can distract the corporation from its mission. Therefore, consistent with systems theory, the organization will strive for a level of what is called *homeostasis*, or balance, in order to regain stability or a nondisruptive state. Relevant management personnel should continually practice *environmental scanning*, monitoring the environment in order to avoid surprises.

Systems theory would suggest that any organism that fails to adapt to its environment challenges its own survival, and a corporation that ignores incoming information regarding change becomes a closed system that eventually will be unable to survive. However, a corporation cannot deal with every environmental disruption or issue. Neither can it respond to an issue without careful analysis of the issue's potential effect on the organization, its potential effect on powerful stakeholders, the potential for the issue to develop or be disrupted, and potential media interest.

Organizational systems theorists suggest that organizational response can take one of two forms. If the organization feels the problem or issue is

routine or has been dealt with previously, established procedures may already be in place. Assuming the organization was satisfied with the earlier outcome, routine response procedures should be sufficient. If the problem or opportunity has not been addressed, the organization should search for both similar issues and coalitions and evaluate the new information before acting. *Cybernetics* suggests that the organization will respond by either increasing or decreasing information from the organization to relevant stakeholders. However, issues management theorists recommend two-way negotiation to establish mutually beneficial relationships.

Issue Life-Cycle Theory

Issue life-cycle theory in effect extends systems theory by explaining the components that predict whether an issue will grow or will safely move out of the corporate system. The theory suggests that negative corporate issues begin when a recognizable group begins to register discontent with the corporation or when a specialist group recognizes a corporate-related problem. Positive-outcome issues may be supported by the organization. Regardless, at least three stages exist: first, the beginning of an issue, when a problem begins to surface and attract attention; then the stage when the organization is expected to react; and the final stage, when the organization makes changes to resolve the issue or when the issue disappears.

A negative issue that is not resolved in its early stages can escalate to the point that a political solution, such as regulation or litigation, is expected. When mass media become aware of an issue and find it of interest, at least in the short term the issue grows. Media coverage legitimizes an issue, attracts other media, creates an awareness of the issue in a broader public whose activities can attract additional media coverage, and can even create a label or name for the issue. It also can provide a means of activity for groups, or stakeholders, who thought the issue was unresolvable.

These activist groups may pressure an organization for unilateral change. Even after mutual resolution of an issue, the activist groups have developed coalitions that can be quickly mobilized if another related problem arises. Organizations generally wish to avoid a litigated solution, which can be precedent setting, affect other organizations, and

move an ethical issue into the legal system. Social issues generally have a limited life cycle as they share public interest with other issues. Regardless of the issue focus, life-cycle theory says that no issue stays in the forefront forever. Other issues move into the cycle and attract attention of relevant groups and organizations.

Legitimacy-Gap Theory

Theorists have attempted to identify the reasons a corporate issue moves into the issue cycle, generates problematic attention, or fails to generate desired attention. One of these explanations is *legitimacy-gap theory*, discussed at length by Suresh Sethi. If we consider an organization a legitimate member of the business or nonprofit community, any activity or information that creates a discrepancy between society's expectations of the organization and the organization's perceived behavior creates a gap that could threaten the organization's status. Two scenarios can explain this gap. In the first scenario, the organization's behavior is knowingly inappropriate. The organization has either changed from acceptable to unacceptable behavior, or it had hidden inappropriate behavior that has been discovered. In the second scenario, the organization has neither changed its behavior nor tried to hide inappropriate behavior, but society's expectations or norms have changed, and the organization no longer meets these standards.

These scenarios often appear when an organization focuses only on financial success, and the effects can be traced through analysis of corporate history and development of corporate public relations in this country. Financial success enables an organization to survive, but this narrow focus relates to only one stakeholder, the shareholders of the corporation. To close or avoid a legitimacy gap, corporate citizenship suggests that a successful organization needs to maintain awareness and consideration of changing social mores and exhibit behavior that is perceived as not only financially sound but also socially responsive to other stakeholders in the organizational system.

The issue is one of corporate ethics and social responsibility. Even when government attempts to promote a favorable business climate, social and environmental regulation will follow irresponsible behavior, especially behavior that is perceived as

causing social risk. Social responsibility is also becoming a criterion for financial investors. Research enables an organization to maintain awareness of social norms.

Powerful Stakeholder Theory

Different stakeholders have different roles in the organizational system, and the amount of attention needed to engage a particular stakeholder group will vary with the issue. When an issue campaign becomes an organizational priority because of the behavior, needs, or influence of one stakeholder group, that stakeholder group assumes the role of or rises to status of a *powerful stakeholder* and generally behaves as and is treated as an activist group. Vincent Price reminds us that the political process, in which regulatory decisions are made, focuses either on recruiting specific groups, or publics, for individual problems or on defining these issues so the identified groups do not form or become active. These powerful stakeholders can include media that focus on an issue.

At minimum, interested stakeholders are perceived as having two roles. The first role is that of smaller activist groups that focus intently and actively on the issue, identified by Walter Lippmann as *actors*. These active groups are problematic if they have power in regard to the relevant issue, beneficial if the organization supports the issue. The second role is that of a support group, or in Lippmann's terms, *spectators*, who provide support or perceived support to the actors. This spectator group could also include James Grunig's *aware publics*, those who are aware of the issue but see barriers to the issue's resolution. Perceived support can encourage the actors to continue their behavior in support of or opposition to the issue in question. While shareholders and regulatory bodies will always hold a powerful stakeholder role in the organization, employees, residents in the organization's community, customers, and even suppliers can become powerful by organizing around an issue. If these groups begin forming coalitions, the issue will escalate.

As issue life-cycle theory proposes, individual issues do not maintain priority status forever. But even if an issue is resolved, the original coalitions can materialize faster if another relevant issue develops. Corporate campaign managers should be aware of these group linkages as well as their interests.

Social Exchange Theory

Successful corporate campaign interaction requires communication that is understood by all participants, and this interaction includes words, symbols, and actual behavior, such as demonstrations by activist groups and corporate change by organizations. Without analysis of the interaction rhetoric, *rhetorical analysis*, differing viewpoints, values, and issue perspectives will not come forward and cannot be resolved, or disagreement between an organization and stakeholders may inaccurately be perceived to exist.

One particular type of interaction, *social exchange*, is specifically appropriate for resolution of issues. Corporate interaction with activist groups and other issue-related stakeholders suggests that during negotiation each group expects something from the other. Thus, one concession can be traded for a reciprocal concession, or an exchange. However, Blau reminds us that these mutual concessions are not necessarily social exchange. In his (and Emerson's) analysis, these concessions or exchanges are discrete, even economic, in that they resemble a purchase in which one value is traded for another.

Social exchange as a concept is more relational; trust is built. In this approach, if an organization exhibits responsible behavior, the return or reward may not be immediate. Rather, the organization builds intangible goodwill that will hopefully result in support and future goodwill with the affected stakeholders. The recipient of the intangible goodwill theoretically incurs an obligation to the responsible organization.

The organization's responsible behavior cannot be short-term and must address the needs of the relevant stakeholder group. Blau noted that this responsible behavior also builds power for the giver, the organization, as long as the benefit has value to the recipient and if the benefit cannot be obtained elsewhere. Thus corporate issues campaigns are long-term efforts to maintain an organization's reputation and build goodwill with relevant stakeholders.

Janet A. Bridges

See also Campaign Communication Theories; Cybernetics; Institutional Theories of Organizational Communication; Organizational Communication

Theories; Organizing, Process of; Public Opinion Theories; Social Exchange Theory; Stakeholder Theory; System Theory

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CORPORATE COLONIZATION THEORY

Corporate colonization refers to domination by corporate organizations. *Colonization* has usually referred to one country or society invading or taking over another. In the 1970s and 1980s, Jürgen Habermas used the term to discuss the way different parts of society can dominate the *lifeworld*—the everyday meaning and experience of individuals through various asymmetrical structural and system relations. In his 1992 book, *Democracy in an Age of Corporate Colonization*, Stanley Deetz detailed the ways in which this happens within corporations.

Scholars have been concerned for some time with the *politics of the personal*—the political processes by which meanings, identities, and experience are formed. Much of this was gradually organized and connected to communication processes by critical theorists from the Frankfurt School in the 1930s. The central issue has been with how language and communication processes affect the formation of the *interior*, meaning the very identities and meanings that individuals and groups espouse. This work has contrasted with more common concern in communication studies with expression.

Most scholars interested in this *inner* colonization have worked from a constitutive theory of communication, providing a nonpsychological understanding of meaning and experience, focusing on how the relational positioning of the human subject is put into play and interactively with the world and others produces experience. In the corporate world, the large economic corporations rather than general economic relations were seen as the locus of meaning, experience, and reasoning domination. Deetz's work pays attention to political relationships, using a social constructionist view. Using this "political-attention-relation-constructionist" theory of communication, Deetz critiqued liberal democratic communication theory as inadequate to deal with a colonized world, positioned the everyday world as the central site of democracy, and proposed the development of more participatory conceptions and practices of communication as core to reciprocal open formation of self and society.

Understood in this way, the concept of corporate colonization draws attention to the ways workplace organizations have usurped the functions of lifeworld institutions that tie meaning to such groups as religion, family, and community. In different historical periods, other institutions have dominated meaning, and personal identities may have been more firmly located in them. In an age of corporate colonization, corporations shape decision-making processes and ways of life more powerfully than in the past, and personal identity is often derived from the workplace and work processes.

Conceptually, colonization of this sort might be represented in the following way. Imagine three spheres of life—private, public, and economic. Through history these have resided in a dynamic tension-filled relationship, each having its own logic and demands. Many of the decisions about how to raise children, live a good living, and value events and others arose out of meaning structures developed in the private sphere of homes, communities, and churches. Public sector institutions—governments, legislatures, and so forth—made decisions about public welfare, defense, and inter-community relationships. Business and work made decisions about what goods and services to produce and how work processes were to be organized. Throughout history some struggle has existed among these three sectors, with one or another becoming more dominant and the others providing a supportive role. Occasionally, for example, governments have become deeply involved in business and decisions of the home and community or the church in business and government.

In domination, one of the spheres begins to encroach on the others, replacing the logic and demands in those spheres with its own. In corporate colonization, a particular form of workplace and economic relations becomes dominant. For example, in cases of corporate colonization of the public sphere, work organizations have increased power in legislative and policy-making processes; economic decision processes might gradually replace political processes. In inner colonization, corporations encroach on the private space, the colonization of the personal. Both through their own internal practices and through their external advertising and media control, personal identities,

values, concepts of civility and worth, child rearing practices, and conceptions of progress are increasingly derived from corporations. The development of consumption life styles becomes both an effect and a continuing cause of corporate identification. In corporate colonization, instrumental reasoning becomes the primary form of reasoning. Ends are stressed over means, resulting in people, things, and processes being assessed in terms of their rational, measurable impacts on the world.

This has been both good and bad. On the positive side, economic institutions have sometimes been more peaceful, accepting of group differences, and efficient than their community and public counterparts. But raw, short-term economic logics without counterbalance have also been disastrous for people and the environment. The traditional state democracies struggle when the leading social decisions are made in nondemocratic sites and institutions. Both possibilities and difficulties of inclusion of social and ecological values in the decision processes in economic sites exist. The concern of communication scholars has been to understand the communication dynamics of colonizing processes and to reconstruct communication theory to be more attentive to these dynamics since much of current theory was developed for the traditional private and public spheres.

Critical communication theories have been very helpful in understanding this new politics of everyday life. These theories have focused on the communicative production and reproduction of structures of discourse that recruit, call, or position subjects in particular ways, the communicative processes by which some formations become more dominant, and processes of closing off certain ways of thinking and acting by suppressing conflict and preventing different discourses that might challenge or change the existing order of things. In workplace studies the attention has been to communicative processes of power control and resistance.

Stanley A. Deetz

See also Constitutive View of Communication; Critical Discourse Analysis; Critical Organizational Communication; Critical Theory; Cultural Studies; Frankfurt School; Organizational Control Theory; Postmodern Theory; Stakeholder Theory

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CORRESPONDENCE THEORY

See Language and Communication; Meaning Theories; Metatheory

CREATIVITY IN GROUPS

Creativity in groups is an emergent process that results in novel and relevant ideas, responses, processes, or products. This definition of creativity wedges process and outcome—which will be

addressed later in this entry. Although creativity in groups has a long history of being studied in disciplines such as business and psychology, only recently have communication scholars paid systematic attention to how group communication and creativity are related. This entry explores the concept of creativity in a group context, examining how creativity differs from related concepts such as learning and innovation, the different factors that seem to hinder as well as facilitate creativity, and theoretical developments in the group communication field.

The term *creativity* is sometimes used interchangeably with related concepts such as *learning* and *innovation*. Careful examination, however, reveals that creativity is related to, yet distinct from, these processes. *Learning* may be considered to be the increased capacity of a group to adapt and change on the basis of newly acquired information, skills, or understanding. So while creativity generally indicates learning has taken place, not all learning results in creativity. While a group may increase knowledge, skills, and understanding of information, for example, it is when that knowledge, skill, or understanding is applied in ways that serve to yield novel products, processes, or ideas that are directly relevant to the task at hand that members engage in creativity. Thus learning paves the way for creativity and creative activity.

In addition to the production of novel and relevant ideas, responses, processes, or products, *innovation* adds the criterion of implementation. The main difference between creativity and innovation is that the latter requires a plan for how the group's creative product will be put into effect as well as the actual enactment of that plan. Creativity is part of the innovation process.

Factors Affecting Group Creativity

One might think that part of the answer to having groups produce highly creative and imaginative solutions to problems is to compose them of highly intelligent or creative individuals. While this may make intuitive sense, it is not always the case that groups composed of such individuals will produce more creative solutions than groups not composed of such individuals or than individuals working alone. Part of the reason is that bringing individuals together to work in a group setting sometimes

results in the manifestation of factors that hinder creativity. Some of these factors are associated with the individuals who compose the group, some are associated with the larger environment or broader context in which the group is situated, and some are associated with the exchange of communication messages themselves.

Among the factors associated with individual hindrances to creativity are functional fixedness and evaluation apprehension. *Functional fixedness* refers to a person's propensity to think about things in ways in which they have traditionally been used. A claw hammer, for example, is a tool used to pound nails into a material or pull them out. Yet, depending on the situation, the tool may also be used as a lever or a glass smasher. A person who is prone to functional fixedness will have difficulty using the hammer in the latter two ways because he or she is rigid in his or her thinking about how a hammer can or should be used. With *evaluation apprehension*, group members may fear being judged or seen in a negative light by other group members. In an effort to minimize this fear, such members will refrain from expressing ideas.

Factors associated with the larger environment in which the group operates also may serve to hinder group creativity. These factors include organizational resources that are available to group members, such as time and information. *Time pressures* imposed on the group by the organization, for example, will have an adverse effect on creativity as members are not allowed to adequately express and search for information and ideas. Another broader environment factor concerns *organizational culture*. Here, an organization that has had a past history of financial, social, or other failures may have developed procedures, policies, language and/or reward systems that are indicative of being risk-averse. Consequently, original, novel, and divergent problem solving is not valued. A group charged with creative problem solving is affected by the risk-averse culture of the organization in which it is embedded. Group creativity suffers as a result.

Among the factors related to communication messages that may hinder group creativity are production blocking and the communication network structure that is characteristic of the group. *Production blocking* occurs when group members

are limited in their generation of ideas because of the sequential flow of communication messages. That is, every time a group member speaks, others are essentially blocked from expressing their ideas. *Network structure* refers to the patterning of communication messages among group members, or who talks to whom and with what frequency. Group members may communicate little with each other and may direct most if not all messages to the group leader. The group leader, then, acts as a gatekeeper for information and ideas.

Communication View

In addition to factors associated with communication messages themselves, communication is related to group creativity in at least two other ways. First, and perhaps most basic, communication is a *symbolic activity*, and creativity is always expressed symbolically. When group members wish to convey information, thoughts, and ideas to one another, they do so through the use of language. Ideas are expressed, assessed, and validated through the use of language, the exemplar of human symbolic activity. Second, symbols, their use, and the meanings attached to them serve to create the very group environments in which creativity takes place. Group environments may be described in different ways, and regardless of how described, communication serves to give life to them. For example, notions of how things should be done, what is to count as acceptable or right or wrong, and the general atmosphere of group relations are all communicatively and symbolically constituted and maintained. The manner in which group members communicate with one another serves to give life to these notions and, in short, to the immediate environment in which creativity occurs.

Given that the communication process is essentially tied to group creativity, a variety of communication techniques, tools, and formats have been designed to enhance creativity. One of the ways in which group creativity may be fostered is by attempting to minimize the effects of those individual, environmental, and communicative factors that hinder it. Such fostering may be accomplished, for example, by structuring the communication that takes place in the group.

A variety of methods, or *formats*, have been developed for structuring communicative activity,

with arguably the most famous being the brainstorming technique developed by advertising executive Alex Osborn. One of the central arguments justifying the use of the brainstorming technique concerns the role of the evaluation of ideas. Sometimes group members place an emphasis on evaluating ideas instead of generating them. As well, some group members may become apprehensive about having their ideas being negatively evaluated by other members. Consequently, those ideas are never expressed in discussion. The brainstorming technique is designed to reduce the adverse impact of evaluation on idea generation. Despite its widespread use, the brainstorming technique has met with equivocal empirical results.

Theoretical Approaches

Abran Salazar has put forward a theoretical view of the connection between communication and group creativity. His view is influenced by a complex-systems orientation to the study of groups. There are many different systems, and groups are but one type. A complex system is one that is marked by increased dynamism and variety of group activities. It is a system that operates at the boundary between order and chaos.

Picture a match that has just been put out. Left alone, smoke rises from the match head in a steady column (*order*). A few inches above the match head, there is a noticeable disturbance in this orderly rise: The smoke displays an increased dynamism (*complexity*) among the particles that compose it, with the result being a visible change in the column. Just beyond this disturbance, the smoke loses coherence and dissipates (*chaos*) into the surrounding air. The point at which the smoke seems ready to dissipate may be said to be the “edge of chaos”; it is the point at which the smoke has reached a complex and dynamic state but has not yet lost coherence.

At times, groups also operate in an analogous complex state. Salazar claims that in order for a group to be creative, it should function in this complex state. That is, a group’s chances of being creative are small if it continues to function in the ways it always has—by displaying a characteristic order. By the same token, a group will not be creative if it is in a state of chaos. Rather, a group should

function between order and chaos. How group members communicate with one another informs us about whether a group is in a complex state.

One can observe how members target other members through their communication, that is, who tends to talk to whom and with what frequency; this is the group’s *structural system*. One can also observe the procedure group members use when working on a task (*technical system*); the roles group members occupy (*relational system*); and the assumptions about what is right or wrong, and good and bad, which is inherent in how group members communicate about information (*information system*). Whenever we see group members changing their interaction patterns, whether by changing the frequency and directional flow of communication, using new procedures to solve problems or make decisions, displaying little or no discussion typical of group member roles, or questioning or supplanting assumptions about what counts as good or bad information, the group is showing evidence of operating in a complex state. This complex state lays the fertile ground for the emergence of the creative process and outcomes. Hence, as far as creativity is concerned, there is no differentiation to be made between process and outcome.

John Gastil has built on Salazar’s ideas, focusing on how groups can come to a state of complexity. He discusses a three-stage process. The first of these stages is taking an *inventory* of the group. Here, group members come to know how each of the four systems described in the previous paragraph work. Group members take stock of their group in an effort to come to know how to change it. In the second stage, *perturbation*, group members introduce disturbances that serve to shake up the group in some way pertaining to one or more of the four systems. Such perturbations may include changing group roles, employing different standards for evaluating information, or using a new procedure for solving problems. Finally, in *amplification and extension*, group members employ the changed features, integrate them into everyday group functioning, and recognize the implications of the change(s) for other aspects of group work, such as impact on roles and power differences.

As of today these theoretical ideas have not been empirically tested. While the models identified above have intuitive appeal, future development in the field of communication will benefit from

further theoretical honing and empirical scrutiny. After all, there may be an element of chance or serendipity associated with creativity that no model may be able to capture. Clearly the study of communication and group creativity is still in incipient stages. However, if group communication scholars' attention to creativity in some degree parallels that paid to it by psychology scholars after J. P. Guilford's call to engage in creativity study in his 1950 address to the American Psychological Association, it will have been a very promising beginning indeed.

Abran J. Salazar

See also Functional Group Communication Theory; Group Communication Theories; Groupthink; System Theory

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CRITICAL COMMUNICATION PEDAGOGY

Named by Deanna L. Fassett and John T. Warren in their book of the same name, critical communication pedagogy is both a paradigm and an area of study. As a paradigm, this worldview contextualizes and provides a lens to view recent initiatives at the intersection of communication and education that deal with power relations as they arise from social systems of race, gender, class, disability, and sexuality. Critical communication pedagogy, at this level, serves as a framework that collects and provides coherence for the diverse work that takes a critical lens to issues of communication in pedagogical contexts.

As an area of study, critical communication pedagogy is also a subdiscipline that is beginning to develop on campuses across the United States. From site-specific studies to expansive views of educational practice, scholars use critical communication pedagogy to investigate power within a variety of contexts. By building on an interdisciplinary base, this communication-centered approach builds new ways of knowing and thinking about how (and to what effect) communication happens within classrooms.

Historical Origins

When the National Communication Association (then called the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking) began the formal study of communication, the focus of the organization was dedicated to the teaching of public speaking. These early teachers studied and wrote on how best to teach speech. Since then, the study of pedagogy has always been the center of the formal study of communication, even as it traces its roots to the rhetors of ancient Greece. As a subdiscipline of communication studies, communication education continues to investigate how best to teach the principles of communication, including the best instructional practices for the teaching of such topics as nonverbal communication, persuasive speaking, rhetorical theory, interpersonal communication, and communication theory, to name but a few content areas. The teaching of speech, as a research area, centers on pedagogical practices,

claiming that the teaching of communication is unique and requires a discipline-specific pedagogy to meet the needs of communication classrooms.

Often credited with beginning in the 1970s, instructional communication shifts the focus from the teaching of speech to the study of communication in classroom settings, regardless of the discipline. With the careful application of communication theory, scholars investigated a variety of communication phenomena in the context of classrooms, including teacher–student immediacy, student–teacher facework management, communication apprehension, and communication competence. Today, researchers seek to provide useful ways of understanding misbehaviors and miscommunication in the classroom in order to counter them, building more effective classrooms where learning can be enhanced.

The field of education, also in the early 1970s, was beginning to witness the influx of critical theory, the most significant of which was Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, first published in English in 1970. From the workings of Marxist, feminist, and other schools of critical thought, critical pedagogy was taking root as a major force within education. Critical pedagogy examines the institution of education (and the practices that sustain it), arguing that education is deeply rooted in power and serves to reproduce the ideologies of the dominant class. Today, hundreds of books have been written on the topic of critical pedagogy; however, the communication scholar, with his or her attention to the workings of discourse and embodied communication, still struggled to find a place within this conversation. In the early 1990s, Jo Sprague began, in earnest, to introduce critical pedagogy to the field of communication, arguing that communication scholars could offer the research much in terms of focus and analytical precision.

Critical communication pedagogy ultimately stands as the evolutionary outcome of these diverse threads. While not communication education, the import of communication as a unique area of study is recognized. While not instructional communication, the fine attention to the workings of communication remains central. While not critical pedagogy, the focus on examining larger institutional forces guides critical communication pedagogy researchers. Together, these form a paradigm

of research characterized by critical theory's dedication to social change as a goal of research as well as communication studies' analytical focus on mundane practices. Critical communication pedagogy provides specialized attention to the functioning of power, asking how communication works to sustain (and possibly counter) systems of domination.

Commitments of Critical Communication Pedagogy

In *Critical Communication Pedagogy*, Fassett and Warren use the framework of 10 *commitments* to name the stakes and issues that together assemble the logic, paradigm, and area of study that are critical communication pedagogy. The first addresses identity, arguing that constitutive approaches allow the researcher to see identity as produced in and through communication, not as something taken for granted from which communication originates. This communicative way of seeing the self foregrounds how identity is constituted in interaction, reflecting basic principles of performance and ethnomethodology (careful attention to the details of actual interactions), which both grant that subjects are the result of undergoing interaction. In sum, identity is conceptualized as produced or made by our communicative experiences.

The second commitment sees power as fluid and complex, rather than as a force that can be possessed. Power, within this framework, is shared, even if the players are not equal. For instance, while teachers certainly have power in the classroom, students also have power to use, manipulate, and resist the structure of education that circulates around them. This leads to the third commitment, which defines how culture is seen within critical communication pedagogy. Culture infuses everything, and a critical communication pedagogy researcher would do well to remember that any examination of the classroom that fails to account for culture is problematic.

Commitments four and five focus on the relationship between communication's dedication to mundane and minute communication practices (fourth commitment) and critical theory's examination of larger social structural systems (fifth commitment). Critical communication pedagogy, as a paradigm, sees mundane practices and larger social

systems as co-constructed, meaning that they affect one another. So, while mundane communication practices constitute larger institutional norms, those norms in turn place everyday communication in context. This co-constructive process is used as the basis for critique. For instance, school uniforms surely help discipline students by reproducing idealized notions of how cultural citizens should look; however, any examination of uniforms must be seen within the larger system, and any focus on one piece to the exclusion of another limits one's ability to understand the phenomena.

Philosophy of language is the primary concern of commitment six, again focusing on how language constitutes or generates meaning. Critical communication educators argue that language always does more than reflect or represent some idea or ideal; language creates meaning and produces relationships. Each utterance makes the world; other choices would make different worlds. This is why commitment seven centers on reflexivity, arguing that a radical (as in, *at the root*) reflexivity is needed to see ourselves critically, to be accountable for what we say and how that saying affects others. Reflexivity is not just the ability to look back on one's self and understand how one is involved in power; rather, reflexivity also includes the understanding that all social activity is achieved through communication—it frames all the taken-for-granted aspects of life and recognizes that they are, in the end, produced by human interaction. So, just as language produces the world, it also produces, for instance, speaking subjects, social institutions, and created categories such as race and gender that govern or shape the communicators who use language.

In commitment eight, which borrows from the philosophy of Paulo Freire, critical communication educators embrace praxis, simply defined by Freire as theory-infused action designed to transform the world. Action without continual thought and critique does not necessarily transform the world in liberating ways; for instance, before anyone would intervene in a community (especially a community one is not a member of), he or she would want to balance the desire to act with careful reflection, built from the members themselves. Such action then will be hopeful rather than simply a different version of domination. From praxis, or thoughtful practice, comes our ability to act, to meet the

world with a willingness to challenge it. Often, critical communication educators see such agency in the most mundane of sites—their classrooms, their neighborhoods, and so forth. Regardless of the context of action, what counts is how one engages—the effort to see the self and other as complex beings, each striving for meaning and purpose, is to engage them with a kind of care that embraces the ethics of a critically compassionate communication pedagogy. Often, this results in dialogue, the last of the 10 commitments. Dialogue as method, metaphor, and ethic serves as a key principle of critical communication pedagogy. Ultimately, dialogue is constructive and deconstructive at the same time. That is, it is both a basis for changing customary power relations and a basis for building new ways of thinking and seeing relationships.

Together, these 10 commitments build a foundation on which one can construct a productive ground to study and enact a critical communication pedagogy. As both a theory and a guiding praxis of pedagogy, critical communication pedagogy enables one to see the site of education as a institution that is produced through communicative interaction. Such institutions are necessarily reproductive of the very social forces that are ingrained in the culture itself—because power and privilege are pervasive, schools can be seen as sites where these systems are reiterated and normalized.

Critical Communication Pedagogy as a Communication Theory

Communication and education as disciplines often ask different questions, drawing readers and thinkers to different ways of seeing what happens in pedagogical sites. Because of these different lenses, there is often little shared dialogue between the two programs of study. In contrast, critical communication pedagogy does more than simply link these two literatures; rather, it theoretically demonstrates that the subject of critical pedagogy (the institutions of education and systems of domination) are produced through communication (the constitutive, mundane moments of interaction). As such, as a theory, critical communication pedagogy enables scholars to see how the institutions of which we are members are produced and normalized through our everyday talk, gesture,

and so forth. By analyzing communication, scholars can talk about institutions not as amorphous structures under which we labor, but rather as crafted spaces that exist in, through, and because of our communicative practices.

Because critical communication pedagogy enables such dynamic and vivid analyses of educational settings, it also enables innovative ways of resisting oppression. Take, for example, deeply embedded sexist talk and practices among students in a classroom setting. One could study, from the standpoint of critical communication pedagogy, how sexism plays out in classrooms in ways that reproduce and normalize it. As a result, such a study offers a lens by which to understand the complexities involved in how gender gets enacted in that classroom and beyond; this information can provide the basis for creating new policies, new ways of teaching, and new ways of thinking about gender in the classroom that might provide different possibilities for enacting gender.

The classroom is often cited as a place ripe for social change—it is a place where progressive change has historically been enacted (think school integration, for example). As such, critical communication pedagogy is hopeful in part because it builds on a long-standing tradition of making education a site where one learns not only content, but ways of being critically reflexive citizens of the world. Here lies a source of its potential as a communication theory.

John T. Warren

See also Autoethnography; Constitutive View of Communication; Critical Race Theory; Critical Theory; Culture and Communication; Ethnomethodology; Feminist Communication Theories; Power and Power Relations; Social Construction of Reality

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CRITICAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Critical constructivism stands for the merging of *constructivist* or *constructionist* views with *critical* epistemology developed by the Frankfurt School. This involves combining ideas related to how people think while interacting with the social environment (constructivist) or how meanings are socially derived (constructionist) and impacted by power structures in society, as well as the ethical consequences of people's choices (critical). The term *critical constructivism* was first used in the 1960s in the field of education and then, with similar meaning, in psychology. Later, critical constructivism was incorporated into political science and sociology; it found its way into communication studies with the work of Andrew Feenberg, Maria Bakardjieva, and Milton Campos. This entry describes these lines of work and their confluence.

Origins in Education

The *critical constructivist school* in education was built around the tradition known as *critical thinking*, which emerged from the application in education of informal logic approaches, such as those of the British logician Stephen Toulmin, who became disillusioned with the power of formal logic as a tool for understanding commonsense communication. He developed a method for analyzing arguments based on constructs analogous to those found in legal procedures and tribunals, and this method led to the development of the informal logic school in the United States in the early 1960s.

The general idea of the critical constructivists in education was to integrate these contributions regarding informal logic to notions of cognitive development, originally based on traditional Piagetian theory and/or contemporary cognitive theories. According to this view, critical-thinking abilities can scaffold the development of more and more complex cognitive abilities through well-designed pedagogical activities based on argumentation. Certain educational strategies would “wake up” children’s awareness of the underlying logical structures of their own reasoning through critical inquiry. It was believed that good teaching designed to enhance critical thinking could speed up cognitive development, that pedagogical activities developed on this basis would enhance learning.

Strategies of this kind were further developed by the introduction of sociocognitive approaches in North America, adapted largely from the learning theory by the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. Some cognitive psychologists and educators, who came to believe in the integration of Vygotsky’s psychology with cognitive theories issued from cybernetics (such as the information processing theory), found ways to assess argumentation as a critical process of construction.

Thus, the *critical* component of this educational tradition refers not to power structures in society but to critical-thinking processes within the individual’s discourse. Although these educational applications introduced the term *critical constructivism*, the term took an entirely different turn in communication, as reflected in the critiques of technology offered by Feenberg and Bakardjieva.

Feenberg’s and Bakardjieva’s Critique of Technology

The term *critical constructivism*—which could also be called *critical constructionism*—was first published in communication studies in 1999 in the foundational book *Questioning Technology*, by the American philosopher of technology Andrew Feenberg. Later, and very curiously, Maria Bakardjieva proposed the term independently in her 2002 dissertation for a doctorate in communication (she also has a PhD in sociology), which led to the world-renowned book *The Internet in Everyday Life*, published in 2005. Today, Feenberg

and Bakardjieva are the most important scholars of this tradition.

Both share common ground with the educational critical constructivist approaches developed by the critical thinking school in terms of a view toward change and a focus on the idea of construction to account for the process of understanding. But these scholars depart from this common ground in their approach to critique. From their perspective, critical constructivism refers to the integration of the *social construction of reality theory*, proposed within the tradition of the sociology of science and technology, and critical theory, namely, the contributions of the German philosophers Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas.

According to Feenberg, the critical constructivist approach criticizes deterministic views, according to which technology shapes society by itself, silently or independently of major political and cultural developments. Feenberg makes three propositions: (1) Technology is defined by a social process in which technology choices are influenced by a variety of contextual criteria; (2) this social process satisfies various cultural needs related to technology; and (3) competitive definitions of technology mirror conflictive views of society. Thus, technology choices are influenced by power arrangements in society.

This approach draws from the critique of traditional Marxism made by Frankfurt intellectuals, namely Herbert Marcuse. According to Feenberg, Marcuse understands social progress as mirroring historical conflicts and artistic representations that are based on experience, that provide meaning to art, and that place technology at the core of social processes. This approach is consistent with the views of Jürgen Habermas about democracy as an intersubjective process of understanding (created through interaction with others), through which communication integrates public and private realms of life. Feenberg synthesizes these ideas but distances himself from Habermas because of the latter’s supposed silence about the role of technology, thoroughly discussed by Marcuse. In addition, Feenberg absorbed a number of Michel Foucault’s reservations about critical theory and embraced the critique of technological determinism from the *actor network theory* by Bruno Latour, one of the main theorists who shaped the constructionist tradition. Feenberg’s critical constructivism is,

thus, a philosophical critique of technology integrating the contributions of postmodern structuralism and critical theory.

Maria Bakardjieva has made contributions to advance this line of inquiry with in-depth reflections derived from extensive empirical work done with Internet users that highlights the importance of a normative or prescriptive approach in social communication processes. Her empirical research provided qualitative evidence that Habermas's critique of reason can be regarded as a suitable progressive framework to understand people's experiences with technology. Moreover, in line with Feenberg's critique, Bakardjieva points to the fact that the uses of technology in the practice of communication empower people, provided that the conditions of democratic engagement are met.

The work of Feenberg and Bakardjieva do not constitute the formulation of a new communication theory, but rather a philosophical and sociological inquiry grounded on empirical studies and critical social and political intervention into the role of technology in contemporary society. In other words, their work proposes a critical constructivist view of science and technology that uses the social construction of reality to show the role of active citizens in political engagement. Empowered citizens can build democratic societies by shaping and using communication technology to change society and achieve democracy and justice. Feenberg's and Bakardjieva's approaches to communication do provide insightful contributions about active normative models in which technology could be meaningfully integrated in life and in society. Milton Campos took critical constructivism in a somewhat different direction in his ecology of meanings theory.

Campos's Ecology of Meanings Communication Theory

Milton N. Campos used the term *critical constructivism*, also independently, in 2005, when he proposed a general critical constructivist theory of communication known as *ecology of meanings*. Communication is seen as a biological mechanism that enables a person to make sense of the self and the outside world. The term *ecology* stands for blended natural, or biological, and cultural interaction processes. As for *meaning*, it is understood

as the process of permanently making "sense" of the others and of the world, which is different from the semiotic idea of *signification*, in which meaning is simply the denotation of a word or symbol. According to the theory of ecology of meanings, communication should be understood as a *transversal discipline* that crosses all others because it is both psychological and social and because it accounts for necessary universal and particular contingent knowledge. Communication is the foundation of all scientific disciplines and all forms of human expression (e.g., art, common sense, codes) because it is simultaneously a *condition* and a *result* of all possible human knowledge.

Ecologies of meanings can be considered as open, dynamic, and progressive symbolic universes, analogous to the expansion of the physical universe or to the expansion of the human population. Ecologies of meanings have structure and dynamics. The structure lying beneath developmental and evolutionary interactive processes can be explained as three interconnected layers that evolve altogether along time: (1) internal cognitive and affective structures; (2) consciousness and will; and (3) the external natural and social environments. The internal cognitive and affective structures emerge from the functioning of the brain. Underlying psychological states enable communication in the social environment. Consciousness and will shape moral values within the person (*morality*) and action outside the person (*ethics* and *politics*).

The external natural and social environments on one hand provide the conditions of existence such as the accessibility to material and spiritual resources needed for development (food, shelter, and care, as well as ideas) and, on the other hand, trigger actions on the world that lead to transformation and change.

As for the dynamics, the above-mentioned three interconnected structural and functional layers account for the concept of biological construction advanced by Jean Piaget and the notion of cultural molding of meanings and judgment making underlying Jean-Blaise Grize's and Jürgen Habermas's works. Dynamics express how people, while communicating through language (e.g., spoken, written, symbolic, bodily), construct and co-construct images of themselves, of one another, and of the world. These constructions and

co-constructions are accounts or glimpses of progressively represented reality that are reflexively and critically assessed. Interpretations resulting from these processes, or *configuration of meanings*, can be just ephemeral through assimilation of outside influences or more permanent through both assimilation *and* accommodation to the social environment, leading the individual to change himself or herself and the world.

Ecology of meanings is, thus, a critical constructive communication theory accounting for interactions of configurations of meanings that express constructed and co-constructed images of the world. The theory traverses both the universal (ever-moving, organic, logical structures) and the situational contents of communication that emerge from culture, including language, history, geography, and other cultural factors.

Campos integrates the theories of Piaget, Grize, and Habermas to describe different layers of ecologies of meanings:

1. Piaget's *model of values exchange* accounts for the biology of interaction in which the exchange of affective and moral values evolves in circumstances of equilibrium or disequilibrium. Equilibrium is a state in which the individual truly cooperates and one in which moral values are consistent with equality and democracy. Disequilibrium results from constraint, as when a ruling authority imposes his or her will on others, and moral values of manipulation and control prevail.

2. Grize's theory of *schematization* accounts for the sense-making process that emerges in communication exchanges. Researchers can use the *natural logic* developed by Grize to study the thinking operations, expressed by language, that lead to the construction and co-construction of the discourse, to extract ethical possibilities from the language used. In terms of moral values, for example, when a president announces to the citizens of a given country, "I decided to go to war," the predicate "to decide to go" reflects a double moral stance (to *make a decision* and to decide in favor of *disequilibrium*). This stance has psychological and social consequences.

3. Habermas's *theory of communicative action* accounts for the political inscription of moral behavior in communicative action that projects values in how language is used. Habermas's

"taxonomy" of reason expressed in discourse includes two poles—the *teleological*, or instrumental reason (standing for disequilibrium, constraint), and *communicative* (equilibrium, cooperation). Communicators, thus, *do* have a choice in terms of what moral behavior and subsequent social actions will be taken.

These three theories are taken altogether in the ecology of meanings theory in that they allow a holistic understanding of the communication process. According to the ecology of meanings theory, communication, as all biological mechanisms, is a never-ending, progressive process of disequilibrium, in which interlocutors search for equilibrium, fighting for autonomy instead of multiplicity, and shared understanding instead of conflict. Communication thus crosses science, philosophy, the arts, religion, and the daily-lived world.

This transversal discipline, considered as a knowledge field, needs formal and informal methods to provide the necessary ways to verify and interpret progressive communicative constructions, co-constructions, reconstructions, and so on. The knowledge scale is not only that of science: it goes from the phenomenological experience of living and social-political action in the world to the possibility of symbolically expressing the empirical world through the mysterious forms of logic and mathematics. Whatever symbolic course of action people take, it leads to communicative behavior and ethical choices that have moral consequences. *Communication is, in fact, an Ethics* that triggers the amazing human ability of constructing multiple universes of love, understanding, and cooperation, or hate, war, and destruction.

Milton N. Campos

See also Archeology and Genealogy; Argumentation Theories; Communication and Language Acquisition and Development; Constructivism; Critical Theory; Cybernetics; Frankfurt School; Social Construction of Reality

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CRITICAL CULTURAL STUDIES

See Cultural Studies

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical discourse analysis represents a variety of theories, methodologies, and definitions. Encompassing the theoretical concepts of discourse theory and critical theory, as well as suggesting a method for uncovering the relationships among these various perspectives, critical discourse analysis (abbreviated as CDA in most contexts) is the study of texts, speech, and visual images to uncover the shared meanings that contribute to, or represent, social structures and ideologies. CDA is distinguished from discourse analysis by its explicit political and social goals; it assumes that discourse structures constitute social inequality and injustice and seeks to expose those structures in both the production and reception of written, spoken, and/or visual messages. CDA is concerned with studying and analyzing how power relations, inequality, and dominance are created and perpetuated through discourse within various political, social, and historical contexts. By unmasking the workings of such discourse practices, CDA

scholars hope to subvert—or at least resist—those practices in the interests of social justice.

CDA does not provide one single or specific theory or research methodology. Rather, various theories and research methods have influenced the development of CDA. Epistemological theories, social theories, sociopsychological theories, discourse theories, and linguistic theories, to name only a handful, can be found in CDA. In essence, CDA brings a variety of theories into play by focusing both on the micro aspects of discourse (e.g., words, sentences, and images) and the macro aspects of social structures (e.g., production and reception of texts within a broader order of discourse). On the micro level, CDA assumes that power manifests in the usage patterns of words and images and that individuals participate in these construction processes in their use of language. On the macro level, CDA assumes that our identities (subjectivities) are constructed in and through the ways we produce and consume discourses and that language constructs our social and cultural worlds. Within both contexts, CDA assumes that social, cultural, identity, and power structures are not fixed—that changes in language usage can and do change that which is constructed. This social change is the goal of CDA.

The key terms of CDA are *discourse* and *critical*. In most usage related to CDA, discourse is distinguished from *texts*, which are specific utterances, images, or writings. Discourse is an overall form of knowledge and an arena that delimits certain expression. According to Michel Foucault, whose work influenced the development of CDA, the use of language and words is regulated through *discursive formations*—conventions and rules that constrain our knowledge and the meanings of things. Discourse, then, is the arena in which social relations, practices, and behaviors are constructed and maintained.

Concerns regarding the manifestation of power and the workings of ideology characterize the critical aspect of CDA. These concerns can be traced to the work of Marxists and the influence of Frankfurt School scholars who argued that certain ideologies are conveyed through textual and cultural forms. Ideology is an important concept in CDA because it is through ideology that power and inequality are maintained. Textual production and reception are social processes. The meanings

of texts are often encoded by those in power, although the meanings and effects of language are also products of negotiation between producers, consumers, and the broader social/cultural context. Texts, then, can be open to contestation as various individuals and groups—producers and receivers—struggle over meanings and effects. The role of ideology, however, is to naturalize dominant structures so that the processes of meaning making and social construction are obscured. CDA aims to make these processes visible by asking whether texts serve powerful interests or structures of domination, by evaluating whether one representation or identity is selected or constructed in particular ways, and by asking who produces the representations and what their motivations might be.

Finally, CDA considers the social, political, cultural, and historical contexts of discourses and how discourses have evolved or developed over time. It is important to understand context in order to analyze *intertextuality*, a concept used by Norman Fairclough to analyze the structure and organization of texts in relationship to other texts and their contexts. Intertextuality refers to the ways that texts are implicated in other texts or draw on prior texts. It is through an analysis of intertextuality that the relationship between texts and social structures may be uncovered. This analysis becomes especially meaningful when the various contexts in which discourse practices and texts occur are taken into consideration.

Concerns and Focus of Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA has several intellectual traditions that have produced various forms of analysis over the years. In addition to Marxist theory and the insights of the Frankfurt School, the work of Jürgen Habermas, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, Stuart Hall, and British cultural studies scholars have influenced the direction and concerns of CDA since its beginnings in the 1970s. A group of scholars in the United Kingdom, who were influenced by the work of linguist Michael Halliday (although some used approaches from Noam Chomsky, the work of Roland Barthes, and early French semioticians), developed an approach called critical linguistics in the 1970s. Critical linguistics sought to analyze

texts as instruments of social and political power. Borrowing from the structuralist–functionalist tradition and Russian formalism, critical linguists used words and sentences as their units of analysis. They structured their interpretations in three areas identified by Halliday: the ideational dimension (which is similar to the ideological focus on the relationship between language and social structure); the interpersonal function (which is that aspect of language that defines how relationships are structured in language—whether one-way or two-way, argument, or dialogue, for instance—and how identities are constructed); and the textual function (which considers the structure and form of the text itself and its genre). Despite the three-pronged analysis, critics charged that this approach was too centered on the text itself and did not consider the practices of production or the possible interpretations of texts, which would lead to an analysis of meaning as changeable and as the result of social struggle. Building on these concerns, Australian social semioticians in the 1980s and 1990s incorporated poststructuralist ideas as well as the insights of French structuralism and semiotics into their work and developed a focus on intertextuality and the ways that discourses constitute identities and subjectivities.

Norman Fairclough built on the work of the Australian scholars to produce his theory of discourse and social change. He combined the mostly linguistic study of words and texts with an emphasis on Foucault's notion of discursive formations to study more specifically the ways that texts are implicated in social and cultural forms. In the late 1980s, Fairclough developed an analytical framework for researching language in relation to power and ideology and in relation to social and cultural change. He also suggested that mass media are powerful sites for research both in their use of language and in their manifestation of particular routines—or practices—that influence the character and meaning of a text. In addition, Fairclough argued that discourses needed to be analyzed within the broader arena of discursive formations and their interrelations (what he called *orders of discourse*). Thus, CDA expanded to include not just individual texts (and the internal linguistic structure of texts) but also the ways in which they intersect with other texts and with other discourses to form powerful, constitutive orders of discourse.

Other scholars have contributed to the theoretical and methodological development of CDA. In the late 1980s, Michel Pêcheux, who also was influenced by Althusser and Foucault, developed the notion of interdiscursivity, noting that various discourses can interact and intersect (for instance, the discourses of economics and politics). During this same period, Teun van Dijk developed cognitive models in order to understand how individuals process the meanings of texts and how meanings circulate socially and culturally. Van Dijk is known for his critical analysis of discourses that encode prejudice and racism, for example. This contribution added to the theoretical base of CDA that concerns itself with the reception and consumption of texts as well as the theoretical concerns regarding the ideological power of texts. The Vienna School of CDA in the late 1990s focused on language use in institutional settings and introduced the historical perspective. In addition, scholars in this tradition study the construction of identity at national and transnational levels. Scholars associated with this school are Ruth Wodak and Gilbert Weiss. At the end of the 1990s, CDA scholars began to turn away from the purely linguistic analysis of texts to include visual texts and the meaning of images. This “semiotic turn” expanded the range of CDA studies to include film, television, and music.

Approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis

Practitioners of CDA use different tools or methods for uncovering the mechanisms by which discourse functions. As defined above, texts are the primary unit of analysis—whether spoken, written, or visual. Analysts consider the various representations in texts, the framing techniques, linguistic features such as grammatical structure and modality, what is excluded from the text, how individuals are implicated in the text, and how texts interact with other texts in a discursive field. The form of a text—or its genre—is also considered. Genres are identifiable, repeated forms of communication such as the news broadcast, the television Western, political speeches, textbooks, business letters, and so on. These forms of communication follow certain conventions; as such, they are seen to have ideological effects. The validity of a message, for instance, may be strengthened if it is delivered in the

form of a policy or newscast because individuals are used to hearing and responding to messages of these genres in particular ways. In addition, specific ideas or discourses may be found repeatedly in certain genres; for example, television Westerns feature discourses of gender and heroism; political speeches may contain discourses of patriotism and public service. Thus, in addition to the actual messages contained within them, genres communicate ideas and meanings that are shared socially and culturally because of the form in which they are delivered.

Fairclough’s approach to CDA considers three levels of analysis: the text itself; the processes of producing (creating, writing, speaking) and receiving (reading, hearing, interpreting) texts (what he calls *discursive practices*); and the larger social context in which texts are created and consumed. Texts perform the ideational and interpersonal aspects identified by Halliday—that is, they convey certain representations of the world and establish relations among participants. In addition, they provide the building blocks for identity construction, both in the ways that people identify themselves and how they are identified by others. Discursive practices refer to the rules and conventions by which texts are produced and consumed. One may consider, for instance, the economic considerations of producers who tailor their products to fit audience demands as well as the viewing or reading habits of particular demographic groups. But it also implicates the more subtle, socially conditioned ways that messages are produced, circulate, and are interpreted—why some messages predominate, are taken as common sense, or are difficult to dismantle (ideas regarding gender, race, and age are examples). Texts and their practices of production and consumption are considered within the broader arena of discursive formations and interdiscursivity (orders of discourse) to uncover their ideological and social construction effects. Finally, a consideration of specific political, historical, and social contexts provides a necessary frame for understanding the power and meaning of texts and discourse.

In spite of myriad, interdisciplinary approaches, CDA is unified around basic principles, identified by Ruth Wodak and Norman Fairclough, which include an orientation toward social problems such as racism, sexism, and social change; eclecticism in theories and methods; investigation “from the inside,” which means that analysis begins with

the textual artifact first, rather than making the data fit a theory; consideration of intertextual and interdiscursive relationships; an accounting of historical context; specification of the precise method of analysis used in a given study (due to the eclectic approach); and application of the results of analysis—often toward the goal of changing oppressive discursive and social practices.

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See also Constitutive View of Communication; Critical Theory; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Language and Communication; Materiality of Discourse; Meaning Theories; Social Justice

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CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Critical ethnography is a way to study communities and cultures that seeks to dismantle unfair power hierarchies, promote emancipation, and reduce the oppression of underprivileged people worldwide. Ethnographers who use this form of research claim that it is not enough to report “objective” findings on peoples’ cultures but feel instead that it is the responsibility of an ethnographer to engage in various forms of political action on behalf of and together with the group they study.

Critical ethnography is not a theory per se, but rather a research strategy and methodology that rely heavily on the theoretical foundations of *critical theory*. Relatedly, critical ethnography is a tool for the construction of theory and for the translation of critical theory into practice. In essence

critical ethnography is a way to do critical theory, or as many scholars have stated, the practice of critical theory. Critical ethnography, then, is a methodological and practical undertaking through which critical ethnographers question the boundaries between theory and method.

The entire process of critical ethnographic research is based on critical principles: From the various ways to collect data to how data are interpreted and represented to various audiences to the ethical involvement of researchers and collaborators to the application and generation of theory and knowledge, the end goal of critical ethnography is to create transformational change. This entry will examine the theoretical foundations, methodological processes, and ethical commitment of critical ethnographers. As a resource for examples it will look at the critical ethnographic work of Dwight Conquergood, who in his life conducted critical ethnographies among the urban poor of Chicago, within a Southeast Asian refugee camp, and at vigils held at prisons for death row inmates on the eve of their executions.

Theoretical Foundations

Critical ethnography shares several things with interpretive, noncritical approaches. It explores, describes, and interprets norms, rules, everyday rituals, and epistemologies that identify people within a culture or institution. This is done not in order to test hypotheses or even to collect empirical information subject to tests of validity and reliability, but rather to better understand social phenomena. Also critical ethnographers are not keen on statistical generalizability but prefer analytical generalizability, which emphasizes the potential of ethnographic research for theoretical development. When ethnographic research allows scholars to create and expand concepts or understand generic processes or social systems, ethnographic research can be said to have value for theoretical/analytical development.

However, where critical ethnography diverges from interpretive ethnography is in the epistemological and theoretical orientation of the ethnographer and his or her role as an engaged citizen, activist, and scholar. Critical ethnography seeks to move beyond mere description and interpretation and move instead toward a critical approach that

seeks to question hegemonic discourses that allow certain groups to exert power over others, to equalize power structures, and to criticize the actions and policies faced by people enmeshed in subordinate relations. In his work, for instance, Dwight Conquergood took it on himself to testify in court as an expert witness on the groups he studied on several occasions.

Historically, ethnographers—even many interpretive ones—have adopted an ethnographic approach based on detachment from the people under study, the desire to maintain and gather value-free knowledge, and the relativist view that cultures are different but equal. In contrast, critical ethnographers' main assumption and interest are in the ways cultures are positioned unequally in power relations. Critical ethnography takes its roots from critical theory, following in particular the idea that institutions create unequal power structures and produce a false consciousness in which the people cannot see this and actually work to maintain the status quo. This translates into full-blown attempts to create communities and relationships based on ideals of equality, as Dwight Conquergood did by forming surrogate families both among the Hmong in Southeast Asia and in Albany Park.

Much of critical ethnography's underpinnings are rooted in other theoretical traditions, such as critical race theory, feminist theory, queer theory, postcolonialist theory, and critical performance pedagogy. It follows that much of critical ethnography is based on theoretical perspectives that valorize the value of class, race and ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, and nationality.

Methodological Process

Methodology is study and reflection on methods of data collection and strategies of data analysis and representation. Whereas methods are practical techniques, methodologies are theoretical endeavors. Thus a particular methodology, ethnographic methodology for example, is the overall theory and paradigm that guide the ethnographer throughout the research process, including the research question, the development of a research design and proposal, the collection of data, data analysis, and presentation of the research. Methodological reflections—just like theoretical reflections—act as guides to

help researchers conduct research and move through the process of engaging in scholarship.

More specifically, critical ethnographers' method includes participant observation and various types of interviewing. Ethnographers collect these kinds of data together with, at times, textual data to produce an account of a community or phenomenon under study. Other methods, less frequently used, are surveys, diaries, personal introspection, and other similar forms of nonparticipant observation. It is important to emphasize that these are methods and not methodologies. In the following paragraphs, this broad realm of activity is divided into three areas: collection of data, data analysis, and representation of data.

Collecting Data

A critical approach to ethnography begins with the selection of a research site and the collection of data from the field. Critical ethnographers select research sites where they feel injustices need to be brought to light and wrongs need to be righted—as Conquergood's selection of research topics shows. Thus, rather than the need to accumulate knowledge for knowledge's sake, critical ethnographic research designs begin with the impetus of putting critical theory into practice.

With regard to data collection, like all forms of ethnography, critical ethnography revolves around the method of participant observation conducted within a clearly bounded research setting. Ethnographers go directly into the communities that they are studying or collaborating with and interact with them in order to gather research data and solve practical problems. Ethnographers take notes, talk to people, live within the community or as close as possible to it, and spend a great deal of time learning about (and with) the people or phenomenon they are studying. At times this may also result in ethnographers teaching and sharing knowledge. Conquergood, for example, used performances to teach public health and sanitation principles to Hmong refugees in Thailand.

Critical ethnographers utilize an inductive theoretical approach to collecting and interpreting data. This means that ethnographers go into the field without the need to test a preformulated hypothesis and without preconceived notions, categories, themes, or conclusions in mind. Thus the research is

an emergent process in which categories, themes, and analysis take shape as the research is in progress. The only limitation to this induction comes from the researcher's moral stance, which is unchangeably grounded in communitarian ethics and the will to suppress oppression and injustice. Thus, in opposition to other forms of ethnography, critical ethnography is driven first and foremost by a theoretical perspective, philosophy, or ideology. Being so critical and still maintaining an inductive approach is often very complex.

Where interpretive and critical ethnography diverge in relation to collecting data is in their approach to collaborative dialogue. Coparticipation and collaboration are often crucial in critical ethnography. Critical ethnographers believe that it is ethical and morally essential for research to take a collaborative and participatory approach. Collaboration is not only part of the data collection but begins from the research design and moves into the data analysis and representation of research. Critical ethnographers wish to enact a multivocal process in which all perspectives are expressed. This means that the data collection is dialogic and democratic, which means involving research participants at every step of the process.

One key aspect in data collection is the constant reflection, negotiation, and renegotiation of the researcher's position and power differences in relation to informants. Critical ethnographers realize that power difference between researcher and informants cannot be entirely eliminated but believe that the reflection process allows researchers to understand and manage how power differences influence the data gathered. This reflexive process allows the researcher to see how outside forces create the culture under study, beginning from the study itself.

Data Analysis

After data collection, ethnographers engage in data analysis. However, unlike much of conventional ethnography, which is interested in the formation of theoretical categories or even—in the case of some realist ethnography—lawlike statements, critical ethnography attempts to avoid reducing lived experience to excessively abstract categories. Instead, critical ethnography seeks to expose the complexity and nuances of everyday

experiences and to unravel and dismantle the categories of knowledge that structure those experiences. This requires critical ethnographers to approach the data analysis process using a reflexive approach that allows researchers to understand their position in the research process. In this sense, gathering and sharing knowledge and doing theory become enlightened and situated practices, rather than constructions by fiat.

Reflexivity enables the researcher to examine oneself and one's position during data analysis. This process reveals one's background, history, and daily experiences and how these factors ultimately influence the ethnographer's epistemological views, theoretical perspectives, and assumptions. Not only does critical ethnography take on an emic approach (viewing things from the perspective of the participants), but it also requires that in order to dismantle ideologies, it is necessary to use an etic approach (researcher's perspective) in order to reflect on biases that shape the process of conducting and writing ethnographies.

Data analysis is done inductively, from specific data to general conclusions. Working from an inductive frame requires the researcher to address research questions and analysis as the research unfolds and takes form. Thus categories and patterns are shaped as the data collection proceeds rather than being predetermined and fixed.

Representation of Data

A third element of the methodological process is reflection on the writing of ethnographic data and how informants are represented through the words and eyes of the researcher. Methodological discussions about how to present the data—the genres and media of ethnographic presentation—are an important part of the writings of critical theorists. Whereas many academics write up research using dispassionate, impersonal, scientific prose that disconnects informants from the audience, critical ethnographers reject this type of representation and instead seek to create ethnographies that engage their readers and informants directly, experimenting with different genres and media. Critical ethnographers in their research and writing openly display a standpoint, political motivation, and the partiality of research practices. They seek to create a plural and inclusive text that infuses

a variety of voices rather than just the dominant scientific voice of the ethnographer. Conquergood's several essays and staged performances—for instance his work on the death penalty and what he called lethal theater—utilized this approach to garner attention for the plight of death row inmates.

Collaboration with informants on all aspects of the research process is essential for developing a multivocal, or inclusive, text. In many cases critical ethnographers ask informants to participate in the entire development of the research, including the final writing or other forms of production and performance, in turn creating co-constructed texts. Informant collaboration allows the development of a representational style that includes the voices of the people rather than excludes them under the guise of anonymity. Following the lead of critical theory interventions that blur the boundaries across disciplines, some scholars purposefully seek less traditional academic prose and engage in experimental writing styles seen more in the humanities than in the social sciences. For example, a critical ethnographer may use poetic stanzas in order to represent conversations or interviews with informants. This is usually done to enable rhythms of dialogue and speech to flow naturally, allowing the interview and persons involved to come to life. Other common styles adopted are performative writing styles as well as actual dramas and performances to present the study, as well as—again in the case of Conquergood's work—films and documentaries. In most cases the voices of the informants, ethnographer, institutions, and other informants are all included in the text, creating a plural perspective of voices that disperse the authority of the academic voice.

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See also Critical Discourse Analysis; Critical Theory; Cultural Identity Theory; Cultural Studies; Ethnography of Communication; Performance Theories; Performative Writing; Power and Power Relations; Privilege

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CRITICAL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Critical organizational communication is concerned with understanding issues of power in organizational settings. Critical organizational communication studies now cover a wide array of more specific approaches to and theories about the study of organizational communication, drawing significantly from critical modernism, post-structural, and feminist scholarship on the subject. Critical approaches to organizational communication first were developed in the 1980s, with the interpretive turn in organizational communication theory. These approaches became increasingly complex as they were influenced by and became mutually intertwined with the emergence of feminist thought, the popularity of poststructural approaches, and ever-widening empirical contexts for inquiry.

The Interpretive Turn

In the 1980s many scholars began to highlight the centrality of subjectivity, meaning, and context in organizational communication, thereby paying attention to the cultural life of organizations. Formerly, scholarship had been built primarily on a container metaphor for organizations, which entailed looking at how communication, in the form of messages, was transmitted “in” preexisting organizations. However, the interpretive turn led scholars to become especially interested in examining connections between communication and the ontology, or nature, of organizations, that is, how communication actually created the apparently solid things that we called organizations. Thus, scholars started taking apart phenomena that were earlier taken for granted and began to look at how they were communicatively constructed. For instance, instead of measuring how much workers participated in decision making in

their organizations, scholars interested in studying participation began to study how workers ascribed definite meanings to participation and then acted on those meanings. And so, the interpretive turn led to the demise of the idea of an organization as a container and led instead to an abiding concern with understanding the connections between organizations and the rest of society.

Critical approaches grew quickly with the advent of the interpretive turn because power was such a valuable concept in enabling us to understand why particular meanings came to be dominant, why organizations were constructed in specific ways, and what that had to do with the larger political economy of capitalism. While scholars had always studied power in organizational settings, with the advent of the interpretive approach, power became an altogether multidimensional concept. Researchers became increasingly eclectic, drawing from such sources as the *community power* debates in sociology in order to explain why individuals and collectives did not agitate against visibly oppressive conditions. As scholars paid attention to such acquiescence to control, they expanded their conception of power to include not just issues of obedience and direct control through such mechanisms as reward and punishment, but also social and cultural norms, discipline, and unobtrusive forms of control. In the process, four terms became particularly important in critical conceptions of organizational life: *concertive control*, *hegemony*, *systematically distorted communication*, and *identification*.

A First Generation of Concepts

The four terms—*concertive control*, *hegemony*, *systematically distorted communication*, and *identification*—might be taken as the cornerstones of a first generation of critical organizational communication studies, which still have currency today. The term *concertive control* was developed by Phil Tompkins, George Cheney, and their associates, as an extension of the work of Richard Edwards, in order to describe a form of organizational control that did not rely on coercion, bureaucracy, or even technology. They described early systems of workplace control as “simple” in that they were based on arbitrary and ad hoc rules set by owners. The advent of the industrial age

resulted in the development of more elaborate systems of control that were technical and/or bureaucratic. Technical systems of control were exemplified by the Fordist production line, which rigidly controlled the speed and output of work, even as it deskilled workers, forcing them to learn specific tasks at the expense of developing their knowledge base. Bureaucratic systems of control are exemplified by large modern organizations such as universities, which involve formal, codified, rationalized systems of rules and regulations that govern conduct. Concertive control systems, on the other hand, are epitomized by organizations that involve significant amounts of teamwork, control via a system of informal values, and norms and codes that are constructed by workers themselves and that serve to regulate their behavior. While it is evident that simple, technical, and bureaucratic control systems are made possible through communication processes between superiors and subordinates, it is especially easy to see how concertive control systems are constructed through communicative dynamics among employees.

The term *hegemony*, coined by Antonio Gramsci to describe antagonistic and mutually negotiated relationships between social classes, was adopted by organizational communication scholars such as Dennis Mumby to describe the idea that organizational members might consent to the domination of powerful groups over them. This was found to happen where an apparent consensus about the cultural meanings of key workplace practices and vocabularies benefits one group more than others. Hegemony is seen to operate through ideologies, or systems of values and beliefs, and discourses, or broad patterns in talk and text, that, taken together, produce social relationships. Thus, critical scholars interested in hegemonic work practices are prone to deconstruct, or show alternative ways of understanding, the meanings of dominant organizational values such as excellence or hard work in terms of which groups benefit most from those particular constructions. A specific focus in early research on the subject was to examine how organizational and broader vocabularies and patterns of communication served to further the interests of management, an idea called *managerialism*, which in turn was taken to refer to conceptions of organizations as primarily sites of profit rather than cooperation or community.

A third key term in the first generation of critical organizational communication studies was *systematically distorted communication*, a term coined by Jürgen Habermas and developed in the context of organizational studies by scholars like Stan Deetz and Dennis Mumby. In Habermasian terms, systematically distorted communication refers to the instrumental manipulation of language by the systemic interests of money and power that result in the corruption of the *lifeworld*, or our everyday networks of communicative practice. Systematically distorted communication is achieved through a broad plethora of strategies—*universalization*, for example, or the treatment of sectional organizational interests as universal; *disqualification*, or treating the subject or source as petty and trivial; and *neutralization*, or the treatment of topics as not having any kind of political significance. Stan Deetz's early work on the subject focused particularly on what he called the *corporate colonization* of the lifeworld—a phrase that drew attention to the deep structuring of corporate interests into the very fabric of society and that affected where individuals lived, how they chose to educate themselves and their children, the structure of their community relationships, and their expectations of government and public life.

A fourth key term in early critical organizational communication might be said to be *identification*, or the rhetorical process through which organizations persuaded their members to construct their selves in alignment with the organization's key goals and values. The term was made popular by George Cheney, who used rhetorical critic Kenneth Burke's work to launch an entire tradition of rhetorical inquiry in organizational communication. Cheney argued that organizations most often persuaded members through persuasive techniques such as building common ground over subjects and issues (thesis), identifying an enemy against which members were exhorted to act (antithesis), or simply by assuming a sense of "we" or togetherness. Identification, said Cheney, was necessary in contemporary organizations precisely because of the vast differences in incomes and values between organizational members: In this sense, identification could be interpreted as a form of systematically distorted communication.

As scholars grappled with a range of concepts that shed light on the communicative character of

systems of domination and oppression, they retained a core concern of classical critical theory with the idea of *praxis*, or transformative social practice. A key concern of critical scholars is to stay engaged in a practical sense with structures of domination and oppression. This concern has taken many forms in critical organizational communication, most visibly in the attention that critical scholars have paid to activism, as well as their extensive theorization of the notion of *empowerment*—the ability of individuals and communities to engage in decision making and take action in the face of larger power inequities.

A Second Generation of Concepts

In the 1990s, critical organizational communication researchers continued to elaborate on and refine the terms outlined above, and as they did so, they made at least two immensely significant moves that characterized an entire new generation of studies. The first was the explicit recognition of the dialectical character of power. Mumby in particular argued that researchers needed to conceptualize broad systems of control and processes of discipline in terms of the conditions for *resistance* that they engendered. Considerable attention began to be paid to exploring how domination and resistance occur simultaneously. Critical organizational communication researchers studied this by mapping out the conditions and possibilities for resistance in systems of disciplinary control, drawing on the work of scholars like Michel Foucault and James Scott as they did so. Among other things, researchers studied how flight attendants resisted patriarchal conventions, how secretaries resisted administrative control, and how service workers reinterpreted and resisted dominant constructions of their jobs.

A second major move that changed critical organizational communication studies in the 1990s was the emergence of a robust corpus of *feminist inquiry* in organizational communication studies. Feminist researchers capitalized on the ascendance of critical modes of inquiry in organizational communication in order to draw attention to the inherently gendered character of organizational formations. As might be evident from the examples in the previous paragraph, feminist researchers paid considerable time and energy to understanding how individuals

resisted patriarchal practices in organizational contexts, developing sophisticated and nuanced understandings of self, identity, and voice in the process. Indeed, the term *feminism* encapsulated a variety of approaches to understanding gender that could not be fully subsumed under the term *critical* as it was traditionally articulated. Feminist scholars were therefore responsible for bringing more modernist and poststructural approaches into the study of organizations, ultimately putting in dialogue various philosophical frameworks to question organizational processes and practices.

While both poststructuralist and critical late-modern approaches to organizational communication treat the analysis of power as central to the understanding of communicative phenomena, poststructuralist thought makes at least two moves beyond “traditional” critical approaches to organizational communication studies, thereby transforming the terrain of critical organizational communication. First, poststructural studies are much more likely to treat power in broad and diffuse terms, understanding it not so much as a property of structure evidenced by hierarchy, but as dispersed, decentralized, and disciplinary mechanisms that operate through language. So, poststructural perspectives are much more likely to treat organizational structure as a property of power, arguing that diffuse systems of disciplinary power themselves constitute what are presented to us as organizational structures. Second, poststructural studies are much more prone to understanding selfhood and identity as fragmented, disjointed, and contingent and are thus much more likely to treat individual agency as vulnerable to the point of extinction.

The advent of poststructuralism as a significant influence on critical organizational communication was most evident in the 1990s, in the increasing emphasis of critical scholars on the notion of *discourse* and a focus on *contradiction* and *paradox* in organizational life. The concept of discourse, which was taken largely from Foucault, referred to the broad expression of power in language, from which our notions of logic, truth, and action are derived. The term allowed researchers to identify multiple and competing logics and truths in organizational life. For instance, discourses of technical excellence in organizations are often seen to compete with discourses of managerial efficiency.

Therefore, critical scholars began to take the contradictory and paradoxical character of organizational communication seriously, even understanding key critical terms such as *participation* and *empowerment* from the standpoint of paradox, contradiction, silence, and voice.

Discourses of Suspicion and Vulnerability

Contemporary critical organizational communication researchers are thus irrevocably influenced by both feminist thought and poststructural sensibilities, embracing both a discourse of suspicion and a discourse of vulnerability. Mumby uses the term *discourse of suspicion*, drawn from Paul Ricoeur’s notion of the hermeneutic of suspicion, to characterize scholarship in the area because such studies do not take the surface of organizational life for granted. Instead, their central concern still is to uncover the deeper structural, systemic, and discursive power inequities that underlie everyday communication practices. Simultaneously, however, a *discourse of vulnerability* also underlies contemporary critical organizational communication scholarship. The term *vulnerability* turns our attention to several related ideas. First, the term refers to what one might call the *crisis of representation* in that several critical researchers now balk at the claim to unilaterally present their research as the single, unified, authoritative account of a phenomenon. Moreover, the term refers to the idea that organizational and societal discourses make the notion of an agentic, or choice-making, individual extremely problematic. In other words, we very rarely enact unified selves: Our sense of who we are varies and shifts dramatically in different times and situations and is significantly impacted by a range of different discourses; thus, the idea that we make “free” choices is problematic.

Scholars have developed the versatile and hybrid space at the crossroads of discourses of suspicion and discourses of vulnerability to engage in a series of diverse and specific conceptual and empirical moves that are sometimes explicitly linked with critical approaches or sometimes with poststructural approaches. Three are especially worth discussing. First, scholars have studied organizational identity and difference in terms of *intersectionality*, lending credence to the idea that our organizational selves are, in a sense, crystallized from a vast

set of discourses, including those of gender, sexuality, ability, race, age, and class; the study of one of these points of difference necessarily entails the examination of myriad others. For instance, trying to understand popular conceptions of the empowered entrepreneur now involves examining how our notions of professional entrepreneurial identity are guided by assumptions about class, gender, and race. Second, scholars have drawn on discourses of suspicion as well as vulnerability to examine the *effects of economic globalization*, and such work has taken a wide variety of forms. For instance, some scholars have analyzed in great detail the potential and problems of corporate social responsibility in the face of looming global environmental crises. Others have examined resistance to corporate globalization in the form of contemporary global justice activism, using it as a platform to critique the focus of earlier studies of resistance and power on individualized resistance. Still others have examined the effects of globalization on the nongovernmental and nonprofit sector, focusing on such issues as information technology and accountability.

Third, critical researchers have written considerably about discursively constructed boundaries between *life* and *work* in the context of gender, race, sexuality, and class. As they have done so, they have drawn from a wide variety of theories in organizational communication, including structuration, relational dialectics, and poststructuralism. Throughout, however, they have paid close attention to a core concern of critical studies, empowerment, asking questions about how individuals and families enact empowerment in the context of discursive constraints at home and at work. As they have done so, they have created a genre of scholarship that blurs the lines between the hitherto distinct domains of inquiry in organizational and family communication, while retaining key critical overtones.

In sum, what might now be called critical organizational communication has grown increasingly eclectic over the years, with wide-ranging and multidisciplinary influences. Indeed, researchers have also gone back to some of the more classic concerns of critical organizational communication, using contemporary sensibilities to re-understand key concerns about concertive control and resistance and renewing interest in the study of organizational

rhetoric. Researchers have just begun to concern themselves with an ever-broadening array of topics, including environmental activism, postcolonial politics, sexuality in organizations, and community engagement. It is reasonably safe to suppose that such directions are more likely than not to be multiple and fragmented, as distinct from the relatively homogeneous conceptual growth evident in an earlier generation.

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See also Corporate Colonization Theory; Critical Theory; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Feminist Communication Theories; Globalization Theories; Hybridity; Identification; Interpretive Theory; Intersectionality; Organizational Communication Theories; Organizational Control Theory; Organizational Culture; Organizational Identity Theory; Poststructuralism

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CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Critical race theory (CRT) is perhaps best characterized as a loosely knit body of work that centers on the study of race and racism. Committed to a complex notion of race as simultaneously socially constructed and deeply material, at least in its lived experience and its effects, CRT offers a historicized and dynamic study of race and racism that traces the roots of racial thinking and racist practice as it also carefully tracks contemporary discourses and practices of race and racism.

Origins

Though the origins of CRT can be traced to the influential writings of early figures such as W. E. B. DuBois and civil rights leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and César Chávez, its formal emergence dates to the mid-1970s and the writings of legal scholar Derrick Bell. Bell, among others, launched a critique of the legal system, arguing that its methods and practices perpetuated a racially stratified society. Though his considerable body of work offers numerous specific critiques, his larger argument can perhaps best be summarized as follows: Racial thinking is ingrained in U.S. history, culture, politics, law, and society in ways that often mask it, making both the racial thinking and the

racist manifestations appear neutral. Moreover, the intersection of that racial thinking with the U.S. tradition of liberalism promotes practices and policies that appear to motivate change but that traditionally have enabled the perpetuation of both racial thinking and racist practice. A central such instance for Bell and other CRT scholars is civil rights legislation. While not denying the clear material changes brought about by civil rights, Bell argued, in instances such as the increasing attacks on affirmative action, that the gains made were being lost. CRT also owes debt for its emergence to the critical legal studies (CLS) movement. CLS scholars, writing mainly in the 1970s and 1980s, argued that while law tends to be thought of as neutral, it is heavily political. Indeed, they coined the argument that law is politics. By this, they sought to draw attention to the power-laden biases that drive legal thought and policy. Influenced by the writings of continental social theorists, CLS maintains that U.S. law has mostly served the interests of the dominant and functioned to justify the injustices that it enables. For CRT scholars, such arguments help illustrate the Whiteness that permeates law and society more generally. In response, Bell and the growing community of CRT scholars advocate new approaches to law and legal thinking that would both revise conceptions of race and racism and advocate for racial justice.

Fundamental Assumptions

The writings of CRT scholars are increasingly interdisciplinary and varied. Still, several assumptions are widely shared. United in its investment in the study of race, CRT argues that racism is not merely the seemingly pathological acts of a few extremists, such as members of the Ku Klux Klan, nor is it only the overt expressions of discrimination, such as expressed in Jim Crow laws. Instead, racism is expressed in everyday discourse and practice by much or even all society. In explanation, they argue that racism is a normal, not an exceptional, part of U.S. society; that is, race and racism are so deeply a part of U.S. thought and culture that racial thinking and racist practice have come to look “normal.” Given the invisibility of race and racism, CRT advocates careful historicized and localized studies of race and racism. In a sense, CRT argues for a constant mapping of the

racial landscape. CRT argues that racist thought and practice are historically and contextually specific; this dynamism requires that scholars attend to its various manifestations. CRT scholars argue, for instance, that racism looks very different in a post-civil rights world than it did previously. Civil rights legislation required the ending of overt acts of racism—such as school segregation—but did not and does not end covert or institutionalized forms of racism. Thus, for instance, while *de jure* racial segregation is illegal, *de facto* racial segregation, in housing and education, continues, though its racial component is easily masked by its class component. These ways of thinking about race and racism are then closely linked to a third assumption, that traditional legal thinking is both racial and racist. Grounded in an ideology of liberalism, traditional legal thinking is invested in universalism and formal equality, both of which advantage dominant cultures and disadvantage marginalized ones. Here, CRT maintains, for instance, that universalism—or the argument that all similar instances be treated identically—protects some populations over others. It argues that all people, regardless of race, class, and gender, should be treated the same, but in doing so, it ignores the reality that race, class, and gender mean that people's experiences are not the same. Universalism, for instance, underlies arguments for formal equal opportunity as manifest in such practices as standardized testing. CRT scholars, however, note that, conceptualized as such, equal opportunity is in fact not equal, for standardized testing benefits racially and class-privileged populations. The critiques of the legal field captured in CRT discussions of liberalism, equality, and universalism all express the larger foundational argument that racial justice is unlikely to occur via traditional legal routes, which typically do not require rethinking of racial reasoning and racism.

Core Themes

Spurred by the fundamental assumptions about race and racism, along with law and legal change, CRT asks several key questions about racial justice and social change. While these questions do not capture the entirety of the CRT agenda, they do point to overarching issues that drive much of this interdisciplinary body of research.

The guiding concern for CRT is, of course, race and racism, and much scholarship is designed to uncover the ways in which racism continues to be the norm. In assessing this question, Bell introduced *interest convergence theory*, or the idea that dominant populations, such as Whites, will support an antiracist policy or practice only when they perceive it to benefit them. Others within CRT, such as legal scholar Stephanie Wildman and communication theorist Dreama Moon, turn to the notion of *privilege*, which has also been carefully addressed outside CRT. Privilege, as the feminist and antiracist scholar Peggy McIntosh explains, is the system in which some populations, for instance Whites, enjoy unearned advantages to which people of color do not have access. One example is the presumed racial neutrality of the opinions and arguments made by Whites; people of color are often perceived as pursuing a racial agenda in their arguments or as being racially biased. Making a related argument, Cheryl Harris has coined the idea of Whiteness as property; it is something of value—a privilege—that only some people own and/or have access to.

A second theme within CRT might be framed as the attention given to absences and invisibilities in racial thinking. For instance, a number of scholars have looked at the limitations of what they refer to as the *Black/White binary*. Tracing the ways in which race is understood as an either/or between Black and White, CRT scholars identify the resulting gaps in how both race and racism are understood and perceived. They note that the histories, experiences, identities, and legacies of Latinos/as, Asian Americans, and American Indians have been largely neglected in both popular and academic literature. In addition, some have argued that racist and racial policies that predominantly affect Latinos/as and Asian Americans, such as English-only laws, are not as readily seen as racist because the policies do not directly affect Blacks.

A second primary emphasis in the assessment of absences and invisibilities is discussion of *intersectionality*. Like research on the Black/White binary, this work challenges either/or thinking and asks for more complex understandings of race that attend to the intersections of race with other aspects of social location, such as gender, class, sexuality, and nation. In her groundbreaking work, Kimberlé Crenshaw explored the invisibility

of women of color and delineated the ways in which women of color are systematically disadvantaged by a logic that, for instance, keeps track of “women and minorities.” She and others have argued that this language, so firmly rooted in social practice, fails to recognize that women of color are simultaneously women *and* minorities.

Storytelling provides a third way in which CRT seeks to fill in existing gaps in knowledge and ways of thinking. Convinced that traditional theoretical models and academic modes of writing provide only a partial accounting of the range of social experiences, CRT advocates nontraditional modes of writing that emphasize the use of personal and community knowledge, including the relating of narratives, both auto/biographical and fictional. These *counternarratives*, often grounded in the everyday racialized experience of people of color, provide correctives to traditional narratives and historic accounts, as well as offering evidence of the multiple ways of knowing that exist.

A final area of interest for CRT includes the development of new theoretical accounts of race and racism. Two recurring arguments are the discussions of *particularism* and *microaggressions*. Continuing its critique of liberalism and universalism, CRT advocates particularism, or what has come to be known as the *call to context*. As noted earlier, CRT challenges the liberalism of traditional legal theory, with particular attention to the tendency in legal thought, law, and policy to advocate universalism. But CRT maintains that all people and all experiences are not the same; race, as well as gender and class, means that people’s lives are vastly different. Thus, CRT continues, we cannot treat all crimes or all people in the same way. Instead, CRT asks that we account for the particulars of one’s life or the context in which a particular event occurred and in this way gather greater insight into how race works on an everyday basis.

In assessing racism and tracking its continual evolution, scholars have also drawn attention not just to the overt acts of racism that prevailed prior to the civil rights movement but also to the more covert acts of racism pervasive today. These include everyday acts that traditional scholarship has largely ignored, such as *microaggressions*, or acts that are easily dismissed or negated. One such instance might be the tendency, particularly

though not exclusively among White women, to hold their purse tightly, to lock their car doors, or to cross to the other side of the street when they encounter Black men. CRT scholars have argued that these microaggressions take place frequently, even daily, for people of color and become one of the more emotionally exhausting forms of racism; the larger society generally fails to acknowledge the racial component of these acts as well as the toll they take.

Interdisciplinary and Cross-Disciplinary Developments

Though CRT initially emerged among legal scholars, it has increasingly grown such that CRT scholarship is now a truly interdisciplinary venture, with work being done in such fields as sociology, education, and, of course, communication. Continuing to examine the broad themes discussed above, the interdisciplinary scholarship also directs attention to the particularities of each discipline. For instance, education scholars examine the racial assumptions of educational institutions. Looking at practices such as standardized testing, classroom interactions, and epistemologies, they question whether schooling can be considered to include being schooled into racial thinking. Communication scholars have asked a number of critical questions, many of which examine the discursivity of race. Some look at issues of free speech, while others pursue questions of hate speech. A considerable body of scholarship explores larger social discourses, such as those surrounding immigration, hate crimes, affirmative action, and English-only laws.

In addition to these interdisciplinary ventures, CRT has generated several closely related bodies of literature, including three projects examining the racial dynamics of Latinos/as, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. These are commonly referred to as *Latcrit*, *Asiacrit*, and *Tribalcrit*. *Critical race feminism*, another offshoot, regularly considers the intersections of race and gender. Finally, *critical Whiteness studies*, while not necessarily an outgrowth of CRT, are a closely related body of work. All these projects include both legal and interdisciplinary scholars. Across both the interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary studies, one finds work that both extends the core focus of CRT

and adds to that study with the specific interests of the particular fields.

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See also Critical Theory; Feminist Communication Theories; Frankfurt School; Intersectionality; Privilege; Whiteness Theory

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CRITICAL RHETORIC

The *critical rhetoric project* began in the early 1980s in the communication discipline principally with the work of Raymie McKerrow and Michael Calvin McGee. The phrase *critical rhetoric* in particular owes its genesis to McGee. Work by Phillip Wander, Michael McGee, Maurice Charland, Robert Hariman, and Celeste Condit, among

others, was instrumental in building the arguments that led to the publication of the essay “Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis” by McKerrow in 1989. While the designation of a *critique of domination* and *critique of freedom*, and the principles that encompassed a new formulation of rhetoric’s provenance, may have been seen as original or new, they were premised on the ongoing conversation among scholars begun in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Reason, in all of its forms, has had a dominant role in Western theories of rhetoric. Derived from both Plato and Aristotle, the sense that rhetoric should be *reasoned discourse* lives on in the work of deliberative democracy theorists in the 21st century. While not seeking to eliminate reason or rational discourse from the playing field, a critical rhetoric perspective recognizes that not all communication between people will be, or necessarily should be, “reasoned,” especially if the sense of rationality that is meant is that dictated by those “in charge.” The power of the entrenched establishment in determining who can say what to whom and in what way is not to be ignored. But it is to be challenged, and that is, from the outset, the orientation of a *critical* perspective on rhetoric’s role. As noted above, the critical practice encompasses two distinct (yet not mutually exclusive) perspectives: What is styled a *critique of domination* is oriented toward emancipation and may be best seen in terms of a “freedom from” domination. On the other hand, what is styled a *critique of freedom* is an attempt to place the focus on a not-yet-determined future, captured as a freedom to become other than we are at this moment. A focus on power relations (derived from Michel Foucault’s analysis) places repressive power in the camp of domination, while a productive sense of power—what it can create in positive terms—is placed in the camp of freedom. While seeing these as two sides of the same coin is appropriate, they may function in a blended perspective, wherein one both seeks to escape (freedom from) and, at the same time, considers what one might be free to escape to.

In addition, the hope is that the critic is willing to go beyond a simple criticism to interrogate the very assumptions on which either domination or freedom rests. Nothing is privileged in an ultimate or permanent sense in the process of critiquing present reality. Thus, the grounding assumptions

underlying democracy, for example, become subject to examination. This implies a commitment to *recursivity*, or constant critique: that which is “decided” as a preferred state of affairs for a people becomes, once instantiated, the subject of renewed examination. Nothing is held constant—unless one wishes it to remain. That is, critique is not committed to change as the only outcome but is committed to a reexamination of social relations (wherein power is seen as relational). What is “critical” in this scene is that, once advocacy stops and change is instantiated, it becomes a subject for continual critique. The constancy of a continual critique does not, in and of itself, blind one to ever taking action. Action may be the outcome of a specific critique at some point in time. The changes that occur in relations between people may be “a better world” (as one might hope in advocating a change), but that better world is not, by virtue of that change, a perfect place for all people.

Critical rhetoric is not a method of analysis. Rather, it is an orientation toward critical practice that does not seek to advance a specific approach or a specific set of terms that one might use in illuminating an object of inquiry. Drawing on Foucault, it seeks instead to understand how a particular discursive formation comes to be, in a particular place and time. Thus, it resists being named, as naming may result in any particular act of critique being reified as “the way this is done.” In reversing traditional approaches to public address, however, it does follow what McGee termed an *inventional* approach in critical practice. McGee was not seeking—nor does a critical rhetoric perspective seek—to destroy the agent as a formulator of change. Instead, the approach seeks to place the agent in a larger context of contingent forces that shape discursive acts. Thus, the agent is implicated in a past and future in an ongoing and contingently derived process. Any rhetorical act is premised on those that preceded its enunciation; rhetors seek change in a context that is not of their own making, yet may influence new relationships through their efforts to give voice to that which should be said. Once said, the new future is itself subject to further critique.

McKerrow’s 1989 article advanced eight principles that sought, collectively, to reshape and redirect criticism. Borrowing directly from McGee, the first principle announces an inventional theme

that orients criticism toward praxis. What is altered in this expression is not that practice is “unmethodical,” but rather that one’s approach is not constrained by any specific tactics or strategies in ordering one’s thought about an event or text. One may be methodical in assessing an event without claiming allegiance to any precise “do this, and then do this” approach. What is privileged is a question: What does this context determine to be necessary in best understanding and analyzing its features?

The second principle recognizes that discourse is itself a material entity. While there are varying analyses that make this a controversial claim (for example, the work of Carole Blair, Dana Cloud, and Ronald Greene), the point being advanced here is simply that words matter—discourse makes a difference.

The third principle asserts that rhetoric is more properly seen as *doxastic* rather than *epistemic*. Given rhetoric’s relation to contingency (that which could be otherwise), *doxa*, or grounded opinion, rejects a true-or-false knowledge in favor of a way of knowing that is contingent; words are seen as constituting a social reality, and what brings these words rather than others into the scene at this time is the focus of analysis.

The fourth principle follows on the heels of the previous commitment to a relativized sense of knowledge in noting that naming is central to rhetoric. Implicit in a recognition of the power of naming is Kenneth Burke’s perspective: Naming is neither final nor absolute, but rather an interpretive move in assessing what “is” perceived to be true at this moment. Through naming, one fixes that which is named (consider the attempt to remove the stigma of *ex-con* from one’s existence after serving time) and thereby asserts one’s relation to that which is named. Power is never far removed as a relational force that influences social relations; it asserts who can name, as well as the possibility of resistance to being so named. Should resistance be successful, the change in naming also changes the social relations between those involved. Recognizing the *ex-con* as a person who is more than what is carried in that name and refusing to continue using that attribution alters the social connection that exists.

The fifth principle suggests that influence is not, in and of itself, proof of a causal force or

relationship. Drawing again on the work of Michel Foucault, the question is, Why this discourse rather than another at this time? This implies a causal force may be at work in forcing or determining the direction of discourse, thereby further removing the agent as one who might make his or her own decisions about such matters. What is intended by this principle is a simple recognition that whatever is going on may not be reducible to causal claims. Were this the case, we would be mired in modernity—in a linear evolution of determinative events that forecast the future. The continuity of history would be a pre-given attitude. Such a perspective is limiting in terms of what actually happens.

From an understanding that influence may not be causal, we come to the sixth principle, which focuses attention on the relationship between presence and absence. There is a natural tendency to gravitate toward that which is observable—that which is present in the social scene. What this principle seeks is a reminder: Absence may be more important, more potent, as a source of information than mere presence. The examination of media events, for example, is surely informed by who is seen. Nevertheless, who is not present is equally telling—as years of awards going to Caucasians, as years of movies with Whites playing the role of Native Americans, as years of noting the absence of Black head coaches in the National Football League would tell us, if only we would pay attention.

The seventh principle further complicates the critical act by noting that *polysemy*, or multiple perspectives, is far more common in interpretive work. Critiquing from an ideological perspective does not imply that one, and only one, conclusion is possible from one's understanding of a scene. Rather, multiple perspectives, each perhaps emanating from slightly different questions being asked, will generate equally different takes on the meaning or significance of an event or text. *Defeasibility* rules in the critical, interpretive realm. This does not mean a position is inherently indefensible, but it does mean that its defense is open to question and validation. That different views can be taken on the same event does not mean everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion—extreme relativism is not intended to be the result. Rather, it means that, just because I believe X, I

still must show, and not just tell, why I believe in this way. Making the best case for an interpretive claim is tantamount to defending one's critical assessment, while recognizing that changing one's mind is an open option in the face of alternative interpretations.

The critical act culminates in a performance of oneself, hence the final principle. The critic, just as the rhetor, advocates and hence commits self in the world to this position rather than another. In so doing, the critic goes beyond mere description (this is what I think happened) to an evaluation of what that action means. The performance may be more than one of conveying information; it also may well be a political act—privileging one form of discourse over another or noting the ill effects that a continued exposure to or belief in a form of discourse may have for society. To advocate, especially in the context of advancing one's own ideological stance toward the world, is not done from a position of having the only or “right” answer. The principle of recursivity accompanies the critical act, just as it does the potential to engage others in a new or different power matrix.

To close, the critical rhetorician, in the guise of an inventor, takes an orientation toward the symbolic world that commits one to the possibility of error. At the same time, to risk failure does not imply a paralysis of will. The critical rhetorician seeks change via her or his own assessment of discursive formations, knowing full well that the instantiation of a new universe, with different possibilities for discursive interactions, lays itself open to renewed critique.

Raymie E. McKerrow

See also Critical Discourse Analysis; Critical Theory; Ideological Rhetoric; Ideology; Materiality of Discourse; Power and Power Relations; Rhetorical Theory

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denigrate things, people, and ideas. Criticism is something many associate with negativity, disparagement, and disapproval, yet despite the severe name, critical theory is very useful to the study of communication. Specifically, critical theory offers frameworks to analyze the complexities and contradictions of marginalization and resistance in societies. It is important to note at the outset that critical theory is not a theory proper but a set of complementary theoretical frames that examine structures of *domination* in society in order to open possibilities for the *emancipation* of people, meanings, and values. This two-pronged approach means that critical theorists see theory and action as inextricably interwoven. Critical theory is also oriented toward people, meaning that critical theorists use social life and lived experience as the site of inquiry for analysis and interpretation with the hope that they might find ways to make societies more open and equitable for marginalized groups. Finally, critical theorists are interested in the discursive and material practices of oppression and resistance. To understand how critical theorists arrive at this intellectual focus, this entry will discuss the historical emergence of critical theory, the primary concepts of critical theory, the contemporary forms of criticism in critical theory, and the applications of critical theory in communication studies.

Historical Foundations

Most contemporary scholars attribute the emergence of critical theory to Max Horkheimer and the Frankfurt School of Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany, popularly known as the *Frankfurt School*. In 1937, Horkheimer published a now famous essay entitled “Traditional and Critical Theory,” in which he outlined a needed change in the scholarly pursuit of knowledge. The traditional approach to research at the time privileged objective scientific methods and implicitly emphasized strict interpretations of Marx and, ultimately, Communist values for social organizing and governance.

Largely responsive to the time period, Horkheimer called his colleagues to shift their energies to a new focus that would use Marxist theory in unorthodox and resistant ways, what is now understood as *neo-Marxism*. This approach

CRITICAL THEORY

At first glance, critical theory appears to be quite negative. It sounds like a tool of analysis to

uses Marxism as a theory to understand inequalities within a society. Unlike traditional approaches that used Marx as a universalizing theory, critical theorists use Marxist concepts such as exploitation, alienation, ideology, and class consciousness to understand the dynamics of marginalization. In reinterpreting Marx, Horkheimer specifically called his colleagues to use theory as a mode of critique to understand and ultimately change the organization of society. The first dimension of this new criticism was to historically examine the way a social structure forms and marginalizes particular groups. Second, Horkheimer believed that critical theorists should do interdisciplinary social research, analyzing politics, economics, sociology, and history, among other disciplines, to holistically understand relations of domination within a society.

The writings of Marx are certainly a cornerstone of critical theory, but so is Freudian psychoanalysis. The Frankfurt School theorist most interested in the psychoanalytic dimension of social critique was Erich Fromm. In particular, Fromm examined the relationship between personal freedom and social control, believing that the minute individuals achieve freedom, they search for some authority for affirmation of that freedom. While Fromm was questioned by others at the school for this focus, later it would become well accepted that, in addition to understanding how social structures exist external to individuals, scholars should also examine the ways structures embed themselves in the psyches of individuals and classes of people.

In addition to these theorists, the emergence of critical theory must also be attributed to Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, and Friedrich Pollock. Furthermore, since the 1960s, Jürgen Habermas has contributed greatly to critical theory. Specifically, his theorizing has broadened the utility of critical theory by disconnecting it strictly from Marx. In addition to his work regarding the *public sphere*, Habermas argues that critical knowledge is information that allows individuals to break away from forms of domination. The process of gaining this critical knowledge involves reflexivity, or the process of reflecting on one's participation in structures of domination. While domination was certainly still relevant in the Marxist sense in Habermas's work, Habermas called on critics to recognize other modes of

domination in society in need of critical attention. This point really helped open up critical theory to other modes of analysis. In particular, the founding work of these theorists is influential today in examinations of capitalism, social institutions, culture industries, and popular culture. As will be elaborated in the next section, the foundational work in the Frankfurt School has led to a set of useful concepts that inform critical theorists' interrogations of social structures.

Key Terms

As mentioned above, contemporary critical theory is not a unified theory but should be understood as a loose set of theoretical frameworks that all share the goal of critiquing domination with the end goal of social change. Because of this, there are innumerable concepts that critical theorists use to evaluate society. Most of these concepts—including false consciousness, alienation, the death drive, and melancholia—are situationally useful to critical theorists, depending on the focus of their analyses. There are, however, overarching concepts that inform most critical theory analyses.

Critique of Domination

A central thread in critical theory research is the examination of social conditions for the hidden productive structures of marginalization. This sort of examination looks at the constraints placed on people's subjectivity, agency, and access to resources in particular contexts. Critical theorists understand that structures such as language, social institutions, and government produce meaning systems and knowledge about particular groups. Structures also produce, or reinforce, rules and norms for distributing resources and recognition across groups. In both creating knowledge about people and allocating resources to those people, these structures privilege some while marginalizing others. It is this inequality that is at the heart of critical theory's analysis. The goal in critiquing such structures of domination, however, is to produce possibilities for transforming social relations.

Ideology

Most critical theorists would agree that one of the foundational dimensions of domination is

ideology, or systems of beliefs that serve as the foundation of a group's worldview and perception of reality and consciousness. These ideas structure what people believe about others and the world. While some theorists, such as Louis Althusser, attribute the formation of ideologies to superstructures that he names as state apparatuses, other critical theorists reject such a realistic source for ideology. Instead, many understand predominant ideologies to be constituted from dominant discourses and discursive practices within a society or institution. This does not mean that there are not alternative ideologies within a society, but that through deployment in language, some ideologies come to appear more normative and natural. This is the process that produces structures of domination, or what scholars name as *hegemony*.

Hegemony

Studies of hegemony examine the struggle over ideologies and interests between differently classed individuals in a society. Hegemony happens when one group or one set of ideas is privileged over others, often through subversion or co-optation. Hegemony works in subtlety and soft suggestion rather than direct coercion. It happens when one group's interests are shaped and shifted to reinforce the power of and benefit the dominant group's interests. Hegemony is an important area of inquiry for critical theorists because people often are unaware that their actions and beliefs reinforce the dominant group's interests. It is here, then, that critical scholars are called to intervene by analyzing social practices, norms, and conditions to challenge the eminence of particular ideologies. This task is called the social transformation objective of critical theory.

Social Transformation/Emancipation

Transformation is what sets critical theory apart from most other theories. In addition to analyzing, those who use this framework must provide possibilities for or institute social change. In this vein, theorists of this tradition understand description and social reform as co-constituting goals of theory. Importantly, however, social transformation is not limited to physical activism, but change also happens through discursive interventions, or offering

emancipatory readings of domination that might lead individuals to change their participation in oppressive systems and ideas.

Contemporary Approaches

Depending on who is asked, theoretical approaches including Marxist analysis, psychoanalysis, public sphere theory, feminist theory, critical race theory, Foucaultian analyses, poststructuralism, disabilities studies, queer theory, postcolonial theory, and critical legal theory are included in the purview of critical theory. This inclusion is in many ways representative of critical theory, and yet there are major foundational dissonances among these frameworks if they are conceived of as a unified body of theory. These dissonances include disagreements about the nature of reality, the nature of knowledge, and the preferred methods of analysis. And yet, broadly concerned, there are primary resonances among these trajectories of critical theory. The primary modes of criticism that are useful to communication studies are reviewed in the following section.

Marxist Criticism

Critical theory began with Martin Heidegger's reinterpretation of Marxist theory, and so it makes sense that neo-Marxism is still the foundation of critical theory approaches. Marx was centrally concerned with the ways that dominant modes of production determine relations between people in society. Specifically, he believed that the focus on profit in capitalist societies created relations of domination between those that labor and those that benefit from labor. Heidegger's revisioning of Marxism allowed contemporary scholars of Marx to complicate their analysis of oppression in society. Instead of a strict class analysis, neo-Marxists see domination as the result of multiple interlocking systems of oppression, with class as one contributing factor to that marginalization.

Psychoanalytic Criticism

While not completely accepted when critical theory first emerged, psychoanalysis is now a part of a long tradition of examining domination, particularly in regard to questions of human nature

and subjectivity. Psychoanalysis provides theoretical tools to understand how domination manifests in individuals. While Sigmund Freud posited that adult behavior can be explained by childhood and familial situations, psychoanalytic criticism today applies important Freudian and Lacanian (from the work of Jacques Lacan, who followed and elaborated on Freud's work) concepts such as *melancholia* and *displacement* to examine the ways that groups of people respond to their positions of marginalization and privilege. This criticism differs from many other forms of critical theory in that it calls theorists to examine the effects of social structures through a focus on human behavior.

Poststructuralist Criticism

While psychoanalysis calls for an examination of human behavior, poststructuralist criticism investigates structures of language for the ways that they create and maintain social domination. Most of our lives we take language for granted and use it without reflection. Poststructuralist criticism offers the tool to investigate the hidden meanings and implications of language choices. Specifically, the tool of deconstruction is used to interrogate ideologies veiled in language and language structures such as the binary. This criticism contributes to critical theory in that it provides a way of examining structures of domination that are produced and reproduced through language.

Foucaultian Criticism

Michel Foucault was never a member of the Frankfurt School, but his research resonates greatly with the basic premises of the critical theory approach. First, Foucault contributed greatly to discussions of power, believing that power was not only destructive, but that there is an affirmative, or productive, dimension to power. This contribution has greatly shaped the work of critical theorists as they now question both the way power marginalizes and how people resist in the face of marginalization.

Like other critical theorists, Foucault's work focuses on social life and subjugation in institutions of society. In particular, Foucault offers important theoretical and methodological tools

for examining social institutions and people's relationship to institutions. For example, Foucault himself investigated the psychological institution (psychologically based institutions and norms), the prison system, and religion. In particular, his work provides critical theorists with tools to understand discourse, the relationship between power and knowledge, *governmentality* (the organized practices through which people are governed), and ethics. Critical theorists using Foucault in their analyses may approach their investigation using his methodological tools of archeology and genealogy, or they may examine structures of dominance via Foucaultian concepts.

Feminist Criticism

The previous modes of criticism offered tools to examine marginalization in class structures, language structures, and social institutions. Feminist criticism is considered by many a dimension of critical theory for its primary focus on gender inequality and patriarchy as a system of gender oppression. Many feminist critics conjoin feminist analysis with other forms of criticism to focus on particular manifestations of gender oppression in society. For example, many feminists take a poststructuralist perspective to understand the function of language in maintaining gender oppression. Others employ a Marxist or Foucaultian emphasis in their examinations of gendered social structures.

Postcolonial Criticism

Most strands of critical theory provide tools to examine structures of domination within societies, but postcolonial criticism interrogates the relations of domination between societies. Informed by the processes of colonization and decolonization around the world, postcolonial criticism examines the way knowledge, discourse, economics, politics, and many other facets of social life exist in unequal relationships between nation-states. In particular, postcolonial critics interrogate the dominance of Western discourse, media, and intellectualism in producing knowledge about colonial subjects and states. Postcolonial criticism also provides tools to examine the effects of colonization and decolonization on subjects within societies. This mode of criticism is not only greatly informed by Marx, but

much of the research also takes a psychoanalytic or poststructuralist approach to understanding subjectivity and subjugation.

Influence in Communication Studies

Critical theory has broadly influenced the ways scholars in the social sciences and humanities approach research, and communication studies is certainly no exception. While critical theory began to emerge in Europe around the 1940s and 1950s, U.S. American communication scholars did not begin to fully engage with it until the 1980s and 1990s. The latency of critical theory's application in communication studies is due in large part to the dominance of functionalist assumptions about research, including the privileging of objectivity and generalizability in many strands of communication research. Furthermore, many classic critical theorists were not accessible to U.S. American communication scholars because they were not translated into English, and most U.S. communication scholars were not required to be fluent in texts outside the English-speaking world. Despite the late arrival, critical theory has had enormous influence in communication studies, specifically in the areas of rhetoric, performance studies, organizational communication, and, to some extent, intercultural communication.

Rhetoric

As noted above, many of the areas in communication studies have taken up critical theory as a mode of analysis, but perhaps none as completely as rhetorical studies. Scholars concerned with society have had an important—and sometimes contested—relationship with rhetoric, or the study of public discourse and deliberation. Critical theory's focus on structures of domination, however, melds nicely with rhetoric's examination of discourse in action via speech and public texts. Much like social researchers who examine class, language, or colonial relations of domination, rhetorical scholars are interested in the way domination plays out in people's speech, including who speaks and what/when/where they speak. The relevance of critical theory is evident in rhetoric's focus on key critical theorists such as Heidegger, Habermas, and Marcuse. Critical theory is also evident in the

deployment of particular forms of critical theory to study public discourse. For example, feminist rhetorician Cindy Griffin makes use of the Marxist concept of *alienation* in her analysis of Mary Wollstonecraft's rhetoric. In examining Wollstonecraft's writings on the conditions of women, Griffin calls rhetorical scholars to see that alienation is not only material but that it exists in the discursive realm through language that positions women in passivity and objectivity rather than as active agents. These discursive alienations of women then are materially reproduced and reinforced through the lack of women's access to public recognition and resources.

In addition to forms of criticism, rhetoricians have developed methods of analysis centrally informed by critical theory. Two of the most utilized modes of critical analysis are the ideographic analysis, conceptualized by Michael McGee, and critical rhetoric, formulated by Raymie McKerrow. Critical rhetoric directly ties to the project of critical theory, taking a two-pronged approach to a critique of domination and a critique of freedom. Here McKerrow aligns with Foucault in understanding power as both marginalizing (critique of domination) and productive (critique of freedom). Additionally, the transformative project of critical rhetoric as conceived by McKerrow is discursive intervention.

Performance Studies

Much like rhetoric, performance is an important site for the intervention of critical theory. In the 1980s, performance scholars debated the utility of critical theories in the interpretation of literature. In particular, the work of Marcuse and Adorno was influential early on in performance studies because of these two theorists' emphasis on aesthetics. Additionally, poststructuralist criticism provided ways of reading below the surface of literature to examine the undergirding ideologies in literary texts. Poststructuralism is also influential because it provides tools to understand how discourse constructs what people know and what they do. In particular, performance scholars are interested in Jacques Derrida's notion of *citatoriality*—that people's everyday verbal and corporeal performances are nonoriginal, constantly referencing past performances.

Finally, performance scholars are very much concerned with the second dimension of critical theory's intent—social transformation. Not only do performance scholars work toward social reform through discursive interventions, but they actively engage in reform through actual performance to change what people know, believe, and do.

Organizational Communication

Scholars of organizational communication have largely welcomed critical forms of analysis to the study of organizations and organizing. In particular, they have been interested in the ways that particular individuals or groups come to hold power in organizations. Additionally, they examine the way power functions in discursive and material practices within organizations. For example, Angela Trethewey uses critical theory as a framework to explore how ideologies of aging shape professional women's experiences at work. She finds that as they age, professional women experience loss, isolation, and diminished access to resources and at the same time deploy resistance strategies against the "decline" story offered by age ideology.

Intercultural Communication

It might seem obvious that scholars of culture and communication would be interested in dynamics of power among cultural groups, but critical studies of intercultural dynamics had a relatively late start in comparison to other foci within communication. Despite this late start, there is a growing contingent of intercultural work that examines the relations of power evident in dynamics between cultural groups. Much of this work explores the meanings attributed to differently classed, raced, gendered, national, sexual, or able-bodied individuals. For example, scholar Lisa Flores examines the mediated representations of Mexican immigrants to the United States in the 1920s and 1930s, finding that immigrants are not only represented as other to White U.S. citizens but are dehumanized in mediated accounts to justify deportation. Other critical modes of intercultural work involve investigating the ways that marginalized groups respond or resist oppression and examining the way power plays out in actual intercultural encounters and relations.

Conclusion

This review of critical theory has explicated the basic tenets of this school of research, identified its historical foundations, reviewed key terms, discussed prominent modes of criticism, and reviewed the influence of critical theory on the communication discipline. While no accounting of a school of inquiry such as critical theory can be complete, this discussion has hopefully provided an opening into the exciting possibilities of critical modes of analysis.

Sara L. McKinnon

See also Archeology and Genealogy; Critical Organizational Communication; Deconstruction; Feminist Communication Theories; Frankfurt School; Ideological Rhetoric; Ideology; Intercultural Communication Theories; Marxist Theory; Performance Theories; Postcolonial Theory; Poststructuralism; Pragmatics; Public Sphere; Rhetorical Theory

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CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION THEORY

Around the world, millions of people relocate and cross cultural or subcultural boundaries each year. Although unique in individual circumstances, all strangers in an unfamiliar environment embark on the common project of establishing and maintaining, over time, a relatively stable and reciprocal relationship with the host environment. Young Yun Kim explains this phenomenon in her cross-cultural adaptation theory.

The theory is framed by three boundary conditions: (1) The strangers have had a primary socialization in one culture or subculture and have moved into a different and unfamiliar culture (or subculture), (2) they are at least minimally dependent on the host environment for meeting their personal and social needs, and (3) they are regularly engaged in firsthand communication experiences with that environment.

Kim laid the initial groundwork for this theory in 1976 in a study of Korean immigrants in the Chicago area, followed by a series of studies conducted among various other immigrant groups. A full-fledged theory was first presented in 1988, and a further updated and refined version in 2001. This theory has been widely utilized in research studies across social science disciplines including intercultural communication, mass communication, cross-cultural and social psychology, migration studies, education, social work, and business management.

A Communication Phenomenon

The theory is built on the premise that a person is an *open system* that coevolves with the sociocultural environment. Plasticity, or the ability to learn and change through communicative exchanges with the environment, is one of the most profound

characteristics of the human mind and the very basis on which individuals adapt to conditions of the environment. Cross-cultural adaptation is, thus, regarded in this theory as the unfolding of the natural human tendency to struggle to regain an internal equilibrium in the face of adversarial environmental conditions.

By placing adaptation at the intersection of the person and the environment, the theory explains cross-cultural adaptation essentially as a process that occurs in and through communication activities. Underscored in this view is that communication is the necessary vehicle without which adaptation cannot take place, and that some degree of cross-cultural adaptation, no matter how minuscule, occurs as long as the individual remains engaged with the host environment. This systemic, communication-based conception elevates the ontological status of cross-cultural adaptation to the level of a panhuman phenomenon that must be treated not merely as a specific analytic research unit (such as an independent or dependent variable), but as the entirety of the evolutionary process an individual undergoes in relation to an unfamiliar environment.

The theory addresses two central questions: (1) How does the cross-cultural adaptation process unfold over time? and (2) What are the key factors that help explain the different speeds with which individuals achieve adaptive changes?

Process

The first question concerning the unfolding of cross-cultural adaptation over time is answered in the form of a *process model*, a theoretical representation of the process of a person's evolution toward increased person–environment fit. The theory explains that this evolutionary process inevitably accompanies *stress* in the individual psyche, a kind of identity conflict rooted in the desire to retain the habitual mind, on one hand, and the necessity to seek congruence with the new milieu on the other. The experience of stress produces a state of disequilibrium, often manifested in emotional lows of uncertainty, confusion, anxiety, cynicism, hostility, avoidance, or withdrawal.

Yet, no open system can stabilize itself forever. If it were so, nothing would come of evolution. The heightened self-awareness in the state of stress

serves as the very force that propels strangers to overcome the predicament and partake in the act of *adaptation* through the active development of new habits. This is possible as they engage in forward-looking moves, striving to meet the challenge by acting on and responding to the environment. Stress, in this regard, is intrinsic to self-(re)organization and self-renewal.

What emerges from successful, long-term, and cumulative experiences of managing the stress–adaptation dialectic is a subtle and often imperceptible psychological *growth*. This growth entails an increased complexity in an individual’s meaning system. Periods of stress pass as an individual works out new ways of handling problems, owing to the creative forces of self-reflexivity of the human mind.

The theory explains that, together, the three-pronged psychological phenomenon of stress, adaptation, and growth serves as the very force behind an individual’s adaptive change over time. The *stress–adaptation–growth dynamic* does not play out in a smooth, steady, and linear progression, but in a dialectic, cyclic, and continual draw-back-to-leap pattern. Each stressful experience is responded to with a “draw-back,” which, in turn, activates adaptive energy to help individuals reorganize themselves and leap forward. As growth in some areas always occurs at the expense of others, the adaptation process follows a pattern that juxtaposes psychological integration and disintegration, progression and regression.

The stress–adaptation–growth dynamic continues as new challenges present themselves in the host environment, with the generally forward and upward movement in the direction of less stress and of greater adaptation and growth. In this process, large and sudden changes indicative of the severity of difficulties an individual experiences in the host environment are likely to occur during the initial phase of exposure to a new culture. Over a prolonged period of undergoing internal change, the fluctuations of stress and adaptation become less intense or severe, leading to an overall calming trend.

Structure

The second question driving this theory calls for a set of key factors that account for the different

speeds with which individuals move along the cross-cultural adaptation process. The theory answers this question in a *structural model*, in which key dimensions of factors that facilitate or impede the adaptation process are identified and their interrelationships articulated.

The theory locates the explanatory factors within the communicative interface of the stranger and the environment. In this communication framework, strangers’ communication activities are grouped in two basic, interdependent categories: (1) (intra)personal communication, or the internal mental activities that occur within individuals, disposing and preparing them to act and react in certain ways in actual social situations; and (2) social communication that takes place whenever they participate in face-to-face or mediated forms of interactions with other people.

Personal Communication: Host Communication Competence

The successful adaptation of strangers is realized only when their personal communication systems sufficiently overlap with those of the natives. The capacity of strangers to appropriately and effectively receive and process information and to design and execute mental plans in initiating or responding to messages is labeled as *host communication competence*. Host communication competence facilitates the cross-cultural adaptation process directly and significantly. It serves as an instrumental, interpretive, and expressive means of coming to terms with the host environment.

The theory identifies key elements of host communication competence in three categories: (1) cognitive, (2) affective, and (3) operational. *Cognitive competence* includes such internal capabilities as the knowledge of the host culture and language, including the history, institutions, world-views, beliefs, mores, norms, and rules of interpersonal conduct, among others. Language/culture learning is accompanied by a development of cognitive complexity, the structural refinement in an individual’s internal information-processing ability. *Affective competence* facilitates cross-cultural adaptation by providing a motivational capacity to deal with various challenges of living in the host environment, including the willingness to make necessary changes in one’s original cultural habits. It also

includes the openness to new learning and the capacity to partake in the natives' emotional and aesthetic sensibilities. *Operational competence* allows strangers to enact their cognitive and affective capabilities outwardly, making it possible for them to choose the combinations of verbal and nonverbal behaviors that are appropriate and effective in specific social situations.

Host and Ethnic Social Communication

Directly and reciprocally, the development of host communication competence influences, and is influenced by, an increased participation in host social communication activities of the host environment. A stranger's interpersonal and mass communication experiences of the host environment are constrained by his or her host communication competence, while every host social communication event offers the stranger an opportunity for new cultural learning. *Host interpersonal communication*, in particular, helps strangers to obtain vital information and insight into the mind-sets and behaviors of the local people, thereby serving as the points of reference for a check and validation of their own behaviors. *Host mass communication* facilitates the adaptation of strangers by exposing strangers to the larger environment. Serving this function are various forms of mass communication such as radio and television programs, magazine and newspaper articles, movies, museum exhibits, theater performances, Internet Web sites, audiotapes, videotapes, and posters.

In many communities in contemporary societies, strangers' interpersonal and mass communication activities involve co-ethnics or co-nationals and home cultural experiences. *Ethnic interpersonal communication* activities provide strangers with access to their original cultural experiences, often rendering assistance to those who need material, informational, emotional, and other forms of social support. With the advent of Internet Web sites and direct satellite and cable broadcasts, strangers enjoy an increased access to various sources of *ethnic mass communication* that are produced locally or in their home country.

During the initial phases of relocation, when strangers lack host communication competence, ethnic social communication activities may serve adaptation-facilitating functions. Due to the

relatively stress-free communication experience in dealing with their own ethnic individuals and media, ethnic communication experiences can offer temporary refuge and a support system. The theory explains, however, that heavy and prolonged reliance on ethnic social communication activities tends to help maintain strangers' original cultural habits and limit their opportunities to participate in the host environment.

Environment

To the extent that strangers participate in host social communication activities, the host environment exerts potentially adaptive influences on them. The nature of such influence, in turn, is shaped by the various characteristics of the host environment itself. The theory identifies three key environmental conditions affecting the stranger's adaptation process: (1) host receptivity, (2) host conformity pressure, and (3) ethnic group strength.

Host receptivity refers to the degree to which a given environment is structurally and psychologically accessible and open to strangers. A given society or community may extend welcoming attitudes toward particular groups of strangers, but not toward certain other groups. *Host conformity pressure*, the extent to which the environment challenges strangers to act in accordance with its language and cultural norms, varies as well across societies and communities. Culturally and ethnically heterogeneous environments such as large cosmopolitan cities tend to exert less conformity pressure on newcomers to change their original habitual ways. *Ethnic group strength*, on the other hand, tends to discourage the cross-cultural adaptation process of individual members. Large and active ethnic communities offer their members informational, emotional, and material support systems. Although such an ethnic support system can aid newcomers' initial cross-cultural adaptation, it also tends to exert a level of social pressure to maintain the ethnic practices and discourage an active participation in the host social communication activities.

Predisposition

Along with the conditions of the environment, the process of cross-cultural adaptation is affected

by the internal conditions of individual strangers themselves. The theory identifies three key predispositional factors: (1) *preparedness*, (2) *ethnic proximity/distance*, and (3) *personality*.

Strangers come to their new environment with differing levels of *preparedness*, that is, the mental, emotional, and motivational readiness to deal with the new cultural environment, including the understanding of the host language and culture. Affecting such preparedness are formal and informal schooling and training in, and media exposure to, the host language and culture, contacts and experiences with members of the host society, as well as prior cross-cultural adaptation experiences in general. Strangers also differ in cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds. *Ethnic proximity* (or *ethnic distance*) serves as a relational concept with which a given stranger's ethnicity and the predominant ethnicity of the host environment are compared. A stranger whose ethnicity is similar to and compatible with that of the mainstream ethnicity of the surrounding community is likely to blend in with relative ease. In addition, strangers differ in their more or less enduring *personality traits*. Of particular interest are those personality resources that would help facilitate an individual's ability to endure adaptive stresses. The theory identifies *openness*, *strength*, and *positivity* as three particularly significant personality characteristics that enhance one's chances for successful cross-cultural adaptation.

Intercultural Transformation

Through a progression of internal change, strangers undergo a set of identifiable changes in their habitual patterns of cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. The theory identifies three interrelated aspects of adaptive changes: (1) *functional fitness*, (2) *psychological health*, and (3) the emergence of an *intercultural identity*.

Through the repeated activities resulting in new cultural learning and self-organizing and reorganizing, strangers in time achieve an increased *functional fitness* vis-à-vis the demands of the host environment. Successfully adapted strangers have accomplished a sense of ease, efficacy, and a desired level of effective working relationship with the host environment. Closely associated with the increased functional fitness is a higher level of

psychological health reflected in an increased sense of personal well-being and satisfaction in one's life in the host environment. These functional and psychological facets of intercultural transformation are often accompanied by a subtle change in one's identity. Employing the concept *intercultural identity*, the theory explains that as individuals advance in the cross-cultural adaptation process, their identity orientations undergo a gradual and largely unconscious transformation toward less categorical and more complex ones. That is, individuals become better able to see the common humanity among different cultures and ethnicities and locate the points of consent and complementarity beyond obvious difference and contention.

Theorems

The above-described dimensions of factors constitute the structural model in Kim's cross-cultural adaptation theory. In this model, all the linkages indicate mutual stimulations (and not unidirectional causations). Directly or indirectly, each of these factors facilitates or impedes the adaptation process of an individual. Like a locomotive engine, the workings of each unit operating in this process affect, and are affected by, the workings of all other units. Out of this dynamic interface among the dimensions and factors arise the fluctuating experiences of stress, adaptation, and growth—an emerging development accompanying an increasing level of congruence and ease with respect to the host environment, the original culture, and the ongoing identity transformation itself.

Together, these factors offer a system of explanations as to why every incidence of cross-cultural adaptation takes place at its own pace and why some individuals are more successful than others in their cross-cultural transitions and eventual attainment of fitness vis-à-vis the host environment. The interlocking relationships identified in the structural model are formally specified in a total of 21 theorems, generalizable and predictive statements of a functional relationship, such as: The greater the host communication competence, the greater the participation in host social (interpersonal, mass) communication (Theorem 1).

Looking Ahead

Although intended to explain the adaptive experiences of individuals who relocate to a new and different cultural or subcultural environment, the core concepts and the theoretical arguments are applicable to the broader context of increasing intercultural exposures brought about by the process of globalization. Whether at home or on foreign soil, numerous people the world over are being challenged to undergo at least some experiences of the stress–adaptation–growth dynamic. Through direct contacts as well as via mass media and other technological means of communication, people around the world are increasingly exposed to the images and sounds of once-distant cultures. In many urban centers, local people are routinely coming in contact with foreign-born individuals.

This emerging phenomenon of crossing cultures at home promises a new chapter in the continuing development of the cross-cultural adaptation theory. For now, the theory speaks to a uniquely human plasticity to adapt to the increasingly intercultural environment. Through the concept of *intercultural identity*, the theory suggests a potentially viable vision of being oriented to oneself and to the world in an open and flexible manner. In the project of cross-cultural adaptation, the theory suggests the new possibility for individuals anywhere in the world to embark on a path of personal growth, in which they stretch themselves out of the familiar and reach for a deepened and more inclusive understanding of human conditions, including their own.

Young Yun Kim

See also Communibiology; Communication Theory of Identity; Competence Theories; Complexity and Communication; Contextual Theory of Interethnic Communication; Co-Orientation Theory; Cross-Cultural Communication; Intercultural Communication Competence; Intercultural Communication Theories; System Theory; Transculturation

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CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Cross-cultural communication is normally thought of as communication that takes place between members of whole cultures in contact or between their cultural spokespersons or representatives. Cross-cultural communication is distinguished from *intracultural communication*, which occurs between people sharing a common culture, and *intercultural communication*, which refers to exchanges in interpersonal settings between individuals from different cultures. William B. Gudykunst identifies both *intercultural communication* and *cross-cultural communication* as segments of *intergroup communication*.

When researchers want to compare or contrast the communication of people from different cultures and explain how communication varies from one culture to another, then a *cross-cultural communication* study occurs. William B. Gudykunst

and Carmen M. Lee identify this type of research as among the several approaches for incorporating culture into communication theories. Such theorizing must link dimensions of cultural variability directly with the cultural norms and rules that influence the communication behavior being explained. It must avoid oversimplifying the process or inappropriately coupling the way that the cultural variables influence cultural norms and rules or the reverse. This kind of work is of interest to several academic fields, including anthropology, communication, international relations, psychology, and sociology, and has been applied to concepts such as attitudes, beliefs, cognition, cross-cultural business and training, journalism, language and linguistics, mass media, nonverbal cues, organizational culture, perceptions, stereotypes, thought-patterning, and values.

Theoretical Dimensions

Several sources of cultural variation have been investigated. These include (a) *power distance*, or the degree to which cultures include status and power hierarchies versus relative equality; (b) *individualism–collectivism*, or the extent to which cultures value individual personal identity versus community identity; (c) *self-construals*, or the ways that people see themselves; and (d) *low and high context*, or the degree to which a culture relies on unstated relational dynamics versus direct verbal communication.

A number of important theories have made use of these cross-cultural distinctions. Examples include Stella Ting-Toomey's 1985 *face negotiation theory*, which illustrates how communicators from different cultures manage varying practices of facework; Young Yun Kim's 1993 *conversational constraints theory*, which looks at how people from different cultures choose various strategies of communication; Judee Burgoon's 1978 *expectancy violations theory*, focusing on how communicators from different cultures respond when their expectations are violated; and William B. Gudykunst's 1995 *anxiety/uncertainty management theory*, which focuses on how communicators reduce uncertainty and anxiety in cross-cultural situations. As another example, *communication accommodation theory*, attributed to Howard Giles and others,

looks at the ways in which communicators accommodate various cultural practices in cross-cultural situations.

In addition, cross-cultural investigations could focus on a variety of other important variables. Michael H. Prosser in his 1978 book, *The Cultural Dialogue*, identified several problems that could guide this work. Among other things, it could investigate the role of conflict and conflict resolution, the ways in which communication is used for control and power, the impact of technology and especially information technology, cultural stability and cultural change, cultural imperialism, and cultural dependency or interdependency.

Steve J. Kulich recommends a nine-level analysis offering themes for cross-cultural research in which culture can be viewed in terms of (1) propagated mythic ideals; (2) mainstream promotion or mass trends; (3) model-citizen norms; (4) expected behavior mechanics; (5) integrated meshworks, which includes a set of real or imagined networks; (6) mediated metaphors; (7) mindless personal responses to familiarity; (8) personal matrix options, such as recognizing that binary theories at each extreme end of a spectrum must realize that instead some cultures are both traditional and modern at the same time; and (9) personalized meaning. In the context of social science research, Kulich proposes that an integrated grid can be developed in the cross-cultural study of communication that incorporates cultural, subcultural, contextual, and individual levels of culture. An integrated grid includes cultural socialization that is passed down vertically or horizontally within a culture; socially constructed perceptions within the context of cultural groups; and personally interpreted meanings, which include conceptual perceptions within social groups and reflective and relative meanings, leading to intercontextual studies. Kulich explains that at the cultural level, one needs to consider such issues as ideal myths, mass trends, and model citizen norms. At the subcultural or contextual level, he proposes that expected behavioral mechanics, integrated meshworks, and mediated metaphors need to be considered, and at the individual level, scholars need to interpret their own mindless responses, personal matrix options, and personalized meanings.

Illustrative Examples

An early longitudinal example of major cross-cultural research efforts includes Charles E. Osgood's *Cross-Cultural Universals of Affective Meaning Project*, designed to find nearly universal factors of meaning across approximately 50 cultures. In this multinational study, 100 teenaged boys in each culture were chosen to assess 100 terms for their understandings of *goodness* or *badness*, *power* or *lack of power*, and *swiftness* or *slowness*. This study tested and confirmed the hypotheses that regardless of language or culture, human beings use the same qualifying and descriptive framework in allocating affective meanings of concepts involving attitudes, feelings, stereotypes, and values.

Desmond Morris's study of middle-aged male usage of nonverbal gesture cues in 25 European cultures, described in his 1980 book *Gestures*, hypothesized and confirmed that middle-aged men living closer to the Mediterranean Sea, and already strongly fixed in their own national culture behaviors, would utilize far more exaggerated and bolder gestures than would those middle-aged men living in the northern European or Scandinavian countries. Also, the hypothesis that the former group would have more gestures with sexual implications than the northern European or Scandinavian cultures was generally confirmed. Later, in his 1994 book, *Bodytalk: A World Guide to Gestures*, more cross-cultural nonverbal studies were significantly explored in a much wider geographical range.

In the 9-day 1974 bicultural Japanese–American research conference in Nihonmatsu, Japan, the research team hypothesized that Japanese participants would be more task oriented and Americans would be more process oriented. Not surprisingly, it was found that the younger Japanese and American participants were more process oriented, while the older Japanese and Americans were more task oriented, thus disconfirming the hypothesis. Michael H. Prosser's book *The Cultural Dialogue* discusses this research conference, providing the essence of the bicultural dialogue that occurred there.

One of the most important cross-cultural studies of national attitudes and values was Dutch sociologist Geert Hofstede's analysis of 116,000 responses. Based on this study, he initially proposed the development of four national cultural

dimensions—*uncertainty avoidance*, *power distance*, *individualism versus collectivism*, and *masculinity versus femininity*. Michael Harris Bond added a fifth dimension in 1987 called *Confucian dynamism*, also known as *short-term versus long-term orientation*. Uncertainty avoidance specifies the level to which members of a national culture avoid or accept uncertainty; power distance is the extent to which less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept unequal distributions of power. Masculinity versus femininity, more recently described as *aggressiveness versus nurturing*, emphasizes how a national culture manages its gender issues.

Individualism versus collectivism, initially proposed by cross-cultural psychologist Harry C. Triandis, focuses on whether members of a national culture are more oriented to *individual* versus *collective* or *communitarian values*. The Chinese Culture Connection in 1987 proposed that Hofstede's Western bias needs to be supplemented by a Chinese methodological bias of Confucianism. This cultural variability dimension has three aspects: *status relationships*; *integration*, or *harmony with others*; and *moral discipline*. In 2008, Hofstede added two new dimensions: *indulgence versus restraint* and *monumentalism versus flexibility* or *flexible humility*. These new dimensions have been articulated in his essay "Dimensionalizing Culture: Hofstede Model Context," in Steve J. Kulich and Michael H. Prosser's forthcoming coedited book *Cross-Cultural Value Studies*, and still need testing.

Western Versus Non-Western Cross-Cultural Problems

Many early cross-cultural studies focused on comparisons between American and Japanese, American and European, or American and Soviet cultural patterns. More recently, considerable research has emphasized contrasting cultural aspects of the Americans and Chinese or Chinese and other Westerners. Michael Harris Bond recommends that while these bicultural studies are useful, including those by cross-cultural psychologists, they use Western research methods to deal with indigenous cultural patterns. He urges cross-cultural researchers to move toward more pancultural studies, as Hofstede's studies have done, and that for serious

reliability, at least 10 cultural groups are needed when standard social science statistical measurements are used.

CHANG, Hui-ching proposes that in building cross-cultural theory incorporating both Western and Asian ideologies, the central starting point for several Asian societies must be Confucianism. This requires the recognition that Asian cross-cultural theories about relationships, intimacy, interpersonal communication, and intercultural communication have Confucian roots. However, at the same time, Confucianism must be integrated with modern theories and must compete with both ancient and contemporary Western and other Asian theories. Her research program, leading to the potential construction of cross-cultural theories, first explored folk concepts leading to relationships developed in Chinese society and then showed how these relationships develop between the East and the West through cultural exchanges such as popular books, workshops, and seminars. Finally, she shows how these relationship ideals develop and expand microculturally through the ordinary language that Chinese use in their daily lives. Fundamentally, she believes that cross-cultural theory construction for a society such as China must concentrate on how the Chinese create these relationships through their modern daily use of language. Cross-cultural researchers in such a setting ideally should be bilingual, both in a Western language and in Chinese.

HWANG, Kwang-Kuo also argues that the development of social scientific cross-cultural research in the indigenous Asian setting is problematic because Western social science methods are not always appropriate to study indigenous Asian cultural factors. He believes that Western social science theories, or the *scientific microworld* versus the indigenous *Asian lifeworld* for intellectuals in non-Western countries, have serious limitations as the philosophy of science for constructing a scientific microworld is essentially a product of alien cultures inconsistent with practical Asian cultural traditions. Thus, a cross-cultural communication researcher must construct a tentative theory to solve scientific problems caused by inconsistencies between Western theories and the observed phenomena or results of experiments in more traditional Asian societies, contradictions within a system or theory, and conflicts between the two types of theories. For example, formal justice in

Western scientific cross-cultural studies includes such basic elements as authority in an unequal relationship but does not practically consider the notion of Confucian respect for the superior in determining what is just.

Referring to cross-cultural communication studies for Chinese scholars as illustrative, GUAN, Shije notes several problems for China, and by implication for other Asian cultures: (a) More dialectical research is conducted than empirical studies; (b) too much research is conducted in individual disciplines rather than on an interdisciplinary basis; (c) more general introductions are provided than on specific topics with Chinese characteristics; (d) more Sino-U.S. research is done than comparisons of China with other countries; and (e) more international studies than domestic cross-cultural research are done of different Chinese communities in the mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and in the Chinese diaspora. He argues that this singularity of research methodology and focus has been a bottleneck in restraining further in-depth cross-cultural Chinese and Asian communication research.

Summary

It is impossible to completely separate the theoretical study of intercultural and cross-cultural communication. Gudykunst notes that before the late 1970s, when he began his doctoral studies, there were few, if any, reliable and valid theories for the study of either type of communication. As the study of intercultural and cross-cultural theories has matured, many new actual theories have been developed, tested, and confirmed or disconfirmed. Still more cross-cultural theories will develop over time that can be tested in a reliable and valid manner. New social science statistical measurements can help researchers hypothesize and test these theories, adding to the mature development of cross-cultural theoretical constructs.

Michael H. Prosser

See also Accommodation Theory; Asian Communication Theory; Confucian Communication Theory; Conversational Constraints Theory; Cultural Types Theories; Culture and Communication; Expectancy Violations Theory; Face Negotiation Theory; Facework Theories; Intercultural Communication

Theories; International Communication Theories; Uncertainty Management Theories; Values Studies: History and Concepts; Values Theory: Sociocultural Dimensions and Frameworks

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CROSS-CULTURAL DECISION MAKING

Organizations of today are becoming increasingly multicultural. Workers, managers, as well as professionals are crossing national boundaries and, as a result, facing a variety of intercultural conflicts. While there are numerous factors involved in such conflicts, differences in the nature and style of decision making seem to be one of the major sources of

confusion and frustration among the interacting members of such organizations.

Organizational theorists and psychologists as well as small-group communication scholars have argued for years about how people make decisions. Many articles and books have been written on decision making in relation to leadership, planning, and group process. Statistical decision making is also a popular area for study in the West, where decision making has generally been considered as an individual mental process involving the identification of a problem, consideration of the problem, and selection of the course of action for solving the problem. However, in Japan, for example, people do not seem to make decisions in the Western sense of the word. Decisions might be made somewhere by someone, but it is difficult to clearly identify the locus of the decision.

The realities of decision making in various parts of the world have not been thoroughly examined. In 1951, Fred N. Kerlinger asserted that the manner of reaching decisions is related to the patterns of thinking, because most people use, almost without thinking about or questioning it, the processes that have been handed down to them as part of their cultural heritage. Edward Stewart developed a theory of cross-cultural decision making by asserting that although decision making is rooted in a universal structure of cognition, once these structures are transformed and function as processes or operations, their evaluation and frequency differ from society to society. He further argues that decision making is a process or form bridging the gap between the internal mental process and action, and therefore, the values and assumptions embodied in different cultures affect the manner and rationality of decision making. Hence, more research is needed on cross-cultural decision making, comparing decision-making styles across cultures.

U.S. American and Japanese Decision Making

Decision making in organizations is complex in nature and form and differs greatly, depending on the particular context in which such decisions are made. For the purpose of comparison, however, research indicates that there are at least four components that can be examined cross-culturally: (1) the

decision maker, (2) the process and nature of discussion, (3) temporal aspects of decision making, and (4) mode of arriving at a decision.

The first component in decision making is the decision maker. In most U.S. organizations, the individual is the decision maker. The leader of the group is in a position to perceive a problem that requires solution. After consulting with some specialists or collecting relevant information, the leader selects one of the alternative plans for solution. Stewart argues that throughout one's upbringing, the American individual is encouraged to decide for himself, develop her own opinion, solve his own problems, have her own things, and in general learn to view the world through the point of the self. Because of these strong attachments of the self to the decision maker, the individual is likely to believe he or she is the locus of decision making even when forced to accept the effects of others' decisions on his or her life.

In contrast, it is difficult to see who the actual decision maker is in Japanese organizations. The role of the leader is to bring up the proposed idea and facilitate the discussion among small groups. The leader does not have to have special, professional, or technical knowledge about the subject matter. Rather, what is needed as a leader is to grasp the flow of discussion by being sensitive to the emotional feelings of participants.

In the second component of decision making—the process and nature of discussion—the leader of the group in U.S. organizations often holds meetings where the leader proposes an idea, explains the background leading to the proposal, and asks participants to judge whether the proposal is good enough to be approved or not. In other words, discussion continues through the stated agenda, and agreement is often reached after frank exchange of opinions among group members.

Discussion in Japanese meetings, on the other hand, might be perceived as somewhat ceremonial or ritualistic. The proposal, mostly agreed on through prior consultation among the members concerned, will be presented at the meeting. Even if the group is unable to reach agreement in prior discussion, the leader will not put the proposed idea on the agenda at the formal meeting.

In the third component of decision making or its temporal dimension, promptness is the utmost

concern of members in U.S. organizations. Before the meeting is held, the agenda will be sent out in advance to group members, either as documents or in e-mails. At the meeting, the time will be spent sequentially moving from proposal to explanation, and then to question and answers, often to be followed by voting. While decisions themselves are made swiftly, chances are that the implementation of decisions will be slow as the members concerned must be persuaded to go along with it.

In Japanese organizations, the meeting is likely to last until agreement is reached. What is valued in the meeting is that everyone spends some time together sitting face-to-face to consider the proposal. The participants may disclose their own opinions with much reservation. In such a case, the meeting will take an extremely long time until a decision is reached. However, once the decision is made, its execution is swift and thorough, as everyone concerned is well aware of how to carry out the proposed decision.

In the fourth component, mode of arriving at a decision, the typical U.S. American mode of decision making is either by announcement on the part of the leader or by majority voting. The leader tries hard to push through the proposal. The leader is expected to explain the decision and to offer the others reasons for considering such a proposal. The deliberation is focused on whether the proposal can be either supported or rejected.

In Japan, all possible effort will be made to achieve consensus before and during the meeting. The leader serves as a moderator, presiding over the meeting and working to reach consensus on the proposal. In the process, participants might say that the meeting went well, and the will of all the members is solidified so that acceptance and implementation of the proposal becomes possible.

Communication Styles

Communication style also differs cross-culturally during the process of decision making. According to Kume, two contrastive prototypes of communication styles in the process of decision making have emerged from the research: *mawashi* and *tooshi*. *Mawashi* (a Japanese expression that means to circulate or rotate) is defined as a way of reaching consensus by passing around a particular view almost endlessly among members of a group,

whereas *tooshi* (which in Japanese means to push through or have one's own way) is defined as a direct communication style of an individual's expressing his or her view clearly so that the idea can be accepted by all the members concerned or at least accepted by all through majority voting.

In *mawashi* style, people communicate by circulating their ideas or hinting at something indirectly, while in *tooshi* style a leader's idea is adopted as long as it is convincing enough to everyone concerned. What is emphasized in *tooshi* style is the persuasiveness on the part of the leader, which is in a sharp contrast to *mawashi* style, in which you are concerned about how your message is interpreted by the other people involved. By circulating your ideas in the form of indirection, polite expressions, or even self-deprecatory expressions, the other members of the groups are engaged, so to speak, in a synchronization of thoughts and feelings.

This simplistic dichotomy of *mawashi* and *tooshi* is merely intended to emphasize that there might be profound differences in the manner by which people of different cultural backgrounds communicate. This also indicates that any two cultural groups might have different perceptions and approaches to decision making in meetings. It also implies that even within the same organization, the above two styles can be interchangeably employed, depending on the nature of the organization, its leadership, the kind of decision to be made, and the attitudes of participants toward the meeting.

The understanding of culture in decision making should not be limited to national culture, but could be extended to subcultures or co-cultures. For example, a detailed case study was conducted by Lea P. Stewart in 1985 to illustrate the conflict resulting from sharply different styles of decision making between engineers and nontechnical managers. Furthermore, because decision making naturally involves an ethical dimension, the question of who should be responsible for the decision can be cross-culturally explored, even though the question of accountability in another culture is not considered as important as in the United States. Continued research on cross-cultural decision making can be expected to continue to provide useful information for those who are working in multicultural organizations.

Teruyuki Kume

See also Cross-Cultural Communication; Culture and Communication; Effective Intercultural Workgroup Communication Theory; Group Communication Theories; Organizational Communication Theories

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CULTIVATION THEORY

Cultivation, also known as *cultivation theory* or *cultivation analysis*, is the area of communication research that investigates relationships between exposure to television and beliefs and attitudes about the world. Briefly, cultivation hypothesizes that heavy viewers of television will be more likely to hold beliefs and conceptions about the world that are congruent with what they see on television. For example, television programs are often seen to be highly violent; cultivation hypothesizes that heavy viewers of television will be more likely to see the world as a violent place.

Cultivation was an outgrowth of the *Cultural Indicators* project, a research program begun by George Gerbner at the Annenberg School for Communication in the late 1960s. The Cultural Indicators project began by documenting levels of violence and other socially relevant information

(such as portrayals of women and minorities) in prime-time and children's programs. As the project began to assert that, for instance, television was overtly and overly violent, cultivation was developed as a way to ascertain whether viewing contributed in any way to viewers' conceptions and beliefs about the world.

The basic hypothesis of cultivation, though questioned by some, is that watching a great deal of television will be associated with a tendency to hold specific and distinct conceptions of reality, conceptions that are congruent with the most consistent and pervasive images and values of the medium. Yet there has been a great deal of interest in, criticism of, debate about, and support for the basic idea of cultivation, a research tradition that continues to be strong over 30 years after its inception.

The first cultivation results were introduced by George Gerbner and Larry Gross in 1976, in a *Journal of Communication* article titled "Living With Television: The Violence Profile." In addition to presenting results showing relatively high levels of televised violence on the major networks, Gerbner and Gross showed that heavy television viewers were more likely to overestimate the proportion of people involved in law enforcement and were more likely to say that others can't be trusted and to overestimate their own chances of being a victim of violence. Such findings eventually led to the notion of the *mean world syndrome*, in which heavy viewers are more likely to see the world as a scary, mean, violent, and dangerous place. This work led to a profusion of tests of the cultivation hypothesis in many different domains, but first there were criticisms to deal with.

Criticisms

Soon after the appearance of the cultivation hypothesis and its early tests, various criticisms were leveled from social scientists. Some criticisms were offered from a "humanistic" perspective, arguing that viewers interpret violence very differently and that aggregating responses to survey questions would miss these differences. Gerbner and Gross defended cultivation theory against these criticisms, arguing that individuals would certainly be likely to have different interpretations of violence but that aggregate patterns were also meaningful. They suggested that tests of such

patterns were themselves useful for determining whether or not television's messages, seen as an overall system, were in any way related to viewers' conceptions. As has been found consistently since Gerbner and Gross's original study, viewing has shown a small but significant relationship with viewers' conceptions, often over and above controls for other important variables.

Other criticisms claiming to disconfirm cultivation were offered from countries such as Great Britain, where similar results were not found. In this case, however, it seemed clear that differences in the programming systems between the two countries could be a major explanatory factor. Since then, numerous studies of cultivation have been carried out in countries other than the United States, many confirming cultivation.

Another criticism was that cultivation might really be an artifact of the fact that people living in high-crime areas might watch more television; thus, cultivation would be a spurious artifact of this three-way relationship. In response to these criticisms, Gerbner and his colleagues found that fear of crime was actually enhanced by television viewing in the high-crime areas, a phenomenon they termed *resonance*. This term was meant to denote a phenomenon in which the lived experience of the individual would be confirmed in the television world, resulting in higher cultivation relationships for those individuals.

Mainstreaming

Other criticisms used multivariate statistical techniques to show that cultivation relationships would disappear if researchers controlled for other important variables. Indeed, in most cases, simple cultivation relationships are often reduced or eliminated when multiple controls are applied. However, at about the time these criticisms were appearing, Gerbner and his colleagues were reanalyzing data with an eye toward specifying when and where the cultivation relationships might be stronger. The most important idea to emerge from these analyses was that of *mainstreaming*.

Mainstreaming is the phenomenon in which groups that would otherwise differ on opinions and beliefs about issues become more similar to one another when they view television heavily. The idea is that television's message system draws its

heavy viewers closer to a mainstream position. Thus, for instance, while liberals and conservatives would be expected to disagree on an issue such as whether abortion should be available (and they do), the difference is much smaller between liberals and conservatives who are heavy viewers. Gerbner and his colleagues eventually saw mainstreaming as working toward a blurring of views and ideology toward a somewhat conservative mainstream that would be favored by the corporate-controlled media system. Mainstreaming and resonance did not completely resolve the debates about cultivation, but the cultivation hypothesis did not go away and has been tested dozens of times in various studies since the 1970s.

Findings

After the violence results emerged, cultivation studies were carried out on a variety of issues. Studies found that television viewing was associated with a tendency toward greater conservatism. Television appeared to cultivate less tolerance of minorities and out-groups. For instance, several studies showed that heavy viewers were more likely to favor keeping women in “traditional” sex roles, which was not surprising given that women were outnumbered by men on television and often shown in traditional roles such as housewife, secretary, or nurse. Television was shown to also cultivate less tolerance for groups that were not shown very much, such as gay men and lesbians. The notion of *symbolic annihilation* suggested that invisibility in the world of television could be as important as actively negative portrayals.

The list of issues that cultivation has addressed is virtually endless. While a majority of studies have concentrated on issues such as violence and crime, ideology, and the roles of different demographic groups, other questions have been investigated. These include perceptions of science, religion, the environment, and belief in the paranormal, among many others. Overall, the published studies have consistently shown that television viewing shows small but significant relationships with perceptions about many phenomena, often after controlling for a variety of other variables. As would be expected, the studies have grown in methodological sophistication. Also, the community of researchers testing cultivation grew; while Gerbner and colleagues

conducted many of the original studies, researchers around the world have picked up cultivation ideas. Even now, and despite enormous changes in the media system, cultivation is still generally accepted as one of the most important and testable propositions within media effects research.

Meta-Analysis

In 1997, Michael Morgan and James Shanahan meta-analyzed 52 independent studies of cultivation, representing over 20 years of cultivation work. Meta-analysis is used as an alternative to the traditional narrative literature review. It compiles results from all extant studies, converts their findings to a similar metric, and then weights the effects for sample size to produce an overall estimate of the “true” cultivation effect. While single studies are more open to problems such as sampling error, meta-analyses can give a truer picture by virtue of their compilation of many studies, resulting in a much larger sample. Morgan and Shanahan found that, on average, the cultivation effect was about .09 (expressed in Pearson’s r). Thus, they argued, as Gerbner and Gross had done earlier, that television viewing does make a small but significant contribution to viewers’ perceptions of reality.

They found, however, that the effect size differed when tested in different ways. Small sample sizes tended to yield larger estimates, for instance. Expanding on this meta-analysis in 1999, Shanahan and Morgan found, for instance, that cultivation effects were higher for self-identified liberals than moderates or conservatives. That is, while self-identified liberals differ from conservatives on many issues, the differences between light- and heavy-viewing self-identified liberals are the most marked, with heavy-viewing liberals scoring much closer to the moderates and conservatives. This finding is very consistent with the notion of mainstreaming discussed above. All in all, then, the meta-analysis showed that cultivation has revealed a fairly consistent pattern of effect, with an effect size not dissimilar to that revealed in meta-analyses of other theories of media effects.

Psychological Mechanisms

Early on, some investigators opined that cultivation contained no psychological or cognitive

explanation of how cultivation worked. While Gerbner and his colleagues were less interested in this question—they tended to be more focused on television from the macrosocial perspective—others put forth tentative explanations. Some early studies sought to break down the cultivation process into steps, such as *acquisition* and *construction*. In the first step, viewers would acquire knowledge from their accumulated viewing experience, which would then be cognitively aggregated into a view of the world consistent with television's messages. Such explanations tended to differ between *first-order beliefs* (simple perceptions of facts about the world) and *second-order beliefs* (more complex views of the world, such as attitudes or ideology). However, while these terms remain in use in some studies, Gerbner and associates did not find them useful and abandoned them as a potential cognitive explanation.

Perceived reality was another mechanism offered to explain cultivation. It was argued that viewers who saw television as more real would be more likely to show evidence of cultivation. Though some studies were done with suggestive results, perceived reality never gained acceptance as the cognitive explanation of cultivation.

Another approach focused on memory. Researchers argued that viewers' memories about a topic could provide a better prediction of beliefs than media exposure. However, few convincing tests of this idea were offered. Elaborating on this idea, other researchers proposed that people who confuse news for fiction would be more likely to give television answers (i.e., answer questions with information received from television), and some evidence was shown for this.

However, the most convincing evidence for a cognitive explanation of cultivation came from L. J. Shrum, who wondered whether viewers consider judgments of reality at all when answering questions about the world. He used a heuristic model to explain why heavy viewers would give television answers. Simply put, he argues that most people do not give thoughtful answers to questions; rather, they rely on whatever information seems most readily available to them. They do not systematically scan their memories for relevant information; rather, they take what is most readily available. Shrum has conducted many studies that show that heavy television viewers will give

television answers to questions (such as, for instance, perceptions about material wealth), and they will give answers more quickly than light viewers will. These results suggest that television viewers have simply accumulated more information about various television-related topics from television than light viewers have. The fact that they answer more quickly indicates that they are accessing this information more heuristically than systematically. That is, heavy viewers are not rationally considering their options; they are just drawing from the stories, images, and representations they have seen on television more frequently and more rapidly than light viewers are. As of now, Shrum's ideas stand as the most plausible account of how cultivation works psychologically.

Future of Cultivation

Much is changing in the media world. When Gerbner began investigating cultivation, there were three dominant television networks; now there is a plethora of cable channels available. And other sources of information and entertainment exist that can compete with television: videogames, the Internet, VCRs/DVDs, and the like. For some, this means that the era of cultivation is over, as viewers can choose and manage their own program choices. As some of these changes emerged, however, Gerbner argued that the media world was still a corporate-controlled entity and that media industries would find ways to dominate the world of storytelling and connect it to advertising.

Nevertheless, it remains to be seen whether cultivation effects will hold up over the long term. Other investigators are pushing toward questions such as whether exposure to specific genres of television produces cultivation effects. Others are looking at long-term questions, such as whether cultivation is a theory of social stasis, or how cultivation deals with social changes. With the existence of data sets that now cover more than 40 years, researchers are only beginning to speculate about television's role in the processes of social change.

James Shanahan

See also Broadcasting Theories; Cultural Indicators; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Media Effects Theories

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CULTURAL CONTRACTS THEORY

Cultural contracts theory was created by Ronald L. Jackson II in 2002 to respond to the ongoing discussion about identity negotiation throughout research in the humanities and social sciences. While it might seem obvious that this theory emanated from sociologist Charles W. Mills's 1997 *racial contracts* treatise, the author was unaware of Mills's work until nearly 3 years after the cultural contracts theory was established. The theory actually has its roots in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 1762 explication of the social contract, which was a moral and philosophical essay on the implications of national sovereignty and the maintenance of social order. This early document spawned a lot of debate about freedom, independence, autonomy, and citizen obligation to social order. The cultural contracts theory is aligned with Mills's theory to the extent that it is aware of and responsive to power inequities that destabilize or imbalance interaction and ultimately instigate cultural identity negotiation.

Jackson actually thought about the contracts metaphor when buying a home. He noted the similarities between communicating one's preferences in important life negotiations such as buying a

home and negotiating one's identity with a stranger whom we expect to behave or proceed in a certain way. In these kinds of interactions, one's values, norms, beliefs, and patterns of communication—indeed one's culture—are revealed within the encounter. Likewise, people negotiate differences in opinion, style, and orientation in these sorts of transactions. Whether two people are meeting one another for the first time or have been acquainted for years, they must still coordinate their relationship by understanding the other's culture. Just as in a home-purchase contract, everyday communication contains “small print,” with hidden features of a relationship. In identity negotiation, the small print can be about hidden motives but is often about hidden insecurities that come as a result of past experiences. All of this complicates the encounter and is exacerbated in intercultural interactions where race, gender, and class all come to bear.

Cultural Contracts in Operation

Drawing from the literature on identities as well as previous studies conducted on how intercultural relationships are formed and sustained, Jackson asked, what about one's identity is actually being negotiated, and how does that happen? When people interact, their identities will overlap to a greater or lesser extent. The co-orientation process that occurs in interaction can be seen as *identity negotiation*, which involves varying degrees of cooperation. The resulting agreement is a “contract” that specifies the rules and conditions for mutual identity management. These contracts function to preserve, protect, and define the self as it meets up with others.

At the core of cultural contracts theory is the metaphor of *negotiation*. Identities are not simply conceded while communicating; rather, there is an attempt to hold onto and negotiate aspects that define who one is. This process permits at least two options: One can elect to assimilate or accommodate, or one can negotiate the relationship anew by signing another contract.

What happens if both interactants see themselves as “leader”? What if there are cultural differences in their definitions of leadership? What if both want to enact their identities in response to another? These are all critical questions. In every communication encounter, people are communicating their

worldviews and what they value, and they must continuously engage this process in juxtaposition with others.

Use of the word *cultural* in the theory is deliberate. Even if one is incapable of articulating the specificities of his or her worldview, there are still cultural norms and beliefs that influence how people behave on a daily basis. So, the theory maintains that everyone has a cultural contract. It is impossible to be without at least one; otherwise there would be no means of knowing what is appropriate or effective in a given culture.

Cultural contracts theory is based on three premises or axioms about the processes and outcomes of identity negotiation engagement: (1) identities require affirmation, (2) identities are constantly being exchanged, and (3) identities are contractual. To say that identities require affirmation is to say that there are multiple ways to think of identity. It essentially refers to a self-definition that is communicatively affirmed or validated by others. Postcolonialist and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon goes so far as to say that speaking enables one to be alive for others, which suggests that there is an interdependent function to human interaction; each of us comes to understand the self by knowing what the self is not. We know what it means to be *rich* by contrast to what it means to be *poor*. We know what is *right* by acknowledging what is *wrong*.

In the process of establishing who one is, there is a sharing and exchange of self-definitions and worldviews—and this is the second axiom of cultural contracts theory. Communication is inevitable and happens all the time; even when we think we are not communicating, we are. And while it is simple to suggest that humans communicate constantly, it is much more complicated to argue effectively for how one exchanges identities or portions of identities while interacting. Clearly, differences of identities imply a need for relational coordination.

Metaphorically speaking, then, there is a need for “contracts” that figuratively stipulate the rules of engagement among cultural group members within and outside a given culture. Social rules and laws become guideposts for acceptable and normal interaction; compliant behavior confirms your signature on the contract. The term *cultural contracts* refers to the end product of identity negotiation; hence, every “signed” or agreed-on cultural contract has a direct impact on one’s identity.

At some point in their lives, people all have to decide to accept and abide by the cultural values, norms, beliefs, and communication patterns of a given culture as a template for how to behave; hence, our cultural contracts reflect our worldviews. This worldview shifts over time and during critical incidents with relational partners. The effect on identities, whether it is a shifting or solidifying move, depends on the significance of the initiating incident and/or nature of the identity negotiation process. At times, the negotiated shift in identity is so dramatic that a contract breach or violation occurs, with one of three possible outcomes: ending or disrupting the relationship; devising an original or amended contract; or conceding, usually because of the high value given to the relationship or the high costs of leaving the relationship.

Types of Cultural Contracts

Three basic types of cultural contract have been identified: Ready-to-sign, quasi-completed, and cocreated. Each kind of contract reveals how people have personally and socially constructed how they define themselves. *Ready-to-sign cultural contracts* are prenegotiated; the parties do not permit any further negotiation of the contract. These contracts are designed to promote assimilation or maintain one’s own worldview. Those who seek to introduce a ready-to-sign contract are often firmly entrenched in their own perspective and are not interested in others’ worldviews. Essentially, they take their cultural understandings into every encounter and have no interest in learning about other cultural traditions, values, norms, and beliefs. As the most rigid of the contract types, the ready-to-sign cultural contract is the type that dominant groups often “hold in their pocket,” ready to present to marginalized group members. The reason that language forms such as Ebonics have not reached full political legitimacy as a language form can be explained by the ready-to-sign contract prevalent in Canada and the United States that refuses to recognize the standards, structure, and function of Ebonics—or of any language or language variation that contests one form of English as the appropriate and normal standard of American speech.

Quasi-completed cultural contracts consist of some prenegotiated agreements and some agreements to agree to relationally coordinate one's identities with those of another. These are perhaps the most common type of cultural contract, and they are ordinarily short-term episodes of identity shifting. People code switch every day when they go to work or school or participate in formal public events and activities. People also use different contracts for different people. The person who feels compelled to code switch with you may not code switch with someone else, or perhaps not in the same way. Signers of the quasi-completed contract may do so because they want both options available: They want to have the option of maintaining their own worldviews, and they want to have the option of cocreating with others. These individuals, in other words, waver in their interest to relationally coordinate. In addition, some quasi-completed contacts are "signed" as self-protection in order to avoid stress. For example, some African Americans try to "talk proper" on the telephone by changing their tonality and inflection to "sound White" in order to avoid racially biased treatment such as linguistic profiling.

The third kind of contract, the *cocreated cultural contract*, is fully negotiable. Cocreated cultural contracts are the ideal kinds of social agreements we would like to have with cultural others because people from cultures other than our own are interested in fully valuing difference. If a cultural contract is cocreated, differences are fully acknowledged and valued. Cultural differences are not ignored, and they are not the only reason the two partners are in relationship. "Signing" this type of contract indicates an openness and embrace of other ways of seeing the world. Mutual satisfaction, rather than obligation to the requirements of the other's culture, is the centerpiece of such relationships.

Cocreated contracts, in the end, however, are behavioral. That is, mere talk about harmony and cohesiveness does not manifest into a cocreated contract; one must also demonstrate the unconditional appreciation and valuation of the other person. This is perhaps discussed and exhibited most as it relates to romantic interpersonal relationships, especially interracial ones. The cocreated contract stipulations for interracial romantic relationships, for example, typically include acknowledgment and appreciation of the cultural

ancestries, values, norms, beliefs, practices, and patterns that govern the partners' behaviors as individuals and as partners.

Limitations

While cultural contracts theory asserts that taking into account others' values is routine in daily interactions, what is not so clear in this theory is how each of us develops, sustains, or shifts our cultural contracts over time. Also, how does one move from one contract to another with different people? When and why do we identity shift or code switch with different people? All of these questions are raised in this paradigm. At the same time, it cannot reasonably answer every question about human interaction; nor should it be expected to. Rather, it points out dynamics familiar to marriages, teams, corporations, churches, schools, and everyday acquaintances, offering a way to understand a phenomenon that occurs instantly when we interact with others in one episode or throughout time. We negotiate identities so quickly that we are not always aware that it is happening.

Unlike uncertainty reduction theory, which is mainly about initial interaction, cultural contracts theory holds that we all have at least one culture we claim and that serves as a guide for how we interact with others. Even in our attempts to be elusive and try not to claim any given culture, the way we behave tattles on us and reminds us about how we live in the world and about what we value. Such values sometimes affirm and sometimes violate our expectancies about others and lead to negotiation, accommodation, and reassessment of contracts.

Ronald L. Jackson II

See also Accommodation Theory; Communication Theory of Identity; Cultural Identity Theory; Cultural Performance Theory; Culture and Communication; Expectancy Violations Theory; Face Negotiation Theory; Identity Theories; Relational Development

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CULTURAL IDENTITY THEORY

Cultural identity theory (CIT) is one of several theories developed to build knowledge about the communicative processes in use by individuals to construct and negotiate their cultural group identities and relationships in particular contexts. Originally developed in the late 1980s, the theory has significantly evolved through continuing collaborative projects in various international sites and diverse regions in the United States. Early versions emphasized an interpretive theoretical perspective, social construction, and individuals' discursive accounts of experiences, while versions after 2000 have been broadened to incorporate a critical perspective and to include attention to contextual structures, ideologies, and status hierarchies. Research guided by the theory today most often includes discursive analysis of public and interview texts focusing on the forms through which cultural-identity positions and intercultural relationships are negotiated, the role of privilege in the outcomes of discourse, and implications for intercultural relations and social justice.

Early Interpretive Versions of Cultural Identity Theory

Early CIT work was characterized by an interpretive theoretical perspective, in which cultural identity processes were described, but not

critiqued. Mary Jane Collier and Milt Thomas combined the ethnography of communication and social construction and from there proposed several properties of the enactment, or creation, of cultural identity evident in communication texts. First they argued that individuals' messages during interaction may contain multiple types of cultural identities, such as national, racial, ethnic, class related, sex and gender based, political, and religious. Because individuals enact multiple identities, all voices within each identity group do not speak in the same way or have the same recognition by others.

Diversity, both within and between groups, became a key principle and was examined in several research studies. For instance, in the mid-1990s, Mary Jane Collier, Michael Hecht, and Sidney Ribeau demonstrated the multivocality, or different expressions, of African American identity, as well as some broad patterns of conduct and norms providing evidence of various ethnic identities among African Americans.

Early CIT also proposed that individuals' cultural identities differ in salience and relative importance across situational contexts, time, and interactions. In a study on ethnically identified college students' communication with acquaintances in the mid-1980s, Collier found that ethnic similarity and difference between the individual and his or her acquaintance were factors that affected how much cultural identity stands out.

A third property of this early work was the varying scope or prevalence with which the particular forms of cultural identities are visible. When Collier studied conflict among friends identifying as Latino/a, Asian American, African American, and Anglo American in the United States, she found that there were some similarities in cultural norms for members of each ethnic group, as well as within-group differences with regard to gender and the nature of the relationship.

A fourth property of early CIT work was related to who constructs or produces the cultural identity and the ways in which these identities are communicated. Two processes were found—avowal and ascription. *Avowal* was defined as personal articulation of one's views about group identity, and *ascription* referred to how one refers to others. The most common forms of ascriptions are stereotypes of other groups. CIT scholars argued that identity

construction is part reaction to past ascriptions and part ongoing and dynamic avowal of identity claims, and therefore both avowed and ascribed cultural identities are important. In interviews with South Africans in the early 1990s, Collier found that there was often a difference in described qualities of avowed cultural identities by insiders and the qualities ascribed to that group by outsiders. She argued that this mismatch could be a factor in continuing or intensifying conflict, but that the consequences depended on the status positioning of group members.

CIT scholars such as Collier also proposed that cultural identities are negotiated within a social context and are affected not only by historical events and political conditions but also by who is present and the situation or site of interaction or public discourse. For example, Collier, Hecht, and Ribeau defined African American ethnic identity as a “problematic event” that is historically and politically situated; they pointed to insider-avowed and outsider-ascribed descriptions of ethnic identities in order to provide a view of the communication through which African American ethnic identities are negotiated.

The intensity with which particular cultural identities are avowed and ascribed was described in CIT as differing depending on context, situation, topic, and relationship. Intensity of avowal and ascription was also linked with the salience, or prominence, of cultural identity, as born out in research by Collier related to South African racial, ethnic, and gendered identities. Cultural identities also have been shown to change in significant ways. *Othering* (placing one group as *other than one's own*) in the form of racism against Blacks by Whites has endured over the years and appears even in certain color-blind forms, according to research on interracial marriages in the United States conducted by Jennifer Thompson and Mary Jane Collier.

Along with other theorists, CIT scholars noted that cultural identities become evident through social comparison. On other words, speakers compare the status position of their own groups to those of other groups. For instance, when South African Afrikaners described their views about the social and economic future of the country in the early 1990s, they did so by using positive self-references for Whites and negative descriptions for Blacks.

Critical and Interpretive Cultural Identity Negotiation Theory

Critiques of research guided by CIT emerged in the late 1990s. Critical scholars called for researchers to recognize the influence of ascriptions and representations found in public texts and the role of structures such as institutional policies and ideologies on identity politics and negotiation. To respond, Collier broadened her work through integrating critical and interpretive perspectives. Stressing the role of contextual negotiation of multiple identities and relationships, CIT evolved into *cultural identity negotiation theory* (CINT). Collier's more recent work in CINT emphasizes researcher reflexivity, or scholars' reflections on their impact on the work they do as well as the way in which that work influences them. CINT work from early 2000 forward calls for attention to the material and social consequences of cultural identity negotiation and increasingly reflects attention to concerns with social equality and justice.

CINT research incorporates attention to forms of discourse such as ascriptions that subjugate certain groups of people as a type of racism, including the discourse that appears in both overt and less visible ways. These types of subjugating discourse are sometimes found in interviews with U.S. courtroom personnel, who pride themselves on being “objective.” It has also been found in comments from wives who identify as White in interracial marriages in the United States. As well, views of “others” have been shown to emerge in contradictory ways. CINT research shows how political histories and government institutional actions are described by representatives of marginalized and privileged groups, such as those identified as Palestinian and Israeli in a peace-building program. Further, research methods such as focus group, interviews, and analysis of public discourse can involve the reproduction of Whiteness and class privilege and thereby reinforce and extend the status and resources of particular groups. Reflexively, then, scholars and practitioners can uncover their own systems of oppression as well as identify what can be changed.

To make a new, less oppressive move in CINT research, interpretation and coding procedures often involve multiple coders in dialogue with one another working with transcriptions from videotapes and

audiotapes. CINT works to build relevant bodies of knowledge about lived experiences and provides data to inform research, add relevance to instruction, and potentially transform oppressive structures, institutions, and relationships.

Mary Jane Collier

See also Contextual Theory of Interethnic Communication; Critical Ethnography; Critical Race Theory; Critical Theory; Cultural Contracts Theory; Culture and Communication; Identity Theories; Whiteness Theory

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CULTURAL INDICATORS

Cultural indicators (CI), in communication theory, refers to several different concepts and entities. Most commonly, it refers to the research program begun by George Gerbner at the Annenberg School for Communication in the 1960s. The purpose of this research program was to establish a method to document and measure

cultural phenomena in a way that would complement existing social and economic indicators. Gerbner believed that culture, in its broadest forms and manifestations, would give important evidence about the direction that a society was taking. Working from this viewpoint, he sought to establish measures of culture that could complement existing economic indicators (such as gross domestic product) or social indicators (such as the crime rate).

Gerbner began his career in communication theory by working on a general model of communication, but his contributions in CI and related areas of inquiry were much more lasting. Gerbner began articulating the need for cultural indicators as early as 1969, though even his earlier research was setting the stage for assessing the importance of cultural products in society. In 1973, Gerbner put forth a formulation for a CI research paradigm, which became so well known that it could eventually be capitalized; we now use *Cultural Indicators* to refer to the long-term research project led by Gerbner, often in collaboration with colleagues Larry Gross, Michael Morgan, and Nancy Signorielli.

Gerbner put forth three prongs for a CI research paradigm: institutional process analysis, message system analysis, and cultivation. Institutional process involved the study of the structures of media industries that controlled the mass production of messages. Such a study would involve detailed examination of various roles in media production, focusing on power roles, types of leverage exerted, and typical functions performed within the media. Such studies would serve to indicate the cultural, social, political, and economic bases and purposes for the production of media messages.

Message system analysis focused on the systematic analysis of media content, specifically with an eye toward determining not only what was being portrayed, but how messages were related to the needs, desires, and interests of those producing the messages. Gerbner was building on his own prior interest in content analysis, but also connecting such study to a more overarching view that messages were not just the random output of a purposeless machine, but a product of a system serving specific social, economic, and political needs and functions.

Cultivation was the attempt to connect messages with their potential impact. Although Gerbner eschewed then-traditional notions of media effects, he felt that it would be possible to see to what extent consumers of media messages had absorbed the lessons and morals embedded within those messages. Thus, cultivation focused mostly on the relationships between consumption of messages and the extent to which consumers held worldviews consistent with those messages. This was something of a departure from the then-common method of examining media effects, which often focused on simplistic stimulus–response models of media effects tested under laboratory conditions. Rather, Gerbner was interested in the extent to which consumers of media messages would absorb, retain, and hold beliefs consistent with those found in media messages. Thus, CI research most often combined content analyses of media messages with survey data on the beliefs of heavier consumers of those media. The extent to which heavier users of those media held beliefs consistent with media messages was seen as the extent to which they had been “cultivated” to hold those beliefs.

While Gerbner’s research program could have been applied to any aspect of the message system, it became almost synonymous with the media effects of television. During the time in which Gerbner began the CI project, television was far and away the dominant medium. The three major networks dominated the distribution of entertainment and news messages, eclipsing other media such as radio, newspapers, and films. Gerbner argued that corporate control of television meant that the goals of political and economic elites would find their way into television’s messages and that heavy viewers of television would inevitably absorb the conceptions and morals found in those stories. While the institutional analysis portion of the research program was not completely abandoned, CI research became most associated with research on the nature of television’s stories and its impacts.

The issue on which CI research came to the forefront was that of televised violence. As early as 1967, Gerbner began collecting content data on television as part of what would become the ongoing CI research program. These data focused on a variety of issues, such as the roles of men and women and occupational roles on television and

portrayals of minorities. Also included were data on violence. Trained coders would examine programs for the number of violent acts, describing in detail not just the act itself, but also who committed it and its victim. Eventually, Gerbner and colleagues developed a *Violence Index*, which has become one of the better known products of the project. Data using this method have been collected essentially continuously since 1967.

The index itself was a composite of the percentage of programs (usually either prime-time programs or children’s programs) with violence, the rate of violent acts per program, the rate of violent acts per hour, the percentage of characters involved in violence, and the percentage of characters involved in killing. The numbers resulting from this analysis were found to range from about 115 to 185, usually averaging about 160. Building from this start, Gerbner and his colleagues went on to produce *Violence Profiles*, which would track the ups and downs of violence in any given year.

In 1976, Gerbner and Larry Gross published *Living With Television*, which tracked violence levels from 1967 to 1975. Across the years sampled, violence did not change much, though it was higher in children’s programming, declining in the then-popular family viewing hour, and increasing during the late evening period. Mostly, since then, CI research has found that violence levels do not vary much. While there may be ups and downs in particular years—due either to change in programming fashion or perhaps during periods when politicians are paying more attention—in general, television has remained fairly violent. This particular measure is one of the continuing and most lasting contributions of CI research.

The measure was and still is controversial. Some argued that the definition of violence used was too liberal. Critics argued that “cartoon” or “slapstick” violence should not really count. Gerbner retorted that “happy violence” could be as pernicious or more so than “sinister” or obvious violence. Later studies of television violence, some commissioned by the industry, have sought to refine or revise the conceptions introduced by Gerbner. Nevertheless, the *Violence Profiles* were the first to set the critical debate on the levels of violence on television on some firm scientific footing.

While the issue of violence took much of the attention, the CI project has also collected much

data on other issues. CI researchers noted the persistent underrepresentation of women and minorities in television's early years. Men often outnumbered women by 2 or 3 to 1. Blacks, gays, and other minorities were also underrepresented. In general, the CI project began by concerning itself with a very wide array of issues and portrayals on television; this has continued to this day, as other researchers have taken up the research tactics first promulgated by Gerbner and his colleagues.

With respect to cultivation, Gerbner and Gross found that heavier viewers of television were more likely to see the world as a violent place and to be less trusting of others. This phenomenon came to be known as the *mean world syndrome*. This was a fairly marked turn from the traditional research focusing on whether viewers imitated television violence. While Gerbner never denied that televised violence could have some role in promoting real social violence, he was more interested in what the viewer would learn about violence. While many murders are committed on television, few people imitate them. But the early cultivation findings showed that people did derive impressions of society from the scenes of violence they saw on television. For Gerbner, ultimately, this was a question dealing with social control. Violence on television was not just "for fun"; it also taught lessons about who could and did commit violence and who would be the victims of it. The idea that such violence might convince people to support stronger legislation on crime was not far removed from Gerbner's original conception that the study of communication should be seen as *basic cultural inquiry*. Thus, violence, while it may have entertained, was also there to help sell products, meeting the commercial needs of the medium. Moreover, it helped to establish perceptions of what was wrong in society, and who could or should control it.

CI research has spawned literally hundreds of studies, both by the original research team and others who have continued, extended, and even criticized the paradigm. Almost always it has focused on television. Even as the television medium has fractured and splintered, researchers are still finding evidence of cultivation on a variety of issues. Researchers are finding, for example, that television interacts with culture in complex ways. Television by no means controls the direction of

society. As minorities and women, for instance, have made strides through civil rights activism, television programs slowly came to recognize these achievements and embody them in their programs. The fact that CI researchers are still collecting data, and have been doing so since the late 1960s, is now allowing scholars to pursue questions about media and social change that have been impossible to address until recently.

In the cultivation arena, research continues to proliferate. Despite heavy criticism early on, studies continue to accumulate that show that there is a fundamental relationship between what people see in the "television world" and what they believe about the "real world." Researchers have even begun to establish a cognitive basis for cultivation, which shows that heavy viewers of television are more likely to draw on memories and cognitions from their television experience when answering questions about their real-world preceptions or experience.

CI can also refer to statistics gathered by countries or international institutions about cultural activities. Data on phenomena such as media penetration rates and production of cultural artifacts such as books, films, and television programs are normally collected for many countries. As such, they often represent economic indicators of cultural activity. Such data were often used to argue that powerful and wealthy Western countries, especially the United States, were dominating poorer countries culturally, dumping cultural products on markets that could not afford to produce their own. This argument for *media imperialism* was a subspecies of the argument for *neocolonialism*: Powerful countries no longer relied on direct military and political control to extract resources from client states. Communication technology permitted powerful states to maintain hegemonic relations through the domination of culture. Such arguments have diminished, especially as many formerly media-dependent countries have developed their own local media systems. However, the production and flow of culture across borders continues to be of interest, especially as globalization has turned the production and reception of messages into an international enterprise with ramifications and effects that are not yet well understood.

Finally, in 1994, William Bennett published *The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*, which he

updated and revised in 1999. He was secretary of education under Ronald Reagan. The book is actually a compendium of a variety of economic, social, and cultural statistics. Bennett treats culture in a macro sense; all phenomena, whether economic, social, or political, tell us something about culture. However, the book has relatively little to offer to communication theorists; most of its data on communication phenomena are available from primary sources. Also, note that the title is somewhat misleading: no single index is offered.

James Shanahan

See also Americanization of Media; Cultivation Theory; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Media Effects Theories; Neocolonialism

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CULTURAL PERFORMANCE THEORY

Cultural performance theory offers an approach for understanding culture within the activity of everyday life. It serves as a means to conceptualize culture by placing culture at the center of hegemonic, or dominating, messages and revealing the hierarchical structure of society through lived experience. Performance is foundational to the study of human communication. *Performance* has

no singular definition, nor is it situated in any singular discipline of study. Performance offers value and insight to theater studies and to social sciences, and it can be viewed through the lens of cultural and critical studies. Performance theory views humans as *Homo narrans*, or creatures who communicate through stories as a way of crafting their social world and making meaning of it.

Performance implies an act of doing, practice, and theatricality, while simultaneously encompassing both the subject of research and the method of doing research. Created from perspectives on human behavior, culture, and ritual, cultural performance theory explores the relationship between the foundations of human experience: community, culture, and performance. It also serves as a challenge to traditional theory by bringing together differing domains of knowledge—the objective, scientific, and observable—with the embodied, practical, and everyday. Cultural performance theory radicalizes, or identifies as the root issue, the binary opposition between theory and practice by providing a model of communicative practice in which culture and performance are inextricably joined and integral to the communal experience of everyday life.

The term *cultural performance* refers to discrete events, or cultural performances that can be observed and understood in any cultural structure. These events include, for example, traditional theater and dance, concerts, recitations, religious festivals, weddings, and funerals, all of which possess certain characteristics: limited time span, a beginning and an end, a set of performers, an audience, a place and occasion, and an organized program of activity. This approach to cultural performances would later influence anthropological and theatrical theory in the 1970s and give rise to the study of folklore from the perspective of culture and performance.

The disciplines involved in cultural performance theory extend broadly. Erving Goffman, a sociologist, explored the social construction of the self in everyday life. Theater scholar Richard Schechner offered the study of social drama and performance as a lens to examine human communication. Anthropologists Victor Turner and Dwight Conquergood employed performance as a means of interpreting cultures and understanding historical, social, and cultural processes—from ritualistic

modes of expression to ethnographic performance. Communication scholars extend culture to include knowledge formation and culture as a force for intercultural exchange, understanding, and equality. The major tenets of cultural performance theory are illuminated in four features specific to culture: process, play, poetics, and power.

Culture as Process

Culture as process assumes that human communication in and through performance is active; all that makes us human is ever-changing, ongoing, and not static. Culture is the sum total of all that we are; a way of life; a blueprint for maintaining traditions; how we celebrate occasions, make memories, ritualize events, and understand the ordinariness of everyday life in our families and communities. Culture also provides the possibility for creating and discovering new ways of crafting and negotiating meaning of the world. Culture is embedded in human communication and is an aspect of all humans. Human behavior is performative when the act is telling a story, creating reality, critiquing society, or remembering history through oral communication, the primacy of the spoken word. A theory of cultural performance illuminates how humans participate in political and cultural aspects of everyday life in creative and expressive ways. For example, oral history performance creates opportunities to understand how culture, identity, and discourse are situated within a historical context of the times. For Africans living in America, for example, various forms of ritual served as a way to articulate the ways in which cultural differences are created between cultures, while illuminating meanings that are contested, as well as the tensions, the complexities, and the commonalities of human existence and meaning making within the context of social interaction.

Performance encompasses a wide range of human activity and is embedded in all human communication while providing a framework for rethinking the body, or self, in ways that critically assess subjectivity and identity, negotiate structures of power and resistance to domination, and challenge predominant ideologies of sexuality, class, gender, race, and ethnicity. Performance is a human act that sees culture as a way of knowing and of discovering new ways of experiencing and making

meaning of the world. Cultural performance, then, becomes an active, engaging, symbiotic exchange in which culture is transacted through performance—a process of throwing off and pulling in cultural forms centered in conflict and dynamic to the total sensual experience of a culture.

Culture as Play

The idea of *culture as play* illuminates the ways in which humans craft meaning of the world in and through the performative experience of play. Play is a specific, special, and significant form of human activity. This aspect of cultural performance aims to analyze the cultural functions of play that provide a deepening communal experience of norms and values subscribed by the culture. The relationship between culture and play is viewed as a representation of culturally constructed and articulated forms of playful activity such as tournaments, exhibitions, pageants, and contests, including playful activities of children and animals. Play is a voluntary act freely selected and capable of suspension at any time. Play is socially associated with “free time,” nonworking, and leisure; it promotes social group cohesion within culture. Scholars of play theory reject notions that play must serve some purpose. Rather, they construct theory around performance that examines what play is and what it means to the player. Other perspectives interested in culture as play note the reflexivity and creativity of the self in play and embrace a communications-based approach to the performance of play.

Culture as Poetics

Culture as poetics elucidates the social and symbolic constructions of culture. It emphasizes the ordinariness of everyday life. Such constructions include rites of passage, social rituals, and those social performances that instantiate and reconstitute values and norms of the culture. Rites of passage are cultural instances of performance that explain the ways in which people move from one point in time to another on their journey of life. Humans engage in life crises and enact ceremonies, such as rites of passage, in order to offer safe travel from one instance in life to another. Other categories of cultural performance include ceremonies

with strangers, pregnancy and childbirth rites, initiation rites, betrothal and marriage rites, and separation or funeral rites.

Research on rites of passage was further advanced by exploring the role of ritual in everyday life. The traditional and largely descriptive approach to the study of humans advanced to the point of viewing culture as performance, which revolutionized and ushered in a new way of studying human poetics, communication, and behavior. In the area of performance studies, concepts such as *liminality* (the threshold of “betweenness”), *communitas* (group intimacy), and *social drama* (cultural conventions) moved beyond description of cultural performance and its constitutive elements to posit the structures and functions of performances as both reflective and reflexive. As *reflective*, cultural performances have sensory codes, which are meaningful messages about a material world picked up at once by all the senses. A vision of the world through the lens of cultural performance reflects the ongoing social processes, claiming what is important, what is valued, and how society functions. The *reflexive* function relates to the ways in which cultural performances can lead to change. Cultural performances provide moments to enact, comment, critique, and evaluate the norms and values of a culture. Performance reflexivity is engaged when a sociocultural group turns, bends, reflects back on itself, on the relations, actions, symbols, meanings, codes, roles, statuses, social structures, ethical and legal rules, and other components that make up the members’ public selves.

Conquergood underscores the importance of performance as a means toward intercultural understanding; privileging the stories, lived experiences, and everyday constructed performances of ordinary people. He views cultural performance theory as a model of intellectual inquiry and a way for understanding the interrelationship among cultures. Guillermo Gomez-Pena reminds us that culture embraces the ordinariness of life by linking us together as humans in expressive, creative, and dialogic ways. Thus, through means of dialogue, we learn the ways of others, their ideas manifested in language, history, art, literature, and politics.

Culture as Power

Culture as power is a perspective that shows how performance can reveal the state of displaced

persons moving between cultures. From this view, cultural performance theory becomes a dynamic means for critiquing culture and a way to articulate the struggle of the lived experience of colonized and oppressed peoples. The theory provides a framework for analyzing what Turner calls the *sensory codes* of a culture. Such codes can range from food performances to political campaigns to cultural expressions of the body and its identity. Culture as power offers performance the inroad to reflect the dynamics of cultural processes and claims about which stories are important, who gets to tell those stories, how we shape the social canvas of cultural transformation, what is valued in a culture, and how we participate in creating a different vision for the future. Culture as power deconstructs the notions of identity by examining how humans negotiate, navigate, and transform systems of domination and control and explores the process by which self and social identity are crafted. Power is performed within the cultural context of *the other* and illuminates the dynamics of domination. By *other* is meant those in society marginalized due to sexuality, race, gender, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity.

The notion of the other reveals dynamics between the marginalized and the privileged. As a symbolic act of resistance, subversive performances are cultural expressions that disrupt and transgress customary boundaries in a nuanced way. For example, performance artists of color in the United States draw on the communal aspects of indigenous ancestral people to reclaim tradition, political struggle, and self-empowerment. These performances place culture at the center, show how the manifestations of being on the margins of society occur at the edge of survival, and transform existence in a way that can facilitate change. For example, Dwight Conquergood’s ethnographic fieldwork with refugees and migrants in Thailand, the Gaza Strip, and inner-city Chicago gangs points to the ways in which cultural performance theory is a lens for seeing how people construct their identities in the face of struggle, liberation, and ultimately change through persuasive means of telling their stories.

Dominant cultural performances have the privilege of living out loud, being explicit, speaking directly without fear of retribution, while subordinate voices perform counterintuitively in ways that

are masked, covered, and embedded ways of existence. Mikhail Bakhtin recognizes the value of culture and living on the margins of society, suggesting that the most intense life of a culture occurs at its boundaries. Cultural performance theory, then, reveals the underbelly of culture as the expression of power and dominance. However, a performance paradigm also privileges the dynamic, precarious, and embodied experience grounded in a historical process and reveals how marginal voices resist domination through performance: for example, Myron Beasley's critique on ritual performances of same-gender-loving men as transgressive and transformative; Bryant Keith Alexander's reading on performing Black masculine identity; or Olga Davis's illumination of the performative act of survival of 20th-century race riots through the lens of cultural memory. Each speaks to the transformational quality of culture performances with the objective of challenging systems of power and control.

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See also Cultural Studies; Culture and Communication; Narrative and Narratology; Performance Ethnography; Performance Theories; Performative Writing; Stories and Storytelling

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CULTURAL STUDIES

Cultural studies can be loosely defined as an academic field of study that crosses disciplinary boundaries such as political economy, literary studies, cultural anthropology, philosophy, American studies, gender studies, film studies, and communication studies. Early cultural studies, which emerged from the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Great Britain, generally utilized *Marxist* and *structuralist* perspectives to investigate the complex relationships between political economy and culture. Particularly, cultural studies explored the mundane and the “popular” as opposed to what might be called high culture.

Contemporarily, cultural studies has fractured into numerous strands of thought that do not share theoretical or methodological unity, although the emphasis on ordinary and popular culture remains central. Communication, which was one of the first disciplines to offer cultural studies legitimacy in the United States, has most often seen a cultural studies influence in assessments of articulations of power and knowledge within popular media texts. Understanding the importance of cultural studies requires an exploration of its creation as an academic field of study, a look at the central issues for nearly all cultural studies scholars, a brief discussion of its relevance in the field of communication, and a summary of persistent criticisms.

Creation of Cultural Studies

The emergence of British cultural studies, in connection with the CCCS, can be traced to post-World War II Great Britain. A number of cultural and social changes faced Great Britain during this time period, including its decline as a world superpower, the development and proliferation of mass media, and the loss of “imperial” identity and homogeneity with an influx of new populations, many of whom were formerly colonized peoples. Moreover, with the expansion of educational opportunities in Great Britain, students who once would have had no access to higher education were now afforded scholarships so they could attend school. These “scholarship” students eventually became intellectuals who did not espouse the same perspectives or values of the middle and upper class who comprised much of the intellectual class. The traditional intellectual class contained many of those who privileged the high arts and condemned the “popular” ones. Thus, a collection of working class intellectuals, including Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams, two of those credited with the creation of cultural studies, began emphasizing the importance of popular culture. Additionally, several individuals involved in the teaching profession, including Stuart Hall, another founder of contemporary cultural studies, began noticing a disconnect between themselves and their knowledge and the cultural communities of their students. A desire to narrow this gap also led to early explorations of popular culture.

Hoggart, Williams, and others, such as E. P. Thompson, set many of the modern foundations

for cultural studies. Stuart Hall’s theories and writings perhaps have left the longest lasting impression, especially on U.S. audiences. Hall took over for Hoggart as director of the CCCS in 1969. Under Hall’s leadership, the CCCS shifted its focus from “everyday” cultures to an emphasis on the mass media and the ideological functions and effects of the media. Hall also centered his approach to cultural studies on dynamics of race and empire, an influence that remains strong today. Hall left the directorship of the CCCS in 1979 to become a professor of sociology at the Open University, and it was also during this time that other centers and university departments began to more seriously aid in constructing the field of cultural studies. The Open University, with the help of Hall, became central in offering innovative tools for cultural studies. Additionally, numerous journals and working groups produced a vibrant body of cultural studies literature.

In the mid- to late 1980s, centers and departments in the United States began to produce a plethora of cultural studies research projects. Several collections of scholarly writing emerged from these collaborations, including Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg’s edited collection, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, and Grossberg, Nelson, and Paul Treichler’s collection, *Cultural Studies*. Additionally, in 1987, the journal *Cultural Studies* launched its inaugural issue in the United States, featuring an internationally acclaimed editorial board. Today, numerous cultural studies journals, anthologies, and academic conferences as well as departments, programs, and centers have been created around the world.

Key Issues in Cultural Studies

In spite of the growth of the field of cultural studies, its increasing legitimacy within the academy, and the substantial number of scholars who identify with it, cultural studies has maintained its refusal of disciplinary and methodological purity. Nevertheless, a number of key issues serve a central function to many cultural studies scholars. Foremost in this arena is the term *culture*, which has numerous definitions, including Raymond Williams’s famous definition of culture as a “way of life.” Others, such as Grossberg, contend that the *culture* of cultural studies is always a contextual and

ambiguous space. No singular definition will do; thus reading *culture* in relation to the following collection of concepts is an imperative of cultural studies.

Language and Signification

The relationship between language and culture is hotly contested, but for most cultural studies scholars, language and processes of signification provide the only access we have to understanding culture. Because meaning is paramount to any definition of culture, the processes of meaning creation must remain in focus. Meaning is constructed, and the site of its construction is language. Cultural studies scholars most typically follow the tradition of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who argued that meaning is arbitrary and that no necessary relationship exists between an object and the word that represents it. Investigating the meaning of *signs*, the arbitrary relationship between the *signifier* (word) and the *signified* (object), provides a way to understand culturally specific modes of meaning making.

Language is one site to interrogate this relationship; signifying processes, more broadly speaking, are another. Images, film, and various nonlinguistic signs can be analyzed as processes of signification that reinforce particular cultural *myths*, or social meanings that attach themselves to particular signs. For example, an advertisement or photograph may contain several signifiers that attach to multiple signifieds, depending on the cultural context. An image of Barack Obama after winning the U.S. presidency in 2008 offers an example. The signifiers in the image might include Obama's smile, his suit and tie, his maleness, and his brown skin. The signifieds, however, could include a shift in the United States' history of racism, a young and attractive president who suggests a change in policy course, or a continuation of the masculine-dominated political system. Any of these meanings are possible, and by understanding these processes of signification, cultural studies scholars can better understand cultural stagnation and change.

Text and Audience

The exploration of signs usually works by featuring the cultural artifact in question as a *text*. In

cultural studies, a text can refer to a written text, but it is more often used to refer to any artifact that requires *reading* or interpretation. *Textual analysis* remains the primary methodological approach in cultural studies. Because of the emphasis on media, cultural studies scholars are interested in both the analysis of media as *polysemic* texts that can be read in multiple ways and in how audiences make use of those texts in culturally and historically specific contexts. Drawing on *post-structuralism* and *postmodern* theories, cultural studies assumes that no text has an intended or singular meaning. Texts interact with audiences in different contexts to create different meanings. For instance, a song written by a U.S. American artist has very different meanings for audiences at a club in New York City, a boutique in Paris, or a shopping mall in Tokyo. Hall's notions of *encoding* and *decoding*, or the interaction between producer and audience to create meaning, have proved especially helpful in understanding these processes.

Ideology and Hegemony

Texts and audiences within any context are not innocent. Because cultural studies research typically produces and adds to *critical theory*, theorizing ideology and hegemony are key enterprises for cultural studies scholars. Generally following Marxist tradition, a key question is, how do mass media uphold and reinforce the ideology of the dominant class? Related to this question is the issue of *discourse*, or the web of cultural meanings that congeal on a particular topic or idea, and how some discourses get naturalized to seem as if they are the only one. Ideology is a difficult concept, and cultural studies scholars early on followed the theorization of Louis Althusser, who offered a deterministic perspective on the discursive and material functioning of ideology. Althusser's theory of ideology promoted a perspective that essentially said ideology produces culture, and people have little agency to challenge it.

Cultural studies scholars mitigate Althusser's deterministic conceptualization of ideology by turning toward Antonio Gramsci's notion of *hegemony*. Rather than depicting ideology as all-encompassing, he argues that dominant ideologies and domination are rarely instituted by force or coercion; rather, people consent to their own

domination. Consent is achieved when the dominant group acknowledges oppositional positions and viewpoints enough so those who are disempowered feel that their interests are taken into consideration. Though little actual change may happen, the accommodations the dominant group offers provide enough recompense to keep the marginalized complacent. Thus hegemony affords the possibility for people to enact social change since they take part in their own domination. Cultural studies scholars often investigate the functioning of ideology and hegemony, as well as the ruptures in dominant discourses that leave possibility for agency and revolution.

Identity and Subjectivity

Questions of agency remain crucial for cultural studies scholars. Ideology not only functions to produce particular manifestations of culture, but beliefs about the self are also ideological. An assumption that is present in both Althusser and Gramsci is that ideologies are internalized and help constitute people's sense of who they are in a given cultural space. Because ideologies are found in the language, texts, and signifying practices, what those things mean comes to reside in people. This means that who people understand themselves to be and how others understand them in terms of factors such as race, class, gender, and sexual orientation are not "natural," but "naturalized." A person's relationship to a particular text is thus a product of a range of cultural processes that are heavily infused with specific ideologies about who they are and how they should be.

Methodological Approaches

Investigating the aforementioned concerns proves to be a complicated methodological task. One of the key strengths and most often identified weaknesses of cultural studies is its refusal to adopt a unified methodological approach. On one hand, this refusal leads cultural studies scholars to conduct research that is driven by their research questions. Cultural studies scholars thus utilize an array of methods including, but not limited to, archival research, textual analyses, interviews and ethnographic methods, surveys, content analysis, psychoanalysis, semiotics, and deconstruction. Scholars who have long

critiqued the methodological limitations of those disciplines that demand adherence to a unified or consistent method have championed this plurality. On the other hand, without a coherent methodological approach, critics have maintained that cultural studies will always lack validity.

One of the most well-known examples of a cultural studies approach to the study of cultural artifacts is *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman*. This book, which provides a step-by-step analysis of the culture of the Walkman, identifies the necessity of unpacking the *articulation* of five related cultural processes: representation, consumption, identity, production, and regulation. These processes create a *circuit of culture* that one must investigate in order to offer a comprehensive look at the function, use, and meanings connected to cultural artifacts. Though many cultural studies projects do not take this particular approach, this case study serves as an exemplar for how to critique the numerous *culture industries* and their products.

Cultural Studies and Communication

Importantly, the discipline of communication studies was among the first to embrace cultural studies in the United States. Specifically, those who study media and cultural processes have been most interested in the cultural studies project. Lawrence Grossberg has been one of the leaders in bringing cultural studies to communication, having written extensively about cultural studies. His work on topics such as youth culture, conservatism, and popular music has laid the groundwork for an entire body of scholarship connecting communication and cultural studies. Similarly, a number of feminist and queer scholars have done important work that conjoins the two areas of study, including Raka Shome, Radhika Parameswaran, Katherine Sender, and others. In her work on Princess Diana, for instance, Shome analyzes British media representations of Diana after her death. Shome demonstrates the connections between White femininity and national identity during the crisis. Sender has also created a body of work analyzing the relationships between gender and sexuality in the media within a broader context of *neoliberalism*. Sender's research highlights representation in relation to matters of consumption,

production, regulation, and identity, connecting it strongly with the cultural studies tradition practiced at the Open University. Others such as Toby Miller have intervened in cultural studies practice by insisting on an internationalization of research and a connection with other dimensions of cultural reality such as law, policy, and money. For media analyses to have relevance to public audiences, scholars must push for more complex analyses that lead to radical critique and social transformation.

Criticisms

No field of study that has changed the academic landscape like cultural studies could be without its critics. Cultural studies has taken hits from an array of scholars for both its political agenda and its methodological fluidity. By now it should be clear that cultural studies has no use for conventional scholarly expectations of objectivity or neutrality. To the contrary, cultural studies scholars are overt in their political commitments, and they often maintain that their critical reflexivity about politics makes their work more honest than that which denies any political investment at all. Not all critics find this premise persuasive. Moreover, some critics hardly consider cultural studies scholarly. Physicist Alan Sokal wrote a parody, which appeared as a hoax, in the cultural studies journal *Social Text*, of what he described as the “nonsense” of cultural studies scholars writing from a postmodern tradition. In explaining his hoax, Sokal argued that the political turn away from analyses of objective realities toward the social construction of reality undermines possibilities for scholarship to affect genuine social change. Sokal’s work created a significant controversy within and outside the field both because he fooled the editors and reviewers of a leading cultural studies journal and because of the scathing nature of his critique.

The Sokal hoax also points to the methodological critiques leveled at cultural studies, from those both within and outside the approach. For example, cultural studies scholars have long squabbled over the relationship between culture and political economy, with some critics arguing that cultural studies has reduced everything to culture, denying the impact of political economy. Additionally, cultural studies scholars have critiqued each other

for using whatever method suits their fancy, relying on a critique of the conditions of knowledge production as a justification for less-than-rigorous methodology. At the same time, because textual analysis remains a primary method, some have suggested that cultural studies research has not advanced beyond the literary criticism generally applied to “high arts.”

Outside cultural studies, the methodological critiques have been no less severe. Some practitioners of journalism maintain that the influence of cultural studies corrupts journalistic practice as it emerges from radical theory rather than empirical investigation. Harold Bloom, a Yale literature professor, argues that cultural studies is destructive to literary studies and an enterprise designed to advance people’s careers rather than engage in serious analysis of literary texts.

Probably one of the biggest critiques of cultural studies remains its profound Eurocentrism. Though the complex phenomenon of globalization has been studied extensively, and *postcolonial theory* has long impacted the thinking of a number of people in cultural studies, the *ethnocentrism* of much of the work has stayed firmly intact. Scholars from traditions in Asia and Latin America in particular have suggested that cultural studies remains a very limited enterprise as long as its perspective emerges from only a small collection of powerful regions (Europe, Australia, and the United States). Latin American cultural studies scholars, for example, demonstrate a long-standing and rich tradition of critical writing and research in Central and South America that predates many of these same conversations in Eurocentric cultural studies. Still, very little of that Latin American tradition is regarded in the Eurocentric one. Despite its obvious shortcomings, cultural studies remains a vibrant and constantly changing project that will no doubt continue to influence generations of communication scholars.

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See also Critical Discourse Analysis; Critical Theory; Feminist Communication Theories; Language and Communication; Marxist Theory; Materiality of Discourse; Postcolonial Feminism; Postcolonial Theory; Postmodern Theory; Poststructuralism; Semiotics and Semiology

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CULTURAL THEORIES OF HEALTH COMMUNICATION

According to an Institute of Medicine report published in 2003, the concept of culture has

increasingly become a core component in the development of health communication theory and application. The field of health communication has recently seen a growing interest in the concept of culture, with the idea that culturally based theories of health communication should guide effective health communication applications. This emphasis on culture in health communication has been brought about by (a) the increasing diversity within the United States against the backdrop of shifting global migration patterns and (b) the increasing postcolonial criticism of traditionally top-down health communication programs. As a result of this emphasis, the hegemonic, or oppressive, assumptions underlying mainstream conceptualizations of health and communication about health have been questioned by health communication scholars.

In order to address the concept of culture in health communication, scholars and practitioners have introduced culturally based constructs into existing health communication theories, developed culturally based theories of health communication, and outlined communication processes and strategies that take culture into account. This work may broadly be categorized into (a) culturally sensitive and (b) culture-centered approaches.

Whereas the *culturally sensitive approach* focuses on developing communication materials that are responsive to the characteristics of the culture as identified by expert scholars and communication practitioners, the *culture-centered approach* relies on developing culture-based processes for listening to cultural members and developing strategies for addressing problems articulated by participants in important health-related discursive spaces, or places and situations in which communication occurs and in which meaning is created. These are situations that traditionally have neglected or erased the voices of various cultural groups. With their diverse roots, the culturally sensitive and culture-centered approaches vary widely in their concepts of culture, in their theorizing of the role of communication in the realm of culture, and in the nature of health communication applications that are developed on the basis of culture.

Culturally Sensitive Health Communication

Culturally sensitive health communication theories aim to develop communication solutions to

preconfigured health problems in local communities. In these theories, culture is treated as a variable that modifies the traditional elements of communication and persuasion. The goal of culturally sensitive health communication theories is to utilize the concept of culture to develop more effective and efficient health communication programs among the members of various cultures.

Researchers and providers segment target audiences of health communication programs according to certain cultural variables and subsequently carry out health communication interventions with the idea that culturally relevant communication materials are more effective than materials that are not relevant. This notion of adapting communication materials to the salient characteristics of the culture lies at the heart of culturally sensitive health communication. Communication is thus conceptualized in terms of health messages. For example, Matthew Kreuter and Stephanie McClure offer a comprehensive review of culturally sensitive health communication programs, incorporating elements of culture into the widely used communication–persuasion model developed by William McGuire, which deals with how to induce resistance to messages that may influence people in unwanted ways. In their review, the authors offer a framework for examining the effectiveness of source characteristics, message characteristics, and channel characteristics in the context of cultural variables.

The Concept of Culture

Culture is seen as a repository of values, beliefs, and practices that are typically categorized in the realm of certain geographically defined spaces or clearly defined communities. These values, beliefs, and practices are conceptualized as variables that guide the development of culturally appropriate health messages. The emphasis here is on noting the cultural differences within populations with respect to the beliefs and values and their communicative and health practices. Cultural variables are incorporated into existing health communication theories with the idea that these variables would enhance the applicability of the theories in the target populations. Examples of such cultural variables include individualism–collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity–femininity.

Culture, therefore, is treated as a static entity that could be measured through instruments and then be utilized for the purpose of guiding health communication applications.

The Role of Communication in Culture

Communication is seen in terms of interventions that are directed toward changing certain undesirable characteristics within the culture that are typically associated with poor health outcomes. In the culturally sensitive approach, communication is treated as messages, and the goal is to create the most effective message for the target culture. Based on an individualistic framework, the culturally sensitive approach is directed toward changing the underlying belief structures associated with a proposed health behavior as might be encountered within the realm of individual lifestyles. Therefore, communication in culturally sensitive health communication is behavior-change persuasion that is built on the idea that sending out the appropriate culturally situated message will be effective in bringing about behavior change in the target culture. The health problem in the community is predetermined, and formative research is conducted in order to identify the salient cultural characteristics that would guide the culturally sensitive health communication intervention. In the culturally sensitive approach, communication is linear and top-down, and the cultural information obtained from the target audience is utilized in order to develop a more effective health communication program promoting a specific behavior.

For culturally sensitive scholars, the health communication intervention is likely to be more effective when it takes into account source, message, and channel characteristics that are appropriate for the predefined characteristics of the culture. Therefore, the emphasis in culturally sensitive health communication is on identifying those cultural variables that would be informative in the selection of sources, message content, and the appropriate channels for targeting the cultural members. Culturally relevant health communication strategies might range from the selection of similar sources, to the selection of surface-level message characteristics such as color and sound that are aligned with cultural beliefs and values, to the development of messages that are aligned with

the underlying social and cultural dimensions of the target community.

The Nature of Health Communication Applications

Health communication applications in the culturally sensitive health communication approach are typically interventions that are directed toward addressing the culturally based barriers that may interfere with the adoption of a recommended behavior. These applications are therefore top-down in their implementation of communication strategies, with communication continuing to flow from the centers of expertise to the cultural communities at the peripheries. Health communication applications in the cultural sensitivity approach ultimately work with cultural variables to produce effective messages that are directed toward bringing about attitudinal and behavioral changes in the population. Relevant cultural variables are selected in order to guide the strategic selection of channel, source, and message characteristics for the health communication intervention promoting the predetermined behavior in the community.

Culture-Centered Health Communication

In response to the criticisms articulated by Deborah Lupton and Collins Airhihenbuwa, the culture-centered approach developed in the work of Mohan Dutta critiques the dominant framework of health communication for its West-centric assumptions and opens up the discursive space to include alternative meanings of health. It does this through joining in solidarity with cultural communities that are otherwise erased from the discursive spaces of knowledge. Here cultural participants themselves are agents in seeking out, making sense of, and transforming unhealthy social structures.

The Concept of Culture

Culture is dynamic and is embodied in the locally situated contexts within which cultural members negotiate their meanings of health. Therefore, central to the concept of culture in this approach is the intersection between communication and continually shifting local contexts. Culture is constituted through communicative practices and constitutes the broader framework

within which communication takes place and meanings are shared. The dynamic nature of culture as conceptualized in the culture-centered approach leaves openings for meanings, values, and rituals to be articulated, co-constructed in participatory spaces, and renegotiated through cultural interpretations. Dynamic culture is constituted through participatory communication, making listening and dialogue two of the central concepts in the culture-centered approach. It is through the communicative act of listening that opportunities are created for the articulation of hitherto unheard problem configurations from the standpoints of cultural members.

The Role of Communication in Culture

Communication in the culture-centered approach lies at the intersection of culture, structure, and agency. *Structure* refers to the forms of organization and resources within the social system that provide and/or limit access to the fundamental necessities of health. Examples of structures include hospitals, health service agencies, shelters, workplaces, forms of transportation, and food resources that are related to experiences and meanings of health. *Agency* refers to the capacity of cultural members to define their own problems, articulate their needs, and participate in communicative processes and practices that seek to address their articulated needs. *Communication* here is seen as a process through which agency is expressed, as meanings are shared locally, nationally, and globally in order to address the structures that facilitate and constrain the possibilities for health. This approach emphasizes the meanings that are co-constructed by cultural members as they participate in a variety of transformative practices that seek to change unhealthy social structures even as they work with these structures. Therefore, communication serves as a process for creating participatory spaces for listening to the voices of local communities and for dialoguing with cultural members in order to address the broader structures that impede the possibilities for health. Furthermore, the culture-centered approach offers a deconstructive lens for continually interrogating the hegemonic assumptions of mainstream health communication programs, as well as an entry point for engaging in dialogue with those communities at

the margins that remain hidden from dominant discursive spaces.

Nature of Health Communication Applications

The health communication applications developed in the culture-centered approach are fundamentally transformative in nature as they seek to address the social structures that create and sustain the unhealthy conditions at the margins of society. Therefore, many of the applications in this approach are directed toward addressing the broader social structures surrounding the health experiences of cultural communities. Examples include projects of community activism, political mobilization, and citizen participation that are typically directed at health policies. In addition, culture-centered health communication applications are based on principles of participation as scholars engage with local communities in order to listen to the voices of community members by creating participatory platforms that voice the stories of local community members.

Conclusion

The cultural sensitivity approach and the culture-centered approach offer largely different understandings of culture, the relationship between communication and culture, and the role of social structures in the realm of health experiences of individuals, groups, and communities. Whereas the cultural sensitivity approach takes an individualistic approach to health problems, with the locus of control being in the realm of individual lifestyles, the culture-centered approach seeks to address the social structures underlying health problems. The cultural sensitivity approach responds to culture by taking cultural variables into account in the development of culturally appropriate health interventions, and the culture-centered approach takes culture as an entry point for listening to voices of local communities in participatory processes that are directed toward addressing unhealthy social structures.

Mohan J. Dutta

See also Cultural Types Theories; Culture and Communication; Health Communication Theories

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CULTURAL TYPES THEORIES

Cultural types have assumed great importance in those areas of the communication field related to culture. The phrase *cultural types* has three primary usages in the social science literature: (1) culture and personality, (2) national character, and (3) high versus low context. This entry discusses these concepts, their origins and relationships, and their relevance to scholarship in communication.

Culture and Personality

The academic concept of cultural types first appeared in the early 19th century, likely based on existing ethnocentric cultural prejudices between peoples of newly emerging nation-states. The cultural types notion suggested a relationship between upbringing in a culture and the character and personality of its people. Traditional religious concepts had been accepted for centuries as explanations of adult behavior, based in part on the idea of karma, the summative moral result of past behavior, or the soul, granted to the child by a higher power before birth. The academic study of culture and personality attempted to understand personality development and its relationship to the social environment in which it developed.

The emerging fields of anthropology and psychology approached the explanation of behavior independently for most of the 19th century until Sigmund Freud's theories of psychoanalysis provided a potential bridge between them. Charles Darwin's theories became a strong influence on each of the social sciences, and the newly conceived differences proposed between human cultures were classified by some anthropologists according to their presumed level of development along an evolutionary scale, from primitive to civilized. Anthropologists searched for common features of personalities in a given culture that might allow the characterization of peoples by their cultures. Generalizations were sought about each culture, such as national character, modal personality types, and particular personality configurations.

Other anthropologists, led by Franz Boas and his students Edward Sapir and Ruth Benedict, developed a position arguing for the equivalence of humans and their social institutions across cultural groups. By the second decade of the 20th century, Sapir was integrating work from his linguistic studies with concepts relating psychology and psychotherapy to cultural anthropology, suggesting that all members of a culture possess related personalities and that these can be subanalyzed into types. This greatly expanded the new culture and personality approach, shifting thinking from the presumed evolution of cultures toward the importance of the individual, arguing that culture assumes the character and form of its members' personality structure.

Much of this thinking was influenced by Boas's and Benedict's work on Native American cultures. Boas defined culture as a collection of individuals with their own institutions and societies, introducing the modern definition of culture, and rejected a hierarchy of cultures. This work patterned culture at an individual level, seeking the source of individual differences in behavior and the meaning attached to the variations, opening a wider discussion between anthropologists and psychologists culminating in the 1920s and 1930s.

During World War II, the Office of Strategic Services employed both Benedict and her student Margaret Mead in a U.S. Army-motivated project to understand the culture of the enemy, particularly the Japanese. Conducted by Benedict and designated as a study of national character, the

research was necessarily based on existing written accounts together with interviews of Japanese Americans, and published after the war. The Office of Strategic Services expanded the national character studies directed by Benedict and Mead as a preemptive attempt to understand different countries and the threats they might pose. Mead's main work was for the Committee for National Morale, to apply anthropology and psychology to the issue of building American morale.

Benedict's work compared the national characters of two similar cultures, England and the United States, finding that while Americans taught young women to exercise control over men's sexual urges in dating, young women in England were brought up not to worry about holding this line since young English males were taught to control themselves. These gender norms for male/female interactions were seen as sufficiently different between the countries that the cultures could easily appear different if analyses of variables other than culture and personality were not undertaken. This also implied that gender characteristics were not shaped by biology or genetics but by culture, implying that gender roles might be modified by changing cultural prescriptions and that culture could change personality.

National Character

When the notion of cultural types first appeared, it formed the basis for the concept of national character, particularly in Europe and East Asia. It was employed as the basis for prejudice and discrimination against minorities or against opposing nations and their populations, or, correspondingly, as the basis for the presumed superiority and right to power of a majority culture. In 19th-century Russia, interpretation of events was closely identified with the concept of the *Russian soul*, a clearly defined notion of national character that is still in use in some modern Russian institutions. Chinese Communist leaders from Mao Tse-tung to Deng Xiaoping employed cultural types notions, particularly with reference to interactions with Russia, and many Russians still respond to the *Russian soul* concept.

In the 1950s and 1960s, national character studies were criticized severely as ethnocentric and reductionistic because they evaluated each culture

on the basis of a small number of characteristics that used Western values, reducing cultural and social complexity to simple descriptions. The similarity of the national character concept to the Nazi use of Aryan superman notions together with its characterizations of inferior populations led to further discrediting. British social anthropologists led by Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown critically examined the entire field of culture and personality studies, referring to them in general as a vague abstraction. He saw the studies as based on Western philosophical and religious assumptions concerning the nature of humanity and suggested that the proposed personality types were not empirically evaluated through a comparison with alternative theories.

While these criticisms were valid, seeking relationships between psychology and culture can produce valuable insights. The culture and personality approach continued as *cognitive* or *psychological anthropology* with a new emphasis on the individual, recognizing that all humans are basically similar and seeking possible cultural and social effects on personality. Understanding this history is important when considering the work of Edward T. Hall, Geert Hofstede, and others in the study of relationships between cultural contexts and communication.

High-Context and Low-Context Communication

Although several different schemes have been used to distinguish among cultures, the ideal types of *high context* and *low context* have been especially important in the communication field. For this reason, this entry features this particular distinction in somewhat greater detail than others. High and low context are ideal types referring to the amount of information directly stated in a communication message versus any additional amount needed to understand it. These concepts were introduced by Edward T. Hall in his 1976 book *Beyond Culture*. In any culture, people require contextual information beyond the words of a message in order to assign meaning. The context needed is higher in some cultures and messages and lower in others.

In the 1930s, Hall was strongly influenced by the work of Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict and lived with Navajo and Hopi on reservations in

Arizona. By the 1950s he was employed by the U.S. State Department to teach intercultural communication to State Department personnel about to be assigned to foreign posts. Hall's students expressed little use for anthropological descriptions of the cultural systems of the Hopi in their attempts to understand the culture they would face in their assigned country. Yet Hall found it difficult to describe the specific culture of entry for each of the students going to a dozen or more different cultures. To address these problems Hall began his initial work on *intercultural communication proper*, generalizations about intercultural communication that hold across cultures. Such generalizations are within Kenneth Pike's *etic* approach, considering multiple cultures from an outside viewpoint to determine their commonalities. The distinction between high- and low-context cultures formed a portion of Hall's work in this regard.

High-Context Communication

In a high-context culture, the significance intended by a message is located largely in the situation; the relationships of the communicators; and their beliefs, values, and cultural norm prescriptions. Thus context is important in interpreting high-context communication since the amount of information carried in the context is high. High-context cultures usually emphasize politeness, nonverbal communication, and indirect phrasings, rather than frankness and directness, in order to avoid hurt feelings. They emphasize the group over the individual and tend to encourage in-groups and group reliance. Messages in many high-context conversations are ambiguous, with multiple possible interpretations that may drift into vagueness, seemingly indefinite in form and imprecise in thought.

Hall's *high context* concept is similar to Ferdinand Tönnies' concept of *Gemeinschaft*. *Gemeinschaft* refers to community or family-type relationships between people with strong personal ties. *Gesellschaft* is similar to Hall's *low context*, emphasizing secondary relationships such as at a job, where the motivation to be together is principally a self-interest in making money, generally with less individual loyalty to the social group. *Gemeinschaft* and *high context* are also related to Basil Bernstein's notion of *restricted codes* that occur where there are

closely shared identifications, expectations, and assumptions in a subculture that raises “we” above “I.” Geert Hofstede’s 1980 study of IBM employees identified four bipolar dimensions that characterize culture. The *individualism–collectivism* distinction Hofstede describes is related to the above conceptions of Tönnies, Bernstein, and Hall.

The defining feature of high-context communication remains one in which the context of the message is a greater determinant of its intended meaning than are the words. Thus “kill the umpire” is understood to express great displeasure with the decisions of the official behind home plate if spoken by a spectator after a questionable call during a baseball game. It is not intended as a literal call for the death of an individual. This message is highly contextual and would be understood in the same way by almost everyone in the co-culture of baseball fans, despite its lack of concern for the feelings of the umpire being berated, and its directness.

Low-Context Communication

In a low-context culture, the meanings intended by a message are located in the interpretations of its words and their arrangement. These are carefully selected in an attempt to express those meanings clearly and explicitly. Thus, there is low dependence on the surrounding context when interpreting low-context communication. Low-context cultures often place a high value on the individual, encouraging self-reliance. The predominant culture of the United States provides an example in which the presumed need is minimal for context surrounding a message in order to understand it.

If a professor states, “The paper is due on Thursday at noon, no exceptions,” the statement means the paper is due on Thursday at noon, no exceptions. Little understanding of the situation or context in which the message exchange occurred, beyond the words of the message itself, is needed in order to assign meaning to the message. Yet even low-context communication requires a degree of consideration of the surrounding context and nonverbals, since the tone of voice of the professor, the situation in which the message occurred, and the past history of the interaction between the

particular participants might create the understanding that this message was intended as a joke or as a facetious response.

The concepts of high- and low-context communication are best seen as end points on a continuum rather than as either/or positions. They should be understood historically, in the context of difficulties with earlier attempts to relate properties of culture to individual behavior.

Thomas M. Steinfatt

See also Culture and Communication; Elaborated and Restricted Codes; Face Negotiation Theory; Intercultural Communication Theories; Linguistic Relativity; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Organizational Culture

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CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

The goal of this entry is to broadly outline selected conceptualizations and approaches linking culture and communication in order to demonstrate the range of theoretical assumptions that guide research. The information is designed to enable the reader to understand a few of the contextual factors that have enabled particular approaches to emerge and to appreciate areas of similarity and difference. Readers are encouraged to remember that even scholars who align with similar perspectives may

have different views of how to approach culture in their work.

Selected Approaches

Frankfurt School and Critical Theory

The Frankfurt School refers to a group of German economists, social theorists, and philosophers at the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, originally established in 1923. Influenced by Marxism and World War I, they were interested in elucidating the links between economic systems and structures within society, concerned with how capitalism produces and reproduces forms of domination, and ultimately driven by the purpose of emancipation and changing the social order. Their work was oriented toward examining conflict and predominant tensions between working classes and dominant classes. They recognized the abilities of the working classes to challenge and change the resulting social order, and therefore their work is credited as originating what is now called critical theory. Well-known members of the Frankfurt School include Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Jürgen Habermas.

As the sociopolitical landscape in Germany became dominated by the Nazi movement in the 1930s, several scholars immigrated to the United States and established the Institute for Social Research at Columbia University. They turned their attention from the role of activism and working-class movements to a focus on objective conditions and advocated for the role of reason and intellect in determining and changing the social order. They also began to address mass communication and media as structures of oppression in capitalistic societies.

The work of these critical theorists includes views of individuals as agents of change and attention to both discovering societal structures and then changing them through public deliberation. Trained primarily as philosophers, some scholars from the Frankfurt School emphasized intellectual and rational orientations to building knowledge about culture and society in contrast to focusing on popular or widely accessible aspects of culture.

In general among Frankfurt School critical theorists, culture is the communicative structure that reflects the social order; culture is revealed in texts

and discourses that are produced by institutions, organizations, and public spokespersons. With regard to ontology (that which is) and praxis (practical action), critical theorists suggest that individuals have the ability and agency to advocate for change, and this often occurs in public deliberation and debate in public spaces.

Intercultural Communication and Foreign Service Institute

Another significant group of scholars doing work on culture and communication in the United States just after World War II included Edward T. Hall, a cultural anthropologist. The Foreign Services Act had just been passed by the U.S. Congress in 1946 to establish a Foreign Service Institute (FSI) in the Department of State. Hall worked at the FSI with linguists and other academics to prepare U.S. diplomats for their overseas sojourns.

Hall's work is noteworthy because he brought attention to face-to-face interaction between members of different cultural groups and also introduced the importance of nonverbal forms of communication. He focused on contextually specific interactions and brought more attention to the role of nonverbal cues such as proxemics (use of space), kinesics (body language), paralanguage (tone of voice and vocal cues), and temporality in establishing the meanings of messages. This was a significant expansion of more traditional anthropological orientations that focused on one specific cultural group at a time, such as ethnographic descriptions of Hopi Indians, or performed cross-cultural comparisons of communication practices within one cultural group, such as U.S. Americans, with those used by another cultural group, such as Japanese.

Hall argued that culture can be identified when groups use patterned, learned, and analyzable codes of communication. With regard to ontology, his work showcases the idea that culture is communicatively constructed and that realities experienced by humans are culturally patterned. He showed the benefits of microanalysis, studying specific interactions and contextual cues as they affect meanings and behavior. In his training of diplomats for foreign service, he discovered that the diplomats wanted practical and concrete recommendations

about what would be effective conduct in the various countries where they were to be posted. They were most concerned with learning what behaviors they should use and what behaviors they should avoid in order to be effective communicators. Thus, Hall brought academic and popular attention to intercultural communication effectiveness starting in the 1950s.

The context of the FSI work is therefore important in understanding the popularity of intercultural communication competence research, training programs, courses, and workshops, as well as popular books that offer “tool kits” and prescriptions for more effective conduct in particular countries. The work of the FSI laid the foundation for laypeople, corporate managers, international trainers, educators, and academics to link communication patterns with national, racial, and ethnic groups who live in particular places.

Cultural Studies Orientations

The label of *cultural studies* originally emerged from an interdisciplinary enterprise at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, England, in 1964. Scholars in the United States who align with a cultural studies orientation are interested in uncovering ideologies that dominate, along with maintaining a commitment to create emancipation and social change. Steeped in the events of previous decades of social and political unrest, some academics began studying how capitalist political systems and the policies and practices of the governments, multinational corporations, courts, and educational institutions positioned U.S. national culture as primary and acted to privilege some groups and marginalize others.

Scholars aligning with this perspective argue that there is not nor should there be one overarching conceptualization of culture; they focus on relationships between discourse, power, and ideologies. Discourse systems refer to what is talked about or expressed, the structure or rules about what can and cannot be said, who may speak, and what is accomplished for whom. Discourses are produced by institutions such as governments, professional groups such as the medical community, or social groups. According to a key figure among cultural studies scholars, Stuart Hall, culture is a site of struggle because these discourse

systems are contested. In other words, some are found more often and are given more value than others, and there is ongoing negotiation about which discourse systems should be more important. For example, there are competing discourse systems related to different diseases and the relative stigma of having HIV/AIDS. Talking about HIV/AIDS as an “African” or “gay” disease or as a virus positions those with the disease into different levels of stigma and status and provides different levels of access to resources for treatment.

Culture, therefore, is defined as a complex and contested communicative system through which ideologies and status are negotiated. Ideologies are fundamental assumptions about reality that are both institutionally and socially patterned and function to position groups with higher and lower status. For example, consider ideologies related to financial aid for college students, such as the following: (a) Financial aid for any group member should be awarded on the basis of individual merit, or (b) financial aid for any group should be awarded on the basis of past histories of discrimination against the group and current levels of underrepresentation in higher status professions. Neither of these ideologies is mutually exclusive and both “compete” for priority in policy discussions among college administrators, faculty, and students.

The negotiation of ideologies, and therefore of culture, takes place in part through discourses that include verbal codes and nonverbal images, and products, as well as policies and procedures or organizations and institutions. Also important for cultural studies scholars is to look at what is accomplished by certain ideologies being reinforced, such as some groups having higher or lower socioeconomic status and social practices that include material conditions of living.

Because these relationships between discourse, ideologies, and power influence public audiences, and because domination and oppression are constructed in patterns of discourse, in normative practice, and in historical context, most cultural studies scholars turn their attention to mediated and public messages as the forms through which power relations become visible. Scholars additionally became interested in intersections of race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality; they began to examine representations and interpretations of particular

groups and how these were positioned in relationship to one another.

There was a move among some of these academics to question dominant paradigms, as well as objective, rational, and scientific determinism. Questions about what scaled measurements actually measure, who is conducting social-scientific research about racial and ethnic groups, and consequences of naming some groups as *minority* and generalizing about ethnic group communication styles were raised. Many cultural studies scholars argued for seeking alternative views, advocated for the value of culturally relative knowledge, and viewed closure and objective certainty as dubious. There were calls to recognize more fully the existence of multiple histories and truths and to acknowledge the role of structures and institutions, hence macro contexts, in producing what is believed, as well as what is considered to be real and valued.

With regard to both axiology (values) and praxis (practical action), cultural studies scholars advocate a reformist orientation and methods that both uncover domination as well as point to social practices that can be changed. What is also unique in this approach to culture and communication is the discussion of group identities and representations as multiple, intersecting, and often contradictory, and the emphasis on the ways in which discourse, ideologies, and power are related.

Ethnography of Communication

While cultural studies scholars were calling for attention to social structures, Dell Hymes, a cultural anthropologist, was arguing for the merits of studying culture and communication in context. Similarly to the work of Edward T. Hall, ethnography of communication builds and expands foundations from the study of culture by anthropologists. In the 1970s, Hymes offered a framework for analyzing naturally occurring speech and conduct in situ, which means in the field or community setting in which it emerges. For ethnographers of communication, culture is a code of speaking and acting, a historically transmitted pattern of symbols, meanings, premises, and rules.

The ontological assumptions held by ethnographers of communication are that individuals learn and communicate through shared patterns of

conduct, and these codes provide ways of identifying who is a group member. Researchers come to know and understand these patterns through extensive observation and/or participant observation often combined with in-depth, open-ended interviews. The observed social practices reveal ontological processes related to what it means to have a particular group identity, what is appropriate and prescribed conduct, the scenes and spaces in which particular activities take place, and ways in which people assign meaning and make sense of their lives. Context is revealed, for example, by categorizing the location in which contact occurs as well as noting discursive references to places and spaces or descriptions of institutions as people talk together. Ethnographers define culture as socially constructed through human conduct.

Postcolonial Approaches

Postcolonial studies emerged in the 1970s as economies were becoming multinational, computer technology was bringing in an information age, and academics were entering into a postmodern era. What is unique about postcolonial studies is the call for identifying historical links, uncovering erasures of historical events, and carefully examining geopolitical relations and inter/national histories in the study of culture and communication. Along with cultural studies scholars, postcolonial studies scholars also examine forms of intersecting nationalities, race, sex, and class positions. A prominent figure in postcolonial studies is Edward Said, who critiqued the ways in which discourses such as those dealing with "Orientalism" colonize and position groups into marginalized or subordinate positions. This movement seeks to understand the effects of macrocontextual factors such as histories and economies, institutional norms such as government and political policies, and international orientations such as imperialism on national and regional cultures.

Cultural Types Theories

Interested in increasing contact among peoples of the world, Geert Hofstede, a social psychologist, conducted research on IBM multinational sites and identified dimensions of cultural variability based on scaled measurements of business

employees in 70 countries. His work on dimensions of cultural variability addressed such dimensions as individualism–collectivism, high–low power distance, masculinity–femininity, and high–low tolerance for uncertainty. These dimensions became widely researched in psychology, sociology, business, and communication and were adopted widely by trainers in corporate and international relations settings.

Hofstede conceptualized culture as a mental program or software of the mind. He operationalized these patterns of mental programs through measuring group members' preferences (social–psychological orientations across four dimensions of cultural variability). These mental programs are learned and shared among group members who share a cultural affiliation such as national citizenship. Because ontologically, group members from a particular nation are socialized with similar mental programs and behavioral norms, they learn to prefer similar behaviors. Scholars approach knowledge generation by assuming not only that these dimensions or types can be measured, but also that they are useful to describe, predict, and explain cultural preferences for conduct. The types have been applied to account for the behavior of over 50 national groups.

William Gudykunst, building on experience in Asia, studied personal relationship development among strangers and acquaintances from different nations. He developed a theory of anxiety and uncertainty management in the 1980s and argued for giving primary attention to intercultural encounters rather than cross-cultural comparisons of cultural communication styles. His own work on culture and communication features theorizing in the form of axioms or verifiable relationships among variables, such as levels of self-esteem and tolerance for anxiety, and use of scaled instruments. These allow for objectivity, quantification and measurement, consistency across different groups since the same instruments are used with diverse samples, statistically verifiable prediction, and generalization to wider populations.

Cultural types theorists, therefore, conceptualize culture as social–psychological patterns that can be measured based on dimensions such as individualism–collectivism. This work has been credited with increasing the rigor and precision of theorizing, extending social–psychological research

about intercultural relating, and demonstrating the value of empirically testing and systematically building particular theories.

International Communication

Given the information age and the globalization of economic systems, scholars interested in mass communication became interested in issues related to information flow, social marketing, and influence of products and strategies across national borders. For international communication scholars, culture was thus conceived in terms of information, the various media forms through which broadcast and print media traveled and their impacts on diverse groups, as well as multinational products that were marketed internationally.

Such scholars also study the role of information and communication in developing countries. Scholars interested in development often approached culture as a set of living conditions that were characterized by poverty or lack of technological innovation as well as attitudes, values, and beliefs that impacted particular ways of life. Communication strategies were developed by U.S. and European scholars to introduce cultural change in such regions as India, Africa, and Latin America.

A leading development scholar was Everett Rogers. His model of diffusion of innovations includes stages of social change ranging from knowledge acquisition, persuasion, reaching a decision, implementation of a new innovation, and confirmation of use. As time progressed, other development scholars turned their attention to community-based participative action approaches that centered on enhancement of social justice, communities defining what they needed and how to introduce change, and the collaborative development of sustainable strategies. In the newer approaches to development, culture is viewed as a set of communicative actions and identities that the community constructs, as well as a set of contextual structures such as government policies and economic systems that both enable and constrain the lives and relationships of community members.

Interpretive Theories of Cultural Identities

During the 1980s in the United States, other scholars became interested in building knowledge

about cultural identities in a more contextually based and experientially relevant manner. Scholars such as Mary Jane Collier, among others, theorized that in various interactional settings, individuals enact multiple cultural identities that overlap and are sometimes contradictory and that there is a diversity of voices within discourses from those aligning with the same national or ethnic group.

Culture, in this orientation, is seen as an enacted, emergent, contextual alignment with a cultural system or cultural group. In this orientation, culture is defined as an emergent group identity that becomes evident in a set of communicative codes, norms for conduct, patterns of premises and interpretations, and outcomes, such as relationship or status positioning. Epistemologically, scholars ask individuals to share narratives about their cultural group identities or to describe recalled conversations that constructed or impacted cultural identities and/or analyzed public discourses.

Some interpretive scholars place attention on individuals' accounts of their experiences of enacting different cultural identities and/or accounts of being ascribed stereotypical cultural identities. Other interpretive scholars look for culture in group and public discourses, examining such factors as membership categorization practices, avowal and ascription of cultural identities, and negotiation of racial contracts.

This interpretive emphasis emerged, in part, as a move away from social-psychological theories that linked national or ethnic background to communication style or psychological preference and a desire to better account for the role of context in cultural identity negotiation. Furthermore there was a recognition that cultural identities emerge in social relationships in which individuals are negotiating diverse status positions, and later, acknowledgment that power relations and structural factors impact cultural identity negotiation.

Some interpretive research was also consistent with the call from cultural studies and feminist scholars to understand multiple and contradictory cultural identities that could emerge in one relationship or in one setting. For example, approaches were developed that emphasized cultures and cultural identities as plural and as both socially constructed in interaction and institutionally produced by educational, political, and legal policies and economic conditions. Scholars began to advocate

for recognizing broader contextual factors as well as the immediate environment of interaction, and knowledge claims included recognition of diverse cultural identity locations such as nationality, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, gender, level of education, and so on.

Emphasizing experiences and accounts of individuals about their group memberships and identity negotiations, which places value on subjectivity, some interpretive scholars also began to call for more self-reflexivity on the part of researchers. In other words they acknowledged that the researchers' respective cultural identities and training influence research orientations and interpretations and should be recognized as a source of cultural bias. More recent work on cultural identities features scholarship based on integrating critically oriented approaches to critiquing contextual factors and structures, building understanding of socially constructed communicative texts and discourses, and summarizing what these communicative moves accomplish in the way of status and levels of privilege.

Summary

These are just a few of the very different orientations to theorizing culture and communication that have emerged as influential in U.S. research. In the programs of research discussed here, there are similarities as well as differences in assumptions about what it means to be members of multiple cultural groups, what representations of cultural groups mean to audiences and consumers, the extent to which context is important and how it is defined, and ideas about how to build knowledge.

Mary Jane Collier

See also Critical Theory; Cultural Contracts Theory; Cultural Identity Theory; Cultural Studies; Cultural Types Theories; Diffusion of Innovations; Ethnography of Communication; Identity Theories; Intercultural Communication Theories; Postcolonial Theory

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CULTURE INDUSTRIES

See Cultural Studies; Postmodern Theory

CYBERNETICS

Massachusetts Institute of Technology mathematician Norbert Wiener defined *cybernetics* as the science of “control and communication,” and to indicate its generality, he added “in the animal and machine.” Wiener derived the term *cybernetics* from the Greek *kybernetes*, the steersman, who observes deviations from the intended course of the boat and communicates with the rudder to counteract them. Wiener recognized the revolutionary potential of cybernetics for the development of technology and advances in the biological and social sciences. Cybernetics continues to offer a unique vocabulary for the study of communication.

The object of cybernetics has ancient roots. Heron of Alexandria (10–70 CE) was the first

chronicler of a peculiar mechanism capable of holding the flame of oil lamps steady. Later, similar mechanisms were found in water clocks. In the 18th century, they reappeared as James Watt’s centrifugal governor of steam engines, which drove the industrial era. Since 1910, engineers called them *servomechanisms*. However, it was Wiener who realized that feedback loops and communication processes formed a unity not heretofore conceptualized.

Cybernetics became established during a series of interdisciplinary meetings held between 1944 and 1953 and known as the Macy Conferences on Cybernetics. They brought together some of the most important postwar intellectuals: Norbert Wiener, Ross Ashby, Gregory Bateson, Heinz von Foerster, Warren McCulloch, Margaret Mead, John von Neumann, Claude Shannon, and Erving Goffman, who presented his early sociological ideas there. Cybernetics quickly expanded to embrace neuronal networks (McCulloch), communication patterns in groups (Alex Bavelas), anthropological concerns (Mead), mind (Ashby, Bateson), management (Stafford Beer), political systems (Karl Deutsch), family systems therapy (Bateson, Jay Haley), and of course computation (von Neumann, Shannon).

Cybernetics was too radical to fit traditional academic distinctions and remains an enormously productive interdisciplinary that gave birth to numerous specializations—mathematical communication theory, control theory, automata theory, neuronal networks, computer science, artificial intelligence, game theory, information systems, family systems theory, constructivism—and continues to challenge various ontologies (philosophies of being). In the late 1970s, cybernetics took a reflexive turn, recognizing that the known reality cannot be separated from the process by which it is explored, giving rise to second-order cybernetics, fundamental to all sciences.

The use of the prefix *cyber-* in popular literature about intelligent artifacts, digital media, and globalization of communication—fueling a sense of liberation from authoritarianism, technological determinism, and geographical, even bodily, limitations—attests to how well the fruits of cybernetics are growing in contemporary culture, albeit somewhat shallowly.

Feedback

Autonomy as operational consequence of *circular forms of organization* unites most cybernetic conceptions. In traditional communication theory, feedback, based on circularity, is the response to intentional communication—interpersonally, listeners' responses indicating comprehension of what one said, and institutionally, statistics of audience reactions to media content. This popular conception of feedback amounts to control of something. In cybernetics, feedback means circular communication, and control is seen as residing *within* a system embodying circularities. For example, when A affects B, B affects C, and C affects A in return. This circularity has several implications:

1. All components involved affect each other but also themselves via the others. It would therefore be difficult to single out one as in control of all others.
2. Circularities bring a system either to converge on an equilibrium at which it no longer changes or to escalate in some of its variables, perhaps beyond its breaking point.

The former is called *deviation reducing, negative, or purposive feedback*, the latter *deviation amplifying, positive, or morphogenetic* (change of form) *feedback*. In conversations, negative feedback might lead to consensus, while positive feedback may escalate into a fight. Positive feedback may be carefully monitored, as in the steady growth of a business enterprise, or create unanticipated forms. An arms race, for example, can lead to war and political or economic reorganization. Therapeutic discourse may destabilize a burdensome situation and spiral into a more desirable practice of living.

3. In the presence of disturbances from its environment, negative feedback may lead a system to adjust. For example, home heating systems, including a thermostat, render the variation in external temperature no longer noticeable from inside the home.

Bateson suggested that virtually all naturally evolved systems, from simple organisms to

ecologies and from conversations to social institutions, sustain themselves in multiple circularities. The preference for linear causal explanations, including for one-way communication, amounts to cutting these circularities open, effectively preventing understanding of the purpose, intelligence, morphogenesis, autonomy, and life of such systems.

Information

Cybernetic conceptions of information emerged largely in explorations of purpose. Bateson observed that circularities—from simple feedback loops and manifestations of mind to social systems—do not respond to stimuli but to *differences*. They are triggered by differences between what is and what should be; they transmit these differences to other parts of the system, which effectively process differences of differences, and so on; and they ultimately replace the very differences that triggered the circular process. He defined *information* as *the differences that make a difference at a later point*. Bateson's differences are related to George Spencer-Brown's *distinctions*, Shannon's *choices*, and Ashby's *variety*. What they share is a reliance on relations among multiple events, not their nature.

Hence, cybernetic explanations of behavior in terms of information fundamentally differ from the causal explanations that physics has to offer. For example, kicking a stone propels the stone in the direction of the physical force applied, but kicking a dog yields a response that is explainable largely from what the dog knows about the kicker—information made that difference. Francisco Varela appropriately called the flow of these differences *in-formation*, and Ashby once characterized cybernetics as the study of systems that are *closed to information*.

The cybernetic conception of information is at variance with the popular notion of information as contained in or a property of messages, that is, without reference to whom, in which context, and relative to which prior messages they inform. Obviously, data generated for an analysis can inform only those researchers who know how they were generated. The Internet can provide information only to those who believe they read the documents they retrieve as intended by those who wrote them. Thus, information resides *within* a system of coordinated interpretations.

Self-Reference

The paradoxical nature of self-referential statements like “do not read this sentence” or the interpersonal injunction “be spontaneous” has been puzzling logicians for centuries. Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell identified self-reference as the chief villain in logic, considered the paradoxes to which self-reference leads an abnormality of language, and proposed the *theory of logical types*, which exorcises self-reference from scientific discourse. Yet, everyday life is full of nonthreatening paradoxes. Zen Buddhists employ them as powerful teaching devices, therapists rely on them for identifying and treating communication pathologies, and many cybernetic concepts would be inaccessible without addressing their circularity.

Based on Spencer-Brown’s *Laws of Form*, Louis Kauffman and Varela dissolved the viciousness of paradoxes of self-reference by describing the dynamics they set in motion. So, the paradox of Epimenides, the Cretan, who claimed “all Cretans are liars,” can be dissolved into this time series: From assuming he is telling the truth follows he is lying follows he is telling the truth follows he is lying, . . . ad infinitum. This dynamics renders self-reference no longer threatening.

Recursive Computation

Arguably the most important contribution of cybernetics is the development of modern computers. The problem of self-reference was solved by adding time to propositional logic, meant to state facts. This move lies at the root of the development of recursive algorithms. *Algorithms* are step-by-step instructions for actions, like recipes and software that make general computers perform specific functions. *Recursive functions* are circular by repeatedly operating on themselves, ideally converging to the solution of a problem. Recursive computation transformed mechanical calculators into modern computers.

Much of computer-aided communication amounts to the reproduction of messages. Expanding on the choices thereby transmitted, Ashby developed another concept of communication, *intelligence amplification*. Technologies of intelligence amplification utilize algorithms that iteratively

expand the capacity of humans for selecting among alternatives. Internet browsers, for example, go through millions of documents within seconds and select among them according to users’ search criteria. In the social domain, one can observe intelligence amplification in many situations, for example, when CEOs distribute decisions among the members of a corporation, communicating to them only how to coordinate their actions in communication.

The cybernetics of recursive computation and intelligence amplification has ushered in the computer revolution that drastically transformed contemporary society, globalized business and politics, democratized communication structures, and undermined centrally controlled dictatorships. Cyberspace is a computational space, widely accessible due to the development of algorithms for user-friendly computer interfaces.

Stating scientific theories algorithmically rather than in natural language enables computer simulations of their entailments well beyond human imagination. Algorithmic theories of social phenomena, especially of the economy, communication networks, ecologies of messages, artificial life, and systems with very many variables have become indispensable tools, vastly expanding scientific knowledge.

Self-Organization

Self-organizing systems develop indigenous patterns of communication and identities and protect them in the presence of interferences from their environment. They are *organizationally closed* by being immune to instructions from their outside. Interactions within social organizations, families, for example, can hardly be explained from where they reside. Families develop, reproduce, and maintain indigenous forms, a culture, secrets, and unique patterns of communication. Their manner of self-organization cannot be understood from their outside by detached observers.

Ashby’s *law of self-organization* identifies three properties: (1) *Circular networks of recurrent communication* stabilize such systems while (2) internal variation ensures their *ability to move from one stability to another*, in the course of which (3) communication becomes *increasingly orderly* and *resistant to outside intervention*. Humberto Maturana and Varela add to these

(4) the ability to *maintain their boundary*, their identity. von Foerster demonstrated that self-organizing systems decrease their entropy (increase order) inside, and/or increase the entropy (decrease order) in their environment. Governments, for example, govern largely by keeping those governed relatively unorganized—a collectivity of citizens—and prevent competing organizational forms from emerging. von Foerster also showed that random disturbances can speed up self-organization and called this phenomenon the *order from noise principle*. Self-organization presents profound methodological challenges to the study of social phenomena.

Autopoiesis

Maturana and Varela identify *autopoiesis*—literally self-production—as the process that distinguishes living from nonliving systems. Autopoietic systems consist of *recursive networks of interactions among components that produce all and only the components necessary for such networks to continue producing them within a boundary*. (Notice the necessary self-reference in the definition of this operationally closed system.) Accordingly, biological organisms are autopoietic as they continually regenerate their physical infrastructure in their location and in the presence of internal decay and external disturbances.

Autopoietic systems “serve” no function. Reproduction, purposiveness, adaptation, cognition, even survival are epiphenomena of the autopoietic organization of living systems. Allopoietic systems, by contrast, produce something other than what constitutes them. Designed for a purpose, artifacts like automobiles and factories produce something needed elsewhere.

Niklas Luhmann adopted the word *autopoiesis* in his sociological systems theory. He observed that social systems do not merely organize themselves but metaphorically produce their own sociology. For Luhmann social systems are constituted in the communications that circulate within them. Their environment exists only in communications about it, and human beings, while necessary to understand and rearticulate communications, are excluded from his theory for being a mere medium for communications to create further communications.

Cognitive Autonomy

Cybernetics made numerous contributions by applying the principles of cybernetics to itself. One is Ernst von Glasersfeld’s *radical constructivism* and Maturana and Varela’s *biology of cognition*. Their epistemologies (ways of knowing) acknowledge that we humans cannot step out of our nervous system and determine the external causes of our perceptions. Early work on neural networks suggested that cognition recursively operates on its own processes.

From this fundamental cognitive autonomy follows that the realities we see are constructed within our nervous system, including our interactions with an environment. Our realities do not represent what exists outside cognition but merely conserve our autopoiesis. Reality constructions are retained when acting on them succeeds to expected experiences. They may be revised or expanded when unexpected experiences are taken as opportunities for learning. But they are extinguished whenever acting on them has fatal consequences to those who hold them. Thus, in ordinary life as well as in science, cognitive constructions of reality are variable and subject to an evolutionary mechanism.

Cognitive autonomy puts the cherished role of scientific observers in question. von Foerster noted that objectivity is the illusion of being able to describe the world without an observer, and encouraged cyberneticians, similar to what Mead had suggested, to include themselves in the domain of their observations. He called the practice of describing and observing one’s observations *second-order cybernetics*. Although describing one’s observing rather than its presumed causes introduces a circular epistemology, its attendant reliance on descriptions, on a representational conception of language, and on cognition does not quite escape the enlightenment project of describing the world as is, even when acknowledging observers in their descriptions.

Language and Discourse

Language is a *social*, not a cognitive, artifact. Conventionally, language is an abstraction from what happens in naturally occurring conversations. For Maturana, language is *consensual coordination*

of actions, which is the root of conversation and related to co-orientation theory.

Cybernetics considers conversations as self-organizing, requiring no outside support. Conversations cannot be analyzed in terms of the logic of propositions, syntax, and semantics, but as language games (Ludwig Wittgenstein) consisting of speech acts (John Austin, John Searle) or conversational moves that coordinate the cognition participants bring to them. Conversations *perform or enact the very social realities that participants conversationally co-construct*. Being self-organizing, the responsibility of directing conversations is shared among their participants.

Systematically constrained conversations are called discourses. A *discourse* (a) *creates its own reality*; (b) *its objects are continuously elaborated within its discourse community*, which (c) *institutionalizes its recurrent practices*, (d) *maintains a boundary* around what does and does not belong, and (e) *justifies the reality it constructs* to other discourse communities on which it depends for material support. Scientific discourse, for example, constructs realities so as to be amenable to investigation by scientific methods and in conformity with what a discourse community considers its subject matter. It is instituted in universities, methodologies, equipment, and publications. It draws a boundary around everything to which relevant truth criteria apply and justifies its theories and models in terms of their usefulness outside science. The coexistence of many discourses puts the idea of a universe in doubt.

Because discourses need to justify themselves, they are not entirely autonomous, however. *Scientific theories*, for example, are discursive products of specialized conversations, may occur in publications outside their discourse, and can affect the truth of what they claim to describe. Especially social theories, when entering the conversations of those theorized therein, may become self-fulfilling, self-defeating, or remain irrelevant. The making or breaking of candidates for political offices by the media exemplifies how social realities are languaged into being.

An example from public opinion research is Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann's spiral of silence, a process in which citizens feel discouraged to speak in public when seemingly facing overwhelming opposition. Noticing the relative absence of their

own opinions in the mass media discourages citizens from asserting their opinions, which thus converges on silence as the attractor of this negative feedback.

Unless irrelevant, the communication of theories can modify realities despite their proponents' descriptive intentions. Since all communication theories must also be communicated, communication theorists should recognize the epistemological implications of this fundamental self-reference and account for the dynamics their theories can set in motion whenever their theories enter the conversations among interested parties.

Participatory Epistemology

Ashby initiated another reflexive turn. He demonstrated that understanding systems solely from observational data is limited to trivial machines. Nontrivial systems, such as contemporary computers, humans, and social forms, embody various kinds of autonomy. They may become known in two ways—by building them or by interacting with them. Computers may be understood either way. Humans, however, cannot be designed or manufactured. They evolve with their environment, and understanding them results from interacting with them. Ashby suggested that experimenters and their objects, analysts and their analyzed, and interviewers and their interviewees form a system of which experimenters/analysts/interviewers can know only the consequences of their own actions, their manner of participating, neither the whole system nor their objects of interest.

Similarly, networks of conversation, whether constitutive of one's family, corporation, discourse community, or government, defy not only outside instruction but also comprehension by external observers. One has to join them to experience their progression—not as self-reflecting observers, but as active participants. Traditional conversation analysis, for example, limits itself to analyzing transcripts of verbal interactions, which omit what is essential to conversations: the experience of codirecting their flow.

Noting the many sociopolitical transformations that cybernetic discourse is creating in society, Mead went beyond Ashby and invited cyberneticians to expand cybernetics to include the consequences of their discourse and consider themselves as responsible

participants or change agents in/of their own society. This reflexive turn encourages an epistemology of participation in systems under continuous reconstruction in which human constituents hold each other accountable for what they say and do.

Cybernetic epistemology explicitly abandons the unattainable and unethical God's-eye view of the universe, common to objectivist scientists, for the admission that one can understand always only one's contributions to a continuously evolving reality. By locating abstractions and metaperspectives in the language used during conversations, it is a bottom-up epistemology. It invokes a communication ethic that grants the human constituents of a system of interest a measure of equality, agency (accountability), cognitive autonomy (individually owned and potentially unlike conceptions), and the ability to communicate with one another (coordinating participants' understandings). It acknowledges that promoting theories, proposing actions, using artifacts commensurate with one's understanding of one's system, and communicating with other constituents about that understanding change the very system as understood. The difference between unreflective participation in one's world and scientifically guided participation lies not in the latter having privileged access to reality but in accepting accountability to those who may have to live in the realities being advanced. It means constructing realities that preserve the circularity of human communication.

Klaus Krippendorff

See also Constitutive View of Communication; Constructivism; Co-Orientation Theory; Epistemology; Information Theory; Language and Communication;

Network Society; Organizational Co-Orientation Theory; Palo Alto Group; Philosophy of Communication; Relational Communication Theory; Social Construction of Reality; Spiral of Silence; System Theory

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D

DAOISM

See Taoist Communication Theory

DECEPTION DETECTION

Deception refers to the successful or unsuccessful deliberate attempt, without forewarning, to create in another a belief that the communicator considers to be false. This definition emphasizes that deception is an intentional, strategic act and does not necessarily require the use of words. Although many consider lying to include only outright fabrications, deception can take many forms, including concealment, omissions, exaggerations, half-truths, misdirection, and even playings such as tricking or bluffing. Telling literal truths that are designed to mislead should be considered deception, as well. This entry explores how humans detect deception and the theories that have been posited to explain deception detection. The considerable research on deception and deception detection, along with practical concerns about deception in everyday life, demonstrates the significance of this topic to communication theory.

Studies About Deception Detection

The study of deception detection has a long history. Questions about the morality of deception and how to detect it have been explored by

Aristotle, St. Augustine, Aquinas, Kant, Machiavelli, Darwin, and Freud, to name just a few. Despite recent developments in technology used to detect deception, such as polygraphs, MRIs, and voice stress analyzers, most deception detection is done by humans. In the U.S. legal system, as well as in others worldwide, jurors are the sole determinant of honesty and believability of witnesses and the accused. They rely on the person's demeanor and manner of testifying to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Unfortunately, humans lack a high degree of accuracy in their deception detection abilities, rarely perform better than chance when attempting to distinguish lies from truth in research studies, and do even worse when the lie is against the self-interest of the deceiver (such as false confessions). Even deception experts such as law enforcement personnel, judges, psychiatrists, job interviewers, and auditors do not appear to detect deception with greater accuracy than nonexperts.

In order to improve accuracy, many studies have attempted to identify specific cues that differentiate liars from truth-tellers. Specific nonverbal cues, such as a lack of eye contact or foot tapping, are often thought to be associated with deception; however, few cues are reliable indicators of deception, and many behaviors show no discernible links, or only weak links, to deceit. In reality, people often do not discover lies for days, weeks, or even months afterward, and deception is typically revealed by a third party, making nonverbal cues leaked during the deception quite irrelevant. Verbal cues are only slightly more reliable, and research has suggested that deceivers are less

forthcoming than those who tell the truth; furthermore, their lies are less plausible, less likely to be structured in a logical, sensible way, and more likely to be internally discrepant or to convey ambivalence than truthful statements. However, given the inconsistency of these findings in the research literature, the best method of deception detection is most likely to be verification of the information presented in a message.

Theories About Deception Detection

Through a series of lectures delivered at Harvard in 1967, Paul Grice presented a theory of language use that has come to be known as his theory of *conversational implicature*. Among others, one of his principles is the *quality maxim*—that speakers should try to make their contributions true, refraining from saying anything they know to be false or for which they have inadequate grounds for belief. This maxim, like Grice's other maxims, is an assumption that communicators must make in order to perceive others as cooperative in a conversation. Even deliberate and obvious violations of this maxim, such as irony, require communicators to use mechanisms called *implicatures* to indicate that the speaker is being truthful and therefore cooperative.

Steven McCornack created *information manipulation theory* in an attempt to understand the covert violation of Grice's maxims through the use of deceptive messages. He argues that speakers can produce messages that violate the norms of cooperative conversational exchanges either by violating Grice's rules or by adhering to Grice's rules but presenting the messages in such a way that the listener is misled (e.g., through sarcasm). Recently Kelly Aune and his colleagues presented the *theory of communicative responsibility*, in which they attempt to take Grice's principles a step further by examining the process by which communicators determine what their communicative responsibilities (including truthfulness) are and how they should satisfy those responsibilities.

David Buller and Judee Burgoon have also recently posed a theory of *interpersonal deception*, which attempts to explain how senders produce credible messages, how receivers process and judge such messages, and how the coordination between sender and receiver influences the process

of deception detection. Consistent with Burgoon's previous *expectancy violations theory*, the theory of interpersonal deception suggests that understanding both the structural and the functional features of communication is crucial to understanding the interactive nature of deception.

Norah E. Dunbar

See also Conversation Analysis; Expectancy Violations Theory; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Interpersonal Deception Theory

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DECONSTRUCTION

Deconstruction is famously associated with the Algerian-born French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930–2004). One of the most influential thinkers of the 20th century, Derrida is also known as one of the leading voices of what is loosely called *post-structuralism*. Over a distinguished career that began in the 1960s, he produced a large body of work that has irrevocably unmoored many of the most securely anchored ideas in Western

philosophical thinking. Through careful and ingenious readings of key texts in philosophy and literature, both ancient and modern, Derrida managed to uncover in them a set of hidden contradictions that work against the best intentions of their authors. According to Derrida's critical readings, philosophical arguments are no different from those in literature and, like them, are subject to all sorts of alternative interpretations, equivocations, paradoxes, even unacknowledged mistakes, in other words, various "accidents" caused by what he called the loose play of language traditionally considered to be the standard, even desirable, form of literary writing.

After the publication of *Writing and Difference*, *Of Grammatology*, and *Speech and Phenomenon* in 1967, Derrida was quickly recognized as a uniquely iconoclastic critic of Western philosophy, and his ideas, now called *deconstructionism*, began to circulate widely, crossing disciplinary boundaries and wielding ever-increasing influence in the humanities, social sciences, and beyond.

The result was a sizable quake under philosophers' feet, a violent shaking that weakened philosophy's boasting claim to being the first science of all sciences. Derrida showed that philosophy is not immune from the figurative exuberance of language and is essentially *textual*—a kind of writing no more and no less serious than nonphilosophical ones—and, as a result, the long-accepted tenet that philosophy is the most logical and judicious path to truth, goodness, and beauty is shown to be one of disillusionment and misconception.

It is important to note that Derrida hardly used the word *deconstruction* in his early writings and expressed his disfavor toward the term because of its negative semantic associations. However, after this term gained wide circulation and began to take root in contemporary critical vocabulary, he came to accept its currency and often commented on the word's negative associations in an effort to clarify what deconstruction means and how it ought to be understood. One of the points he made repeatedly is that deconstruction does not affirm or assert a thesis of its own per se. Instead, Derrida prefers to define the term by saying what it is not, instead of stating straightforwardly what it is. Here he intends to impart two things.

First, in principle and in practice deconstruction does not and cannot affirm any position in relation

to its object of analysis. Instead of attempting to ground philosophy on a single unifying principle, as philosophers always do, deconstruction, by design, proposes no unifying principle on which to build anything new. Having no position to call its own, deconstruction is a kind of reading, which consists of reading with a fidelity that finally betrays the contradictions hidden within the text—fundamental contradictions that cause what is built on them to falter and collapse. This studied way of reading can properly be called deconstructive rather than destructive; in fact, this way of reading is as far from being destructive as the text is from achieving its claims in that it *follows* the text in good faith, teasing out through this faithful following the warring forces that are within the text. Deconstructive reading, therefore, is parasitic; it is always dependent on the text to which it is applied for meaning.

Second, following from the idea that it affirms no position of its own, deconstruction must also be understood to be a practice that eliminates itself. Deconstructive reading is possible only by virtue of the text it follows and cannot exist apart from the text to which it is applied. By allowing the text to speak for itself, deconstruction necessarily falls prey to its own operation. Being parasitic, deconstruction proceeds only to deconstruct itself. It cannot make truth claims because it would have to cause its own truth claims to disappear.

Although deconstruction is without a thesis of its own, it is not voiceless or without basis. As a parasitic practice, it cannot survive without a medium through which to operate. It would not be able to unfold unless there is a *co-text*, or discourse with which it is compared or understood, or *con-text*, a larger set of discourses that provide a basis for deconstruction. These co- or con-texts provide a frame in and against which deconstruction enacts the unweaving of the host text. This medium is language and what language makes possible; it is writing, including what writing means to say. Deconstruction takes place in writing: It reads the host text, rereads what is written, and rewrites what the host text claims to construct. Writing matters for deconstruction because it is where the problem of philosophy begins and ends, and it is also where deconstruction begins and continues to begin without end. This attention to writing, to how language works, explains Derrida's obsession with

texts; it also explains the notoriety of the phrase, for which deconstruction is popularly, albeit regretably to its proponents, known: “*il n’y a pas d’hors texte*” (there is nothing outside the text).

This careful attention to text helps us understand how deconstruction operates, how it positions itself to begin to cut into a text in the way it does, and how this cut disrupts what the philosopher intends to say. To illustrate this, let’s imagine the following situation: After a hard day in the office, John and Etsuko decide to go for a quick meal before heading home. Driving along a strip in town where fast food chains are located, they agree to stop for a burger. Thinking about the options, John turns to Etsuko and asks, “McDonald’s or Burger King?” Perhaps out of politeness, Etsuko responds by saying, “Which one do you like?” Out of politeness, too, John quickly replies, “Why don’t you pick? They are the same to me.” Instead of making an apparently simple choice, however, Etsuko murmurs to herself, “Oh, no! They are not the same,” and starts to explain to John the different ingredients used by McDonald’s and Burger King and the different ways they prepare their meals. Little amused by Etsuko’s long-winded report and desperate to find a parking place, John bursts out, “Just pick one! What difference does it make?” On hearing this, Etsuko proceeds to discuss in great detail the differences in tastes and nutrition values between a Whopper and a burger sold under the Golden Arches.

It is not difficult for us to imagine the frustration John experiences as he listens to Etsuko’s lecture on hamburgers while searching for parking, and it is not difficult for us to appreciate the comic effect brought about by Etsuko’s sublime response to John’s apparently straightforward question. Etsuko is faultless in her literal interpretation: She understands the question, “What difference does it make?” and answers it accordingly. Pragmatically, however, she fails to decode John’s message according to its context, thus misunderstanding what John means. It is this misunderstanding on Etsuko’s part that makes us smile, and, more fundamentally, it is language—language as it is used by us to do things—that makes both Etsuko’s misunderstanding and our smile possible.

This example suggests that language and meaning are thorny affairs that often unfold beyond speakers’ control, catching them by surprise and

generating effects they hardly expect. Contextual variations notwithstanding, John’s utterance is not ambiguous or equivocal: It means what it says, and John intends it to mean what it is supposed to mean. From Etsuko’s perspective, the meaning of John’s utterance is equally clear: Phrased as a question, John’s speech is seen by Etsuko as a request to spell out the differences between the hamburgers sold at two different restaurants. However, we, as outside observers, may analyze the complication of meaning exhibited by this example. The fact remains that a seemingly simple sentence, “What difference does it make?” is capable of yielding meanings that are contradictory, meanings that end up neutralizing or negating one another. On one hand, it means, as John intends it, expressly that between two choices, McDonald’s or Burger King, there is no difference; on the other hand, since it comes forward as a question, the sentence can be properly interpreted as a direct request for the interlocutor, Etsuko, to specify the differences between two choices. To the extent the sentence requests a specification of the differences between two choices, it implies that there are indeed differences between them. The two readings are equally valid, and they can be given, or rather give themselves, only to negate each other. It is contradiction like this—a contradiction inherent in language when and especially when things seem to go on as usual—that causes a text to undo itself, to unsay what is said, and hence to make the meaning of the said finally *undecidable*.

Philosophical and literary texts are undoubtedly more complex and complicated than is an off-handed remark addressed to a fellow hamburger lover. So if a verbal riposte such as John’s and Etsuko’s can have contradictory meanings, then a text—philosophical, literary, or otherwise—will also speak inevitably and unknowingly against itself and fall victim to what cannot be controlled. To write, as Plato recognized, is to fight against the possible tailspins of what one intends to say, yet in writing, in making language say what one wants it to say, the writing itself also brings down what one thinks one is saying. Deconstruction takes place as long as writing takes place, as long as one writes.

Critics of deconstructive writings, particularly those by Derrida, often complain that such writings are difficult to understand and even incomprehensible. Where does this sense of frustration come

from? Is it not the case that reading and writing have never been and never will be easy? It is out of the difficulty of reading and writing—a difficulty of that which we call language—that deconstruction comes to pass. It is this difficulty of language that deconstruction boldly confronts. It is also to this difficulty that deconstruction, nonthetic notwithstanding, ceaselessly turns and returns.

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See also Critical Theory; Postmodern Theory; Poststructuralism

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DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNICATION

The central thrust of human communication concerns mutually understood symbolic exchange. This entry considers the purpose and form of definitions, and the function of message, source, receiver, and channel considerations in defining the term *communication*. It discusses the consequences of different definitions of communication for the meaningful use of the term.

Characteristics of Definitions

Broad Versus Narrow

The term *communication* is commonly used in both broad and narrow senses, from simple human contact to technical uses as in information theory. Defining *communication* broadly, perhaps as the transfer of information, provides the advantage of including most or all the possible instances that the term *communication* might ever be used to reference.

This large number of possibilities will also include many actual instances that the user likely neither intended nor had in mind. Overly broad definitions are not “wrong,” but in many cases their breadth precludes their utility in delineating the area under study. Related problems are encountered when definitions become too narrow, thereby excluding portions of what is actually under study. To be useful, definitions in any scholarly area need to describe what is actually studied and to represent accurately the manner in which the term is used in practice in the discipline.

Inherent Meaning Versus Human Creations

One form of definition states “Communication is...” and lists its defining characteristics. This form assumes that words have fixed or relatively fixed meanings and that the function of definitions is one of discovery of the *correct meaning* of a term. The concept of fixed definitions implies that there are correct definitions and meanings that are inherent in objects—that all tables possess a form of “tableness,” for example—where tableness is conceived to be a known, preexisting, and relatively permanent property of nature. It also presumes that the definitional process involves seeking out this inherent preexisting meaning and then phrasing this meaning accurately in *the* definition. Alternately, definitions can be regarded as human creations that are changeable over time, context, sociocultural language group, and purpose. The definitional process in the second approach is seen as a search for utility of usage wherein definitions can be discarded or changed according to that utility. This second approach suggests “Let us use the term *communication* to mean...” rather than “Communication is...” The human creation approach involves evaluating definitions according to their ability to further the purposes of the persons involved in the communication transactions in question and is often more useful in studying communication.

Clear Boundary Versus Central Thrust

Definitions can also be used in an attempt to place all events qualifying as communication in one box and all events not so qualifying in another. The goal of such *clear boundary* definitions is to create certainty as to what is and what is not included in

the defined term. An alternative goal of definitions is represented by the *central thrust* approach, wherein the major properties of the defined concept are stated and concern for boundary conditions is left for those instances that require such clear delineation when employing the definition in practice.

Characteristics Affecting Definitions

The Message: Signs and Symbols

Charles Peirce uses the term *sign* as an overarching category in his system of semiotics, with *indexical*, *iconic*, and *symbolic* signs as principal subdivisions. Each of these subdivisions is intended to overlap with other subdivisions in Peirce's system and is purposely ambiguously defined. For example, a defining characteristic of *symbols* in Peirce's system is the need for symbols to be learned. Yet both his *indexical* and *iconic* signs also require learning, as none are innate. For the purpose of defining communication, a more useful system may be provided by regarding *signals* as the overarching category, where signals are all stimuli normally detectable by humans through any of their five senses. Two nonoverlapping and clearly defined subdivisions of signals then become *signs* and *symbols*. *Signs* in this method are detectable stimuli characterized by a direct, fixed, physical connection to their referent, while *symbols* have only an arbitrarily defined connection to their referent. Thus symbols require some form of prior agreement between the communicating parties specifying the relationship between symbol and referent. Signs require learning, but not prior agreement, since they have a physical connection to their referent. *Icons* in this system are simply symbols that attempt to employ some form of resemblance to some property of their referent in the construction of the representation used to denote them. Any such resemblance must be specified through prior agreement in creating the intended symbolic usage, and that usage can be changed and manipulated in the same way as with all other symbols. Thus icons do not require a special category. They are symbols. And signs and symbols are each unique categories that taken together cover the domain of perceived signals.

Language is one way of providing prior agreement. A language provides one or more definitions of detectable sound, light, odor, taste, and/or touch patterns that will be used as symbols to represent ordered symbolic events within a message. While signs, as defined, can represent only physical events, often only in the here and now, symbols can be used to represent any form of event: physical, phenomenological, the dreamed of and hoped for, unreal ideas and conceptions, the here and now, or the not-here and the not-now. Symbols also allow for great latitude in lying, where the ability to lie may itself be treated as a defining characteristic of human communication. Some animals and plants use signs as determined by their DNA in order to disguise, deceive, and mislead. But a direct conscious deliberate lie so intended by an individual requires some involvement with symbols.

Source and Receiver Considerations

Plants, Animals, and Machines

Broad divisions of source and receiver include humans, animals, plants, and machines. Machines communicate through simple information transfer, as in radio transmission and computer functions. Machine communication differs from the simple physical contact of objects. Information about course and position relative to an approaching vessel obtained by a ship's radar and sent to an autopilot is clearly of a different order from contact between the hulls of the two vessels. Physical contact may produce knowledge if it is detected by a communicative system, but the phenomenological information thereby produced is of a different nature from the physical contact that produced it. This distinction recognizes the difference between the physical and phenomenological planes on which humans exist. Communication ultimately concerns the phenomenological plane, involving knowledge, beliefs, and feelings and the relationship of information in this plane to the physical.

Human communication differs from the signaling behavior of plants and animals by transferring information in a way that fundamentally defines human communication: *Human communication occurs through the use of at least some mutually understood symbols* and may include other forms

of information transfer as well. While human symbols are completely arbitrary, requiring prior agreement among the parties for communication to occur, no such agreement is required by animals and plants. Animal and plant message systems are signlike, essentially determined by DNA. Plants and animals employing these message forms cannot alter them or their meanings at will. Humans can and do alter forms and meanings and can carry their arbitrarily defined symbols with them rather than lugging along the objects or bringing forth the concepts they represent. This apparently minor distinction—the ability to change the meaning of symbols by agreement—is the basis for all human knowledge, stored symbolically within the human brain, libraries, and hard drives. It is also the basis of human communication.

Intent of the Source

Human communication can be defined either with or without the involvement of intent on the part of the source. In the study of persuasion, knowledge of the intent of a source regarding the desired effect of a message on a receiver is needed in order to determine the relative success of a persuasive message. Aside from the evaluation of the efficacy of persuasive messages, intent is not required as a definitional requirement for human communication unless unintentional messages, such as in much of nonverbal behavior, are specifically intended to be ruled out of consideration.

One Cannot Not Communicate

Related to the definitional consideration of intent is Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin, and Donald Jackson's suggestion that one *cannot not communicate*. To accept this suggestion requires an exceptionally broad and unusual definition of communication. This broad usage implies that communication occurs whenever any human is simply present, regardless of whether the person is alone or whether any communicative actions are taken or avoided by the human. In the narrower original sense, the phrase refers to the inability of any potential source or situational actor to stop a potential receiver from making inferences about the potential source's actions or lack thereof. Nonverbal cues can always be interpreted by a

receiver regardless of whether the source actually did or did not emit the cues, did or did not intend to emit the cues, or was asleep or deceased. A more direct phrasing of *one cannot not communicate* might suggest that people will invariably make inferences about the behavior of another person, though they may be incorrect in those inferences and though the behaviors that may have led to the inferences may have been imagined by the receiver rather than emitted by the source. Nothing in the phrase *one cannot not communicate* implies the need for symbolic or signlike behavior by a source, the existence of a message, the existence of a communicative interaction, or the existence of any degree of source–receiver shared meaning. Rather, communication is judged to exist whenever an observer creates meaning. The phrase operates heuristically concerning how the term *communication* might most usefully be defined. If communication is defined only as *meaning creation by one person through observation of anything about another person*, then we could conclude that one cannot not communicate. With other definitions of communication, it is quite possible to not communicate.

Considerations Related to Channel

A third consideration in defining communication, beyond those of the message and source–receiver considerations, involves the channel. The term *communications* is often used in reference to the media or channels of communication. Three principal issues relevant to defining human communication concern nonverbal communication, intrapersonal communication, and the extent of completion of the transmission–interaction process.

Nonverbal Behavior and Nonverbal Communication

In 1904 a retired German schoolteacher owned a horse named Hans. The teacher spoke to the horse and taught the horse to send messages back to him using hoof tapping as the coding system. Hans could do simple numerical calculations when given the arithmetic problems orally and could encode words by converting letters into a number of taps. This implied that the horse had

communicative ability since he could receive and apparently understand symbolic messages and could respond to them in a reasonable manner. This was truly remarkable for a horse, who was thus renamed Clever Hans. In fact, Hans could behave, but he could not communicate. Hans's "communication" occurred solely in the minds of his human listeners. Hans could tell when his listeners wanted him to stop tapping through an awareness of their nonverbal behaviors. He wanted the rewards he received from them when he stopped but received the rewards only if he stopped when people wanted him to stop. This occurred when he reached a number of taps that had a specific mental significance for the people, significance not shared by the horse. Hoof tapping is nonverbal behavior, not nonverbal communication. The fact of meaning assignment occurring inside the heads of listeners with respect to the horse's behavior does not provide a particularly useful definition of communication. No common meanings for the communicative behaviors of the horse were shared between the people and the horse. It may be useful to suggest that some degree of shared common meaning between a source and a receiver must occur before any behavior, verbal or nonverbal, is considered communicative.

Intrapersonal Communication

Intrapersonal communication, communication within a person or between a person and himself or herself, is a form or class of thinking, just as nonverbal communication is a form or class of nonverbal behavior. Intrapersonal communication cannot be identical to thinking or it would be nothing more than thinking. There would be no reason for its existence as a concept. It differs from thinking as a generic concept in its emphasis on the existence of a dialogue occurring within one person and its focus on the message-creation and meaning-creation processes. Intrapersonal communication is often conceived as involving a conversation or sharing of meaning between two positions or modes of thought within a person. It involves shared meanings between the dialogic entities. Unlike generic nonverbal behavior, thinking itself involves the use of symbolic forms. Thus its subsets such as intrapersonal communication inherently involve the symbolic transfer of

meaning, possibly between two dialogic positions within a person.

The Transmission Process

Communication involves a sequence of communicative events that, individually, constitute insufficient conditions for its existence. The boundary conditions for the departure and end points of each event in the sequence are clearly elastic, with the ordering sequence of the events relatively but not absolutely fixed and the departure point for analysis within the sequence arbitrary.

The following communicative events both specify a sequence and provide a template for considering the difference between *attempts to communicate* and *communication*. They assume a written message but are adaptable to all channels and are but one way of punctuating a communication situation. The question becomes, would a specific punctuated instance or sequence of events be *communication* or simply *an attempt to communicate* if the sequence progressed only to the first element of the sequence, to the second element, and so forth:

1. The possibility of composing a message is considered.
2. A message is considered and intended, but not composed.
3. A message is intended to be sent and is composed, but is not sent.
4. The message is composed, intended, and sent but not received.
5. The message is composed, intended, sent, and received but not detectible as received by the receiver.
6. The message is detectible, received with the source's knowledge, but not opened.
7. The message is received, recognized as such by the receiver, opened but not processed.
8. The message is received, opened, and partially processed.
9. The message is opened and processed, but not understood.
10. The message is processed and understood to an extent but with no measurable cognitive or emotional change in the receiver.

11. The message is understood to an extent with consequent phenomenological change, but without any externally observable response.
 12. The message is intended, composed, sent, received, detected, recognized as a message, opened, processed, understood, and interpreted, with an externally observable response, but without a reply.
 13. The message is composed and so forth, with an externally observable response, and sending a reply is considered.
- And so forth.

This sequence is one way of segmenting a communication process. The lines between the given event segments could be drawn at other points, and different elements of the process could be selected for discussion. In this sequence of events, Event 13 is similar for the receiver to Event 1 for the source. The unstated continuation of the sequence through Events 14 to 25 if phrased similarly to Events 1 to 13 would complete the feedback loop, with Event 26 for the original source in the event sequence similar to Event 1 for that source, the possibility of composing a reply to the reply. Defining communication as any set of events that does not include at least Segments 1 to 11 would suggest that speaking to someone in language X who does not understand X is *communication*, rather than simply *a communicative attempt*.

Similarly, when an academic area concerns itself almost exclusively with message construction, as in Events 1 to 5 and little beyond, it may be more accurately named as an area concerned with one or more such forms of message construction rather than one of communication itself. Persons studying communication implicitly assume the existence of some or all these elements within the context of their work. Making the elements included in their work explicit may be useful in furthering the study of communication. As with all fields, that of communication is usefully informed by work in many areas of study that do not in and of themselves constitute the central thrust of communication, but are of fundamental importance to its understanding.

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See also Constitutive View of Communication; General Semantics; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Process of Communication; Semiotics and Semiology

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DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRATIC THEORIES

Deliberative democratic theories comprise a diverse array of approaches and insights on *deliberative democracy*, the idea that citizens directly contribute to ongoing substantive and inclusive public discussion and debate and seek to arrive at *reasoned consensus* through appeals to the public good. Deliberative democratic theories also emphasize the necessity of deliberation within government itself and especially in those *governance* practices in which public officials and citizens work together. This body of work consists of insights from many sources—from advances in moral or political philosophy to the testing of novel empirical hypotheses. With origins in

critiques of existing political practices, deliberative democratic theory has grown into a complex interdisciplinary body of intellectual, methodological, and practical scholarship.

Conceptualizing Deliberation and Democracy

Contemporary work on deliberation often traces back to the writings of German social theorist Jürgen Habermas, who argued that modern political systems needed to sustain a vibrant *public sphere*, a space in which diverse members of a society freely interact and address common concerns outside formal public institutions. In an *ideal speech situation*, people could debate issues based solely on the merits of their arguments, uninfluenced by inequalities in participants' social, economic, or legal standing.

Though suggested as a philosophical abstraction (and background assumption underlying democratic political and legal discourse), early deliberative theory written or inspired by Habermas drew criticism for its lack of realism. In particular, the *difference critique* holds that unfettered deliberation cannot occur, owing to pervasive inequalities among citizens in any society. In this view, promoting deliberative ideals glosses over such differences and confers unwarranted political legitimacy on public institutions. Public discourse norms should never promote deliberation to the exclusion of alternative forms of speech, such as personal testimony and advocacy, particularly within and between different subpublics unlikely to share common interests. Even amid this critique, however, some theorists developed full-scale conceptions of democracy inspired by the deliberative ideal.

Empirical Deliberative Theory and Practice

Since the late 1990s, much deliberative democratic theory and research have focused on the actual practice of political conversation, discussion, debate, dialogue, and other communicative practices that can, at times, represent aspects of the deliberative ideal. Empirical theories vary in their definitions of deliberation but generally understand it to be a discursive process of carefully weighing diverse arguments about the most appropriate form of action to take in addressing a public problem. Deliberation involves gaining

background knowledge and exploring alternative solutions, all respecting the equality of speaking opportunities and the full diversity of participant viewpoints and experiences.

This conception of deliberation grounds in the actual *practice* of deliberation. Beginning with citizens' juries and planning cells in the 1970s, a range of deliberative designs have been developed that involve lay citizens in governance, public debate, and civic education. In some ways, this represents a resurgence of the *forum movement* of the early-20th-century United States, but modern deliberative models often give citizens a more direct role in policymaking and draw from international experiments with consensus conferences, deliberative polls, national issues forums, participatory budgeting, study circles, 21st-century town meetings, and other processes.

The bulk of empirical work on deliberation has scrutinized the effects of these deliberative practices (or lower-grade simulations of them). In particular, theorists have devoted considerable attention to how participants in deliberative events change the quality and direction of their policy-relevant attitudes. The general hypothesis animating much deliberative research maintains that participants refine their unreflective opinions into considered judgments through the experience of hearing and advancing arguments that are interwoven with both personal experiences and general information. In some cases, theorists maintain that participants are likely to change their basic position on an issue, shifting from one point of view to another. In the aggregate, this could produce something approaching the elusive ideal of a broad public consensus.

The findings of numerous studies, however, show that deliberative events only crystallize public opinion around a shared judgment under special circumstances. Studies of political conversations, loosely structured discussions, and mediated deliberative experiences, such as watching a news program on an issue, are more likely to sharpen the clarity and consistency of participants' original views, particularly when the activity involves sophisticated participants who can recognize the others present who share their own views. By contrast, a broad consensus often emerges in carefully designed events that ensure sustained deliberation among a diverse

cross-section of the public. For example, the British Columbia Citizens Assembly brought together a large random sample of that province's citizens to discuss electoral reform over the course of several months. By the end, the participants reached a near consensus on advocating a new voting system that, prior to deliberation, almost none had even known existed.

Other deliberative theories under development explore how deliberation in juries, forums, and other venues shapes participants' subsequent civic attitudes and behavior. Additional work seeks to clarify the circumstances under which public deliberation influences public policy or the local community's future civic capacity and appetite for a more deliberative approach to politics in general.

Both qualitative and quantitative research also investigates what kind of communication actually takes place during ostensibly deliberative events face-to-face and online. Early findings suggest that deliberation involves a considerable amount of storytelling and quasi-narrative speech. Formal argument and counterargument appear less common, unless built into the structure of the event itself. These early findings complicate empirical deliberative theory by pointing to the importance of clarifying precisely what kinds of communication behavior (and cognition) operate in deliberation and the long-term attitudinal and behavioral impacts of these differences on participants, policymaking, and community politics.

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See also Critical Theory; Dialogue Theories; Ordinary Democracy; Political Communication Theories; Public Sphere

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DEPENDENCY THEORIES

See Asian Communication Theory; Digital Divide; Flow and Contra-Flow; Free Flow Doctrine; Informatization; International Communication Theories; International Development Theories; New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO); Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency

DIALOGUE THEORIES

From a communication perspective, dialogue represents a form of discourse that emphasizes listening and inquiry, with the aims of fostering mutual respect and understanding. Dialogue allows communicators to become aware of the different ways that individuals interpret and give meaning to similar experiences. It is viewed as a dynamic, transactional process, with a special focus on the quality of the relationship between participants.

The term *dialogue* derives from the Greek *dialogos*, in which *logos* refers to meaning and *dia* is a prefix that translates as *through* or *across*. Implied in its Greek roots is the notion that meaning emerges from interaction; it is not something that already exists, waiting to be discovered. Meaning is co-constituted through communication, reflecting both the form of message exchange and the relationship between individuals. Dialogue is made possible by the attitudes with which participants approach each other, the ways they talk and act, and the context within which they meet.

Dialogue is often contrasted with monologue, a transmission-focused process that is primarily concerned with control of the other and of the situation, and with discussion and debate, both of which involve dissecting or breaking things apart, with an emphasis on the presentation and defense of positions. Dialogue points beyond the everyday exchange of messages, implying a particular quality of communication that makes possible learning and change, in both self and others. Dialogue does not preclude disagreement; indeed it allows participants to explore complexities of their own

perspectives as well as those of others. Scholars advocate dialogue as a constructive way for individuals to navigate their differences in interpersonal, organizational, community, and public realms. This entry provides a brief overview of the primary “thought leaders” in dialogue theory and traces the way in which dialogue theory was incorporated into and developed within the communication discipline.

Thought Leaders in Dialogue Theory

There are many important contributors to dialogue theory, but the following are considered to be those who most directly addressed dialogue in their writings: Martin Buber, Carl Rogers, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Mikhail Bakhtin, David Bohm, and Paulo Freire.

The existentialist philosopher Martin Buber placed the concept of dialogue at the center of his approach to human communication and human existence. His distinction between two types of human relationships, *I-It* and *I-Thou*, became a key focus of dialogue theory. In an *I-It* relationship, the communicator views the other as an object and manipulates the other for the communicator’s own selfish ends. The communication in an *I-It* relationship is characterized by self-centeredness, deception, pretense, appearance, domination, and even exploitation. Persuasion, prestige, and power characterize the exchange. In an *I-Thou* relationship, on the other hand, the attitudes and behavior of each communicator revolve around honesty, directness, spontaneity, and mutual responsibility. Individuals in a dialogic relationship do not attempt to impose their own views on each other, and each person accepts the other unconditionally, without attempts to change the other. Dialogic partners show an awareness that others are unique and whole persons, exhibit a *genuineness* or *authenticity* toward each other, and demonstrate a *respect* for each other that encourages mutual growth and development.

Buber also introduced the concept of the *between* as a guiding communication metaphor. He understood dialogue as rooted in the space that exists between persons in a relationship. It is this common center of discourse that brings people together in conversation, not the individual psyche of the interactants. His emphasis on the sphere of the

between and the way in which meaning is co-constituted during dialogue takes the focus away from both individualism and collectivism and places it on the relational. This gives recognition to the *interdependence* of self and other, the *intersubjectivity* of meaning, and the *emergent* nature of reality.

Carl Rogers, considered by many to be the most influential American psychologist and psychotherapist, was a central figure in advancing a dialogic view of communication. One of the founders of the humanistic approach to psychology, he developed a *client-centered* approach to therapy, which he later termed *person-centered* as the application of his work broadened to include relationships in other contexts. He believed that *listening* was central to therapy and to all relationships, and he popularized the term *empathy* as key to meaningful communication. Perhaps more than any other leader of the humanistic psychological movement, Rogers shifted the focus of communication to the *self*. He believed that communication and relationships must center on concern for human feelings, human relationships, and human potential. He placed a great deal of trust in the innate wisdom of human beings, believing that if one could get in touch with the deepest sense of self, direction will emerge and constructive changes would occur without the need to be instructed, shown, or directed by others. He encouraged stripping away facades and moving away from “oughts,” expectations of others, and attempts to please others. Rogers believed that a space could be opened for dialogue when relationships are characterized by a willingness to listen and to enter into a meaningful relationship with the other, genuineness in sharing feelings and ideas with the other, respect and regard for the other, and empathic understanding, which he viewed as entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming “at home” in it.

Hans-Georg Gadamer was a philosopher who studied and worked closely with Martin Heidegger; Gadamer became interested in hermeneutics, or interpreting the meaning of written texts and symbolic artifacts, from his association with Heidegger. Gadamer’s goal was to uncover the nature of human understanding. In his treatise *Truth and Method*, he argued that humans above all seek understanding, and it is through language that this understanding is built. Both language and understanding are living, dynamic processes, open to

continual development and change. Meanings that evolve between oneself and the other are open, fluid, and dependent on both the context of the encounter and the prior understandings and prejudices of interpreters. He wrote about the positive impact of prejudice, which he argued needs to be recognized as inherent in all communicators and forms the basis for human understanding. Gadamer used the phrase *fusion of horizons* to characterize the understanding that develops between persons. He believed that the process of understanding is not based on empathy for another but involves the attainment of a “higher universality” that overcomes the limited horizons of each participant. It is a move from the separate positions of individuals to a synthesizing position that includes relevant aspects of each person’s views.

Mikhail Bakhtin was a Russian scholar of literature, culture, language, and philosophy who produced the bulk of his writings in the 1920s through the 1940s but who was not discovered by Western scholars until the 1970s and 1980s. Though he addressed a wide range of topics, the concept of dialogue was central to his thinking. He believed that dialogue reflects both unity and difference, and at the heart of dialogue is the simultaneous fusion and differentiation of perspectives. For dialogue to occur, participants must build a common base of understanding and at the same time maintain the uniqueness of their individual perspectives. Bakhtin views dialogue as embodying a dialectical *tensionality* that inherently gives it a fluid and dynamic nature. As participants engage in dialogic interaction, there is a dynamic interplay of expression and nonexpression, certainty and uncertainty, conventionality and uniqueness, integration and separation. Dialogue, to Bakhtin, is an emergent process in which the *interplay of contradictory forces* creates a constant state of unrest and instability, while also bringing moments of *unity and synthesis*.

David Bohm, an American physicist and colleague of Albert Einstein, spent most of his career in London. His early works dealt with topics such as quantum theory and the theory of relativity; later in his career he brought his understanding of theoretical physics into the realm of dialogue. He warned against the dangers of *fragmentation*, of breaking the interaction process into separate elements that are treated as if they are independent of each other. Instead, he argued, dialogue must be

understood as a *holistic* process rather than as a collection of separate exchanges. This undivided whole is in a constant state of flow and change, part of an unbroken movement. Bohm believed that for dialogue to occur and be sustained, communicators must suspend judgment about both their own and others’ beliefs and opinions. This *suspension* implies allowing a variety of perspectives to exist in tension, without premature attempts to resolve them.

The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire is best known for his influential book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In Freire’s view, dialogue allows us to move away from individualism and the focus on self to jointly build a learning community. He advocated a dialogic style of education in which the student’s own historical situation provides the starting point for learning. In his work with non-traditional students, he sought, through dialogue, to protect the dignity of learners, allowing them to explore new ideas without fear of humiliation. According to Freire, it is important to affirm the other, thereby helping to instill a sense of hope in the minds of an otherwise oppressed community. For Freire, dialogue can transform the world by enabling us to explore the type of world we desire and shape it together. Dialogue is built on *humility* to learn from the other, guided by *trust* between communicators, and pushed forward by *hope* for liberation from oppression. He insists on the unity of word and action: Unless dialogue leads to changes, it is just “idle chatter.” Although he also believed that action without dialogue was also inappropriate, he saw dialogue as the way to challenge the existing domination that was responsible for oppression.

Dialogue Theories in Communication

Communication scholars have been concerned with the concept of dialogue from the field’s earliest days, starting with study of the Socratic dialogues written by Plato. Until around 1970, however, the focus of dialogue studies in communication was primarily on rhetorical inquiry. This began to change when Floyd Matson and Ashley Montagu published their influential volume *The Human Dialogue*, which appeared in 1967. The authors drew heavily from the work of Martin Buber, adopting his contrast of dialogue with

monologue. They described how dialogue promotes both development of self and knowing the other in the context of strengthening the relationship between individuals. They characterized dialogue as the “unfinished third revolution” in communication theory, sketching out a vision of communication that would move from detachment to connection, from objectivity and subjectivity to intersubjectivity, and from estranged aloofness to “something resembling an act of love.” Although Matson and Montagu’s works were not from the communication discipline, their book helped turn attention toward new ways of conceptualizing the speaker–listener relationship.

Communication scholar Richard Johannesen’s 1971 article “The Emerging Concept of Communication as Dialogue” provided an important impetus for the development of dialogic studies in the communication discipline. Drawing heavily from Martin Buber and Carl Rogers, he described what he called the major components essential for dialogic communication: (a) genuineness—avoiding a façade, stratagem, or projection of an image; (b) accurate empathic understanding—reflecting feelings as seen from the other’s viewpoint; (c) unconditional positive regard—confirmation and nonpossessive warmth for the other, without necessarily approving the behavior of the other; (d) presentness—avoiding distractions and being communicatively accessible; (e) spirit of mutual equality—viewing each other as persons, not objects, avoiding superiority and power; and (f) supportive psychological climate—listening without anticipating, interfering, competing, refuting, or warping meanings. Johannesen raised a number of questions that were given attention by subsequent scholars: Should monologue and dialogue be viewed as mutually exclusive opposites? How does one study dialogue? Can it be subjected to empirical research? Can people be taught to engage in dialogue? What ethical issues are inherent in the concept of dialogue? What is the role of nonverbal communication in dialogue? In what communication contexts can dialogue function most effectively?

As the study of interpersonal communication advanced in the 1970s, a number of dialogically oriented textbooks were published. John Keltner’s *Interpersonal Speech Communication*, Kim Giffin and Bobby Patton’s *Fundamentals of Interpersonal*

Communication, Charles Brown and Paul Keller’s *Monologue to Dialogue: An Exploration of Interpersonal Communication*, and John Stewart’s classic reader *Bridges Not Walls* all reflected a shift away from the older rhetorical traditions in communication to increased emphasis on the humanistic orientation of the 1960s. This new focus on dialogue was not without its critics, and some even characterized the new dialogic focus as an “academic fad.”

In “Foundations of Dialogic Communication,” written in 1978, John Stewart helped clarify communication scholars’ basic understanding of the dialogic phenomenon by articulating the philosophical positions in which the study of dialogue is grounded. He showed how (a) phenomenology’s emphasis on the metaphysical and epistemological primacy of *relationship* contributed a *relational perspective* to dialogic studies and an emphasis on the nature of the *transaction* between human beings engaged in dialogue; (b) the phenomenological notion of *intuition* grounds dialogic communication’s *experiential focus*; (c) existentialism leads to a focus on self and self-awareness, leading to the importance placed on developing awareness of one’s own idiosyncratic communication values and behavior through dialogue; and (d) philosophical anthropology channels dialogic studies toward *holism*, in which emphasis is given to integrating cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements of communication.

Stewart’s grounding of dialogue studies in philosophical inquiry helped move the study of dialogue beyond its early emphasis on humanistic psychology and encouraged the further development of dialogue theory within the communication discipline. Additional textbooks with a dialogic focus appeared, but there were also scholarly books and journal articles. A review in 1998 by Kenneth Cissna and Rob Anderson listed more than 100 citations on the topic of dialogue, most of them published during the 1990s. The number has continued to grow in the 21st century, and dialogue has become a concept that carries across all communication studies. New books went beyond interpersonal communication, as dialogue theory was embraced also by rhetorical studies, organizational communication, media studies, and intercultural communication. At the same time, dialogue studies in communication expanded to

include a broader range of thinkers, including feminist theorists such as Carol Gilligan. Her 1982 book, *In a Different Voice*, described moral development from a female perspective, showing how women give more emphasis to connection, relationship, inclusion, and caring, all of which are part of a dialogic perspective.

As works on dialogue grew rapidly, however, there was a tendency to define it so broadly that it became a synonym for all human contact. In their 2000 article "Dialogue as Tensional, Ethical Practice," John Stewart and Karen Zediker advocated a more focused understanding of dialogue. They differentiated between what they termed "descriptive" and "prescriptive" approaches to dialogue. The former refers to an approach that views all human life as inherently dialogic, while the latter approach reserves the term *dialogue* for a particular quality or type of relating. Those who draw heavily from Bakhtin's work, such as Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery in their 1996 book *Relating: Dialogue and Dialectics*, fall within the descriptive approach. They argue that dimensions of personal relationships such as the self, competence, and relational development should be reconceptualized dialogically. For descriptive theorists, the essential human condition is relational, and dialogue is an omnipresent and significant feature of daily interaction.

Prescriptive approaches to dialogue, which also emphasize the relational nature of the human condition, are equally concerned with urging their listeners to change their communication patterns toward more dialogic modes of interaction. Dialogue, in this case, is a goal toward which participants can work. Interactants can make communicative choices that will help create conditions for dialogue to occur. Those who base their work on Buber's approach, such as Barnett Pearce and Stephen Littlejohn in *Moral Conflict: When Social Worlds Collide*, are more prescriptive in their orientation. These authors suggest specific communication practices that are designed to promote higher quality public discourse on divisive issues.

Many communication scholars believe that prescriptive approaches to dialogue are particularly needed in today's multicultural and conflicted world in which value differences and struggles over scarce resources often lead to alienation, marginalization, community breakdowns, violent

confrontations, and other dysfunctional and destructive consequences. Although the characteristics of communication and relationships advocated by prescriptive theorists and practitioners may be difficult or in some cases impossible to realize, they can serve as an ideal toward which communication can be directed. Dialogic practices apply to a wide variety of contexts, including personal relationships, organizational environments, educational settings, health care systems, and public discourse, as Ronald Arnett and Pat Arneson demonstrate in their book, *Dialogic Civility in a Cynical Age*. Although the situated and emergent nature of dialogue makes it inappropriate to offer a set of specific steps that will guarantee a dialogic experience from a particular encounter, the acts of turning toward the other, focusing on the between, listening with respect to differences, and other dialogic moves all increase the likelihood that communication will be enhanced and relationships will become more creative, fruitful, and rewarding.

Benjamin J. Broome

See also Critical Communication Pedagogy; Empathy; Hermeneutics; I and Thou; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Phenomenology; Rogerian Dialogue Theory; Social Interaction Theories

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DIASPORA

Diaspora means dispersal, the scattering of a people. Originally referring to the Jewish peoples, diaspora dates from ancient times. Commenting on the revival of the concept in the late 1980s, Khachig Tölölyan observed that *diaspora* was now used as a synonym for distinct terms such as *expatriate*, *exile*, *ethnic*, *minority*, *refugee*, *migrant*, *sojourner*, and *overseas community*. The term now operates as a significant sociological and critical category imported into communication studies that puts into play the human and social dimensions of globalization through the increasing movement of peoples demographically across and around the globe.

This angle on globalization—globalization-from-below—has been often neglected in the focus on the latest exploits of the American, British, European, or Japanese world-spanning multinationals. Arjun Appadurai, in an influential analysis, lists the new flow patterns of media and people (which he calls *mediascapes* and *ethnoscapes*, respectively) alongside the flows of technologies, capital, and ideas as constituting the current globalizing era. Importantly, he sees all these flows as *disjunctive*—they are occurring together in related, but unsystematic, ways.

Communication, media, and cultural studies about contemporary diasporas have been a corrective to critical analyses that focus on the inadequacies of media representations of minority cultures in Western societies. Indeed, a number of basic theoretical shifts well underway in these fields reflect the significance of global flows, or movements, of audiovisual media for actually existing diasporas. These theoretical changes are important because they show how peoples displaced from homelands by migration, refugee status, or business and economic imperatives use video, television, cinema, music, and the Internet to rebuild cultural identities. Such shifts could move from a social problem or welfare conception of the migrant to an appreciation of cultural difference; from a view of the media as an imposed force to a recognition of audience activity and selectiveness; and from an essentialist or “heritage” model to a more dynamic, adaptive model of culture.

There is considerable research on the problems associated with diasporic cultures. As one example, Hamid Naficy's study of what he calls the *exilic television* produced by Iranians in Los Angeles in the 1980s is a model for how communication media can be used to negotiate the cultural politics of both *home* and *host*. Naficy's is the most theorized account of diasporic, hybrid cultural identity yet produced in its relation to audiovisual media. Naficy incorporates both the industrial and the narrative features of the television services and program genres developed by the Iranian exile community to show the relationship, as depicted on television, between the transnational experiences of displacement and migration, which in this case was enforced, and strategies of cultural maintenance and negotiation within the borderline “slipzone” between home and host.

The same attention that Hamid Naficy pays to the threshold experiences of exile from a broken national community is seen in Dana Kolar-Panov's research. Kolar-Panov's work goes below the level of consumption of mainstream media in capturing the role played by *video letters* used by overseas citizens of the former Yugoslavia to convey news as their country broke up during the early 1990s. This work illustrates the politics of discord between communities in the homelands as they are played out in the diasporas and the dramatic alternative textual representations of “atrocious videos,” which show

the real-time destruction of the homelands. These videos perform the role of virtual palimpsests—old “writings” that show through new ones—demonstrating the powerful role of the media in contemporary diasporas.

Marie Gillespie’s 1995 study set a benchmark in its detailed audience ethnography and its demonstration of the need for different methodologies to capture consumption of various media formats (mainstream soaps; news; advertising; and community-specific, or *narrowcast*, media, such as Hindi television and film) among diasporic communities. This study examined the microprocesses, or daily practices, involved in the creation of a British Asian identity among young people in Southall, in West London. This new identity emerged against a backdrop of *new ethnicities* that surfaced within the framework of postcolonial migration and the globalization of communications.

The study of the diasporic ethnoscape and the world-spanning media flows—to a significant extent a condition of the ethnoscape’s existence—are dynamic internationally as well as locally. Such work enables cross-disciplinary intersections of cultural and media studies with anthropology, political science, demography, and geography. Cultural and media studies’ nuanced attention to structures of feeling, identity, and community dynamics lend qualitative depth and texture to the more data-driven approaches to all aspects of minority cultures seen in the social science disciplines.

Studies of diasporic cultures, then, are as much about innovative uses of the Internet and other newer technologies as they are about heritage, preservation of identity, and nostalgia. As showcased in *Floating Lives: The Media and Asian Diasporas*, the prevalence of computers in the home, use of the Internet, and participation in globally oriented Web forums were higher among economic migrants from east Asia to Australia than among the general population. An outward-looking, cosmopolitan *ethos* was a major part of the cultural capital of such households.

Stuart Cunningham

See also Cultural Studies; Globalization Theories; Hybridity; Neocolonialism; Postcolonial Theory; Transculturation

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DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS

Diffusion is the process by which an innovation makes its way over time to members of a social system. An *innovation* is the introduction of something new—a project, practice, or idea. The *innovation–decision process* is the process of progression an individual goes through from first encountering an innovation to its adoption. *Innovativeness* is a measure of early adoption; individuals are considered innovative and potential *change agents* if they are more willing to adopt new ideas than other members of a system and likely to do so earlier than others. Finally, the *rate of adoption* of an innovation is the relative speed with which an innovation is adopted.

Background

The French sociologist and legal scholar Gabriel Tarde can be said to be the originator of the basic idea of the diffusion of innovations; he coined and developed concepts that would become basic to diffusion research, such as *opinion leadership* and the *S curve of adoption* (although he used different terms). Tarde’s work was followed by anthropologists such as Clark Wissler, who analyzed the diffusion of the horse among the Plains Indians—an

innovative practice that allowed them to engage in almost constant warfare with neighboring tribes.

All the components of what is associated with the contemporary research paradigm of diffusion of innovations came together in a study in 1942 by Bruce Ryan and Neil Gross about how the adoption of hybrid seed corn diffused among Iowa farmers. Agricultural officials wondered why this technology—which resulted in as much as a 20% increase in production per acre—was not adopted more quickly (it took about 12 years from initial introduction to widespread adoption of hybrid corn). Ryan and Gross discovered that the farmers had to change virtually all their practices in relation to growing corn, including purchasing corn from a company rather than using corn from the previous year as seed (especially difficult during the Depression). This study also suggested that the rate of adoption of most innovations will form a bell-shaped or S curve, with a few people adopting in the beginning, followed by mass adoption, and then a dropping off because of the success of the diffusion and adoption processes. This study became the model for many diffusion studies during the 1950s, conducted by rural sociologists studying a host of other agricultural innovations.

Meanwhile, the diffusion approach moved beyond rural sociology to influence other social sciences, including marketing, political science, education, geography, public health, and economics. A major impetus to diffusion research in the social sciences was the work of Everett Rogers. Rogers earned his PhD in sociology at Iowa State University, where the studies of the diffusion of hybrid corn were done; his dissertation summarized what had been done on the subject. This dissertation became the basis for his now classic book, *Diffusion of Innovations*, published in 1962, in which Rogers provided a general model of diffusion, appropriate across disciplines and research paradigms.

While diffusion has been studied by scholars across disciplines, it has been of particular interest to communication scholars because at its core, the diffusion of innovations is a communication process. First, the innovation is made known through communication channels; if individuals are unable to find out about an innovation, diffusion simply cannot occur. Mass media and mass communication are involved in the process in that they

contribute to awareness about the new idea or product. Interpersonal communication is also critical to the diffusion process: The decision to adopt an innovation depends largely on discussions with peers who have already evaluated and made a decision about whether to adopt the innovation. Today, of course, with cell phones, smartphones, and the Internet, the interpersonal–mass communication link is blurred, and potential innovators are just as likely to find out about an innovation via a computer-mediated format and to evaluate it the same way—through Internet chat rooms and online product reviews.

Other communication processes are involved as the potential innovator considers the information received. Because of the novelty of the innovation, the individual experiences a high degree of uncertainty about it. Thus, studies of attitude change, uncertainty reduction, and decision making come into play in the diffusion process, especially as they impact behavior change since diffusion ultimately is about adopting a new behavior.

Over the years, diffusion of innovation has explained the process of adoption of many new innovations, from family planning among women in Korea to doctors prescribing tetracycline to safe-sex practices among gay men in San Francisco to the adoption of the Internet. How quickly news is diffused about events, such as September 11 and the explosion of the space shuttle Columbia, is another avenue of diffusion research. And the diffusion-of-innovation paradigm has also been used to study resistance to innovations—why a keyboard arranged so that the strongest fingers strike the most frequently used letters of the alphabet has never caught on.

Arvind Singhal

See also Media and Mass Communication Theories;
Two-Step and Multi-Step Flow

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DIGITAL CULTURES

Digital cultures are social formations produced exclusively through engagement with information and communication technologies (ICTs). Also referred to as *cybercultures*, *virtual communities*, *online communities*, or *Internet communities*, they encompass a wide array of cultural interests and practices in different types of forums that are accessible only by a computer or other device with Internet connectivity. At the heart of any digital culture are social interaction and a network of relationships; communication scholars have an abiding interest in studying issues of identity, community, and access in relation to them.

These terms can be traced back to and continue to be informed by the concept of *cyberspace*. In the early 1980s, William Gibson coined the term in his cyberpunk novel, *Neuromancer*. Bodies are described as mere “meat” that is discarded when the characters “jack in” to their computers to immerse themselves in a virtual reality. In the early 1990s, scholarly and popular accounts of ICTs borrowed Gibson’s term to imagine a spatial context for *computer-mediated communication*. The

majority of these accounts were celebratory, emphasizing the advantages of leaving behind the body and its problematic identities (e.g., race and gender). Cyberspace was seen as having the potential to revitalize the public sphere politically and socially and forge new connections and commonalities among disparate groups.

Howard Rheingold can be credited with expanding the focus of discussion to the digital cultures that comprise cyberspace. He argued that the search for community was central to the social use of ICTs and described his experiences in the virtual pubs and salons of the Whole Earth ‘lectronic Link, a San Francisco–based bulletin board service in the pre–World Wide Web era. The other technologies that enabled the creation of text-based virtual communities at that time included Internet relay chat (chat rooms), Listserv (electronic mailing lists), Multi-User Domain (MUD; multiplayer computer games), and Usenet (newsgroups).

A number of scholars have theorized about cyberspace and digital culture based on behaviors observed on MUDs and Usenet groups. MUDs involve fantasy and action role-play, loosely based on the game Dungeons and Dragons, but also social interaction. One of the most popular social MUDs was LambdaMOO, founded in 1990. Participants interact in various rooms of a large house. According to Sherry Turkle, the value of virtual role-play is being able to experience the fluidity of identity as characterized by postmodern theory. The reverse is also true: There can be real-life negative consequences of cyberspace interactions. The virtual rape that took place in LambdaMOO is perhaps the most infamous example. The “cyberrape” was performed by an avatar named Mr. Bungle, who ran a “voodoo doll” subprogram that allowed him to engage in sexual acts that could be attributed to other characters in the virtual community. The duration and intensity of these acts resulted in feelings of violation for participants in real life, raising questions about the boundaries between real-life and virtual communities.

As for the Usenet, it is seen by some as the original Internet community. Started by two Duke University computer science students in 1979, it began with five overarching categories to organize its newsgroups: alt.* (alternative), bus.* (business), comp.* (computing), rec.* (recreation and leisure), and soc.* (social issues). When America

Online (AOL) gave its subscribers open access to the Internet in 1993, many long-time Usenet participants complained bitterly that the presence of the AOL subscribers increased the number of groups and quantity of posts dramatically while degrading the quality of discussion.

With rapid advancements in ICTs, cyberspace and digital culture have expanded exponentially and changed form. By 1995, dial-up bulletin board systems were largely replaced by pay-based online services such as CompuServe, Genie, and AOL, with their own discussion forums. By 2000, those forums, as well as the Usenet, had been eclipsed by Web-based forums (e.g., Yahoo groups and Delphi forums). Similarly, MUDs were complemented by *graphical multiuser konversations* and then eventually overshadowed by *massively multiplayer online role-playing games* such as World of Warcraft and three-dimensional virtual worlds such as the Sims and Second Life. The most recent cluster of digital cultures, considered by some to herald the *Web 2.0* era, includes social networking sites such as Facebook, blogging communities, and YouTube.

Media fans continue to comprise one of the largest segments of digital culture. One of the first mailing lists used for nonmilitary and nongovernment purposes was on the topic of science fiction. Research indicates that the Usenet newsgroups with the highest volume of daily postings were those related to the discussion of television, movies, and sports. Today, networks and fans alike maintain discussion forums for every current television program. There are also virtual communities dedicated to fan-produced fiction, art, music, and videos.

The scholarship on digital cultures has taken a critical turn since the early 1990s. Gender, race, class, and sexuality—informed by poststructuralist, postcolonial, and feminist theories—are understood as shaping and affecting social relations in cyberspace even if not exactly in the same ways as “in real life.” Until 2000, when gender parity was reached, most forums were dominated by men, with women reporting exclusion, harassment, and marginalization. Even today, the majority remains dominated by White, English-speaking, and middle-class participants. That said, members of real-life marginalized groups such as gays, lesbians, bisexuals, as well as other self-identified queer and transgendered people, are claiming a piece of

cyberspace as their own. Queer youth in isolated, rural communities, for example, have benefited from queer-centered Web sites and discussion forums.

The cultural norms of the West still dominate cyberspace, despite the increasing number of Internet users in wealthier Asian countries, notably Japan and South Korea, as well as in India. The World Wide Web has always been a misnomer, and access, with the exception of a few pockets, remains very limited in the Global South (Africa, South America, Southeast Asia). The digital divide also manifests itself in the West. In the United States, for example, some poor African American and Hispanic neighborhoods still remain without an advanced telecommunications infrastructure. Hence, the digital divide affects which cybercultures are formed and under what conditions.

Rhiannon Bury

See also Community; Computer-Mediated Communication; Digital Divide; Fans, Fandom, and Fan Studies; Network Society

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DIGITAL DIVIDE

Digital divide is a term representing the gap between populations that have easy access to communication and information technologies and those who remain underserved by these technologies. Issues related to the digital divide are salient

worldwide because of the widely held belief that inclusion and involvement in the global information and knowledge economy is an important measure of the “quality of life” in the 21st century. Consequently, being excluded by this emerging economy is deemed a significant deprivation. The digital divide is an important concern for communication and social change theorists and practitioners. This essay highlights and describes key facets of the digital divide.

While liberals, libertarians, and conservatives are united in their determination to tackle this divide, their solutions vary in scope and substance. Empowerment, digital competency for economic development, and open access for all are just some of the objectives of digital-inclusion projects. Making provisions for digital dividends has become a priority concern for organizations such as the World Resources Institute and the World Bank. The World Bank, for instance, supported the Virtual Souk project in North Africa that has enabled rural artisans to connect to a larger, international market for their crafts.

While access to and the affordable uses of information and knowledge have increasingly become a yardstick for development as defined by the International Telecommunications Union, the United Nations Development Program, and a range of multilateral and international aid agencies, the preponderance of technologically determinist thinking and the tendency to advocate one-size-fits-all solutions have seriously affected the efficacy of the global response to the digital divide. While there is certainly a case to be made for *leapfrogging technologies*, such as the use of mobile telephony in contexts previously discounted by or beyond the shapings of telecommunications, it would be shortsighted to infer from such examples that a single application such as mobile telephony is the answer to the world’s digital divide.

What, then, are some of the key issues related to the digital divide? First, there is, unlike in the past, a willingness to interpret the digital divide as an aspect of other divides in society. In other words, the digital divide cannot be seen in isolation from other social differences resulting from poverty, status, caste, class, and inequity; solutions must factor in this larger context of social deprivation. A second issue relates to the belief that because information and communication technologies (ICTs)

can effect change in society, the deployment of ICTs must be accompanied by parallel changes in local social structures given that these structures can either support access or indeed block access to those who stand to gain from digital inclusion projects. A case in point is whether issues related to caste are factored into ICT projects in Indian villages.

There is also greater appreciation for the fact that solutions to the digital divide—whether they be e-governance projects, ICT kiosks, online marketing, or the computerization of village-level information—require more than just a technological solution. Sustainable projects require political will, capacity building at local levels, the availability of language-specific software, intentional networking strategies with a range of institutions, training in software and hardware skills, and last but not least, regular access to uninterrupted power supplies. Telecenters in South Africa, for instance, provide a range of services, from faxing to voice telephony. The more sophisticated versions of telecenters offer e-governance, e-health, e-education, and other services. Issues related to scalability remain widespread, with the result that a number of digital-divide projects continue to be pilot projects with little or no possibility for upgrading or extension.

While there is enough evidence to suggest that digitalization can have a positive impact on the lives of people, more often than not digital solutions are imposed by well-meaning outsiders. Such imposed solutions, based on minimal consultation with local people, can result in people’s rejecting the technology for the simple reason that they have not been convinced of its worth. It is necessary for local people to be involved in defining their information and communication deficits and for them to prioritize the deficits that they see to be most important. Today, for the most part, the impetus for change solutions comes from governments, nongovernmental organizations, and international nongovernmental organizations, and also from hardware and software companies that stand to gain from increased connectivity.

There is also greater acknowledgment, particularly in communication and social change theory, of the fact that the issue with respect to the digital divide is not just access but affordable, sustainable access. This is a critical concern not only in the

developing world but also in the developed world, where significant pockets of people, including the rural and urban poor in the United States, the socioeconomically disadvantaged living on housing estates in all large cities in the United Kingdom, and small farmers in rural Australia, are yet to benefit from digital dividends. The reduction of mobile telephony charges in many parts of South Asia, coupled with the steady decline in the price of handsets, has led to a massive increase in rural mobile telephony and a consequent decline in the need for land lines.

Today, there is more openness to the need for appropriate technological solutions. Mounting concerns related to electronic waste (*e-waste*) have demonstrated the need for a better use of existing technologies and the need for adaptability, appropriateness, and maximization of the potential of hardware and software. The digital divide is of key concern in communication and social change theory, communication and social movement theory, and theories related to global media governance.

The financing of digital divide solutions remains a thorny issue. While there are numerous initiatives—both governmental and intergovernmental—that are aimed at bridging the digital divide, funding tends to be project driven, dependency remains a critical concern, and issues related to sustainability remain a recurrent concern. The *Global Digital Divide Fund*, proposed by the president of Senegal at the United Nations–sponsored World Summit on the Information Society held in 2003, received very little support from Group-of-Eight countries or from industry. While there literally are thousands of digital-inclusion projects spread throughout the world and supported by civil society and state, intergovernmental, and commercial sectors, there is as yet very little evidence to suggest that these projects are providing answers to the need for long-term solutions to contemporary information and knowledge deficits.

As globalization continues to integrate the world into a global market on one hand, it is also responsible for marginalizing regions and people who have nothing to offer the market economy. These people in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and South Asia who live lives that are, in effect, beyond the market, need solutions to issues related to basic needs—access to food,

water, shelter, education, and employment. How to integrate these people into the knowledge era remains a knotty issue for all those concerned with the digital divide.

Pradip Thomas

See also International Communication Theories; International Development Theories; Media Democracy; Media Sovereignty; Network Society; New Media Theory

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DIPLOMACY

See Media Diplomacy

DISCOURSE THEORY AND ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis is a term that comprises many different approaches to language, both in theory and in method. Some approaches find their provenance in linguistics and literary studies, yet others in sociology, psychology, or anthropology. They all share an interest in the analysis of text and talk, and their focus is language in use. In the theoretical and methodological underpinning of this starting point, however, discourse analysis arises as a contested terrain. After a historical introduction, this entry will focus on the forms of discourse theory and analysis that are applied in, or originate from, the social sciences. Most of them have also adopted the term *discourse analysis* as a way to present their approach.

Historical Developments

One of the greatest achievements of the earliest forms of discourse analysis was a departure from the traditional linguistic approach that started from invented or written data. Zelig Harris, a prominent linguist in the 1950s and founder of the first linguistics department in the United States, is probably also the first person to have used the term *discourse analysis*. He launched a research program aimed at unraveling general principles in language production by looking at regularities in actual usage. In practice, however, the focus on empirical data was still limited, in part because of the program's taxonomic ambitions.

Some 25 years later, John Sinclair and Malcolm Coulthard developed a model of teacher–student interaction that started from a prototypical three-part sequence of teacher initiation, student response, and teacher feedback (evaluation). They found that departures from this sequence were “noticeably absent” for students. A missing feedback was, for example, treated as a clue for having given the wrong answer. The comparative work of Coulthard and Sinclair was designed to provide insight into structures of interaction across different institutional settings. Although they drew on simplified transcripts, their approach put forward a substantial argument for the importance of studying *real-life interaction*. At the same time, this and related approaches were criticized for their urge to characterize everyday verbal interaction in terms of quasi-syntactical rules. Introductions on discourse analysis from that period, for example from Gillian Brown and George Yule, display the same emphasis on formal rule seeking.

Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences

Apart from the shift toward studying real-life materials, or the ambition to do so, discourse analysts proposed a move in thinking about the nature of language, especially within those forms of discourse analysis associated with *poststructuralism* and *postmodernism*. Language was no longer seen as a passive medium that smoothly conveys information about the world out there and what people think about this world. Instead, it was conceptualized as an active and constructed tool that constitutes the world around us. Accounts of reality are necessarily selective and should

therefore be understood as constructions rather than reflections of what is “really the case.”

This conception of language was not entirely new but inspired researchers to actively criticize the tacit assumption of *language as a neutral vehicle* that was still prevalent in most social science research. Different forms of discourse analysis have evolved, depending on how the notion of context was understood and the influence that was attributed to *people versus structures*. Some discourse analysts emphasize the role of people as active sense-makers who use the context flexibly to perform particular actions such as blaming, mitigating, and building expertise. Context is taken to refer to the local surroundings of talk and to broader cultural reservoirs made relevant in the interaction. Others were encouraged by the work of the French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault and lay more emphasis on discourse as a constitutive power in itself.

The Influence of Foucault

In the 1970s Foucault firmly introduced the element of power into discourse analysis. While not at all concerned with the analysis of verbal interaction, his influence on discourse theory and analysis has been huge. The French *discours* denotes something radically different from the conception of discourse in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. Instead of referring to everyday interaction, it refers to institutionalized rules that govern the way a certain topic—sexuality, hysteria, romantic love, punishment, and imprisonment—can be meaningfully talked about. Discourse itself is power but not so much in the hands of people. Foucault focuses on discourses as constitutive of knowledge and meaning. Everything outside such a *discours* is without sense and significance.

Foucault's so-called genealogical studies were historical and did not draw on records of interaction. The studies show how particular “sets of statements” acquire authority and act as rules, prescribing if and how certain topics should be thematized. Finally they come to manifest themselves as institutions. In the context of mental illnesses, for example, medical records of the insane are not decontextualized, neutral statements but powerful tools that help to fill in the very definition of what madness is and what or who represents sanity.

Foucault's illuminating analyses show historically embedded discourses that perform their work on the level of structures rather than through active agents. His approach, however, has not resulted in a distinct methodological perspective that acquired followers in the strict sense of the word.

Discourse Analysis and Sociology of Science

Unlike Foucault's work, the form of discourse analysis that was developed within sociology of science in the 1980s positioned participants' performative work at the heart of its approach. In a study among biochemists, Nigel Gilbert and Michael Mulkay revealed the use of two contradictory *interpretative repertoires* (broadly discernible clusters of terms and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images) with which the scientists accounted for the truthfulness of their and other people's scientific work. The *empiricist repertoire* was dominant in scientific articles and was drawn on to explain results in terms of impersonal rules, with experimental data getting chronological and logical priority over interpretation. The *contingent repertoire*, on the other hand, was popular in more informal settings and referred to speculation, personal commitment, and social networks as important explanatory sources. Gilbert and Mulkay were particularly interested in the fact that the scientists needed, not one, but two different sets of accounts to explain their results in a satisfactory manner.

By the end of the 1980s Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell used the repertoire concept in developing an approach that first emerged as a discourse-based alternative for social psychology. The book *Discourse and Social Psychology* marked the beginning of a discourse tradition that had its roots in diverse disciplines such as the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, ethnomethodology, and poststructuralism. The notion of an interpretative repertoire was coined to capture the ostensible inconsistencies in people's accounts of mind and reality that were not explained by the social-psychological attitude concept. Potter and Wetherell's most important criticism concerned the interpretation of an attitude as an abstract, cognitive state of mind. When people give their opinion they do not so much express a mental state but rather perform a social action such as blaming

someone, reducing one's own responsibility, or giving a compliment. Views are designed and redesigned to fit a certain functional context, and it is for this reason that they show considerable variation across different interactional situations. The repertoire notion was applied in a wide range of disciplines, including sociology, health studies, and communication, and to a diverse set of topics, such as science discourse, racism, gender, and politics. At the same time, it has been criticized for its broadness and its tendency to overlook crucial details in talk.

Discourse and Ideological Dilemmas

With a similar eye for the importance of inconsistency rather than steadiness and uniformity, the social psychologist Michael Billig and colleagues made a case for paying more attention to the role of *ideological dilemmas* in discourse. Their interest in ideologies and in dilemmas was in how ideologies and dilemmas appeared in everyday life and, more specifically, in everyday talk. Ideologies were identified as always containing or invoking counterideologies, for example when the demands of intellectual theory clash with the routines of everyday life. Participants shift alignment flexibly from one theme to another and back ("that's all very well in theory, but in practice..."), thereby tailoring their ideological repertoire to the interactional business at stake. The notion of individual freedom may be drawn on to make up for the flaws of social responsibility and collective ideals and vice versa. In this sense, contrary themes within or between ideologies function as suitable "error accounts." Rather than belonging to some ideological periphery, they are mutually implicative and therefore part of how ideologies work.

Critical Discourse Analysis and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

In the 1990s, critical discourse analysis combined more fine-grained, linguistically inspired analyses with an interest in power and social inequality. Despite their different accents, critical discourse analysts are united in their attempts to reveal the workings of language within social relations of power and the *normalizing effects of discourse* in this respect. They show a strong preference for data related to social issues such as gender inequalities and racism—for example, research on

how men and women are represented in the media or how different ethnic categories appear in policy documents. Critical discourse analysts have been inspired by predecessors as diverse as the Frankfurt School and Jürgen Habermas, the Italian activist and theorist Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, and the Russian philosopher and linguist Mikhail Bakhtin. Michael Halliday's functional grammar has been another important influence. Critical sociolinguists such as Robert Hodge and Günther Kress have stressed the role of power in producing linguistic form and difference.

Despite the similarities in perspective, there are notable differences when it comes to the actual analyses. Some critical analysts focus on the *cognitive basis of representations*, for example, the sociocognitive processes underlying racist discourse (Teun van Dijk). Others (such as Norman Fairclough) are particularly interested in the relationship between different levels of social practices constituting a social order (such as of education in a particular country) and its related order of discourse (marginal and dominant ways of "making meaning," for example, about what counts as proper education).

Critical discourse analysts have an interest in the subtle properties and workings of power. The concept of *hegemony* is often used to capture those aspects of power that sustain practices of dominance (over women, over the poor) with seeming consent of those oppressed. These forms of dominance are considered "jointly constructed" rather than simply imposed. Dominant discourses play a crucial role in sustaining such practices. Critical discourse analysts are not only interested in revealing the mediating role of discourse but also make a plea for political engagement—finding points of entry to support marginalized groups in society.

A more recently evolved branch of discourse analysis is Foucauldian discourse analysis. It shares the critically engaged focus of critical discourse analysis but presents itself as more directly informed by the work of Michel Foucault. In line with Foucault's notion of discourse, it highlights the productive side of language in that it establishes groups, categories, and subjects rather than laying stress on how language conveys meaning. Perhaps confusingly, Foucauldian discourse analysis often departs from the kind of genealogical studies as Foucault propagated them. While some studies make use of historical texts, most seem to draw on

interview materials. The concept of interpretative repertoire is often deployed as a starting point for analysis. It is doubtful whether Foucault would have pursued such analyses himself, since it seems to put active meaning construction by subjects at the center of analysis. Foucauldian discourse analysts stress that it is not methodological rigor per se that makes up for the quality of the analysis. Corresponding with Foucault's focus on power-knowledge networks, the notion of an objective truth is eschewed in favor of sustained *reflexivity* about one's own production of "truth" or theory.

Discursive Psychology

Derek Edwards and Jonathan Potter are the founders of what is now called discursive psychology. Discursive psychology developed out of the strand of discourse analytic repertoire research as it was developed by Gilbert and Mulkay and applied to social psychology by Potter and Wetherell. In its current form, it is very much akin to conversation analytic research. Like conversation analysts, discursive psychologists are interested in close empirical investigation of naturally occurring data. They work from detailed transcripts of audio or video recordings derived from a variety of "natural" settings, such as talk between peers, counseling sessions, or mealtime conversations. Discursive psychology examines how psychological issues are made relevant in everyday interactions. The question of what psychology comprises is, however, approached from participants' so-called *emic point of view*. How are attitudes, emotions, scripts, and the like made available, and how are they ascribed and resisted by people *themselves*, as part of the social actions performed in and through talk? Limited memories may, for instance, account for a forgotten action, while gustatory "mmms" may enhance the genuineness of food pleasure. The action-oriented approach to language marks a shift away from cognitivist traditions in psychology that treat mental states as the source or cause of what is being said.

For discursive psychologists, as for conversation analysts, it is *action in sequence* rather than the isolated sentence or utterance that is the basic unit of analysis. Many actions are accomplished in pairs, such as question-answer and invitation-acceptance pairs. The *normative* character of these paired

actions enables people to make sense of deviations. Precisely because they have a common expectation that questions are followed by answers, they can make inferences about the nature of the deviation and the action that it accomplishes. These publicly displayed and continuously updated understandings are available, not only for conversationalists, but also for analysts, who use them as an important *proof procedure* by which they can check their own interpretations.

Recently, Edwards and Potter have distinguished three major strands in discursive psychology. The first strand focuses on reformulations of traditional psychological topics such as attitude, motives, memory, and scripts, into discourse practices. Someone who expresses a complaint is at risk of being treated as a dispositional moaner. Humor can be used to negotiate the *motive* of the complainer by showing that he or she is not disposed to make too much of it. The second strand involves studies of how psychological terms are deployed in everyday talk (*intent, remember, see, know*, for example). When people display uncertainty about something they are saying (“What is it I was reading somewhere?”), the statement may not simply claim that one has not quite remembered but may also display disinterestedness precisely at a point where it could be an issue (“She would say that, wouldn’t she?”). A third line of research focuses on psychology-in-interaction as it appears in less overt ways. Attributions of agency and intent and the corresponding accusations of stake and interest are, for example, typically performed not by explicit blame but through apparently straightforward, factual descriptions.

Bones of Contention in Contemporary Discourse Analysis

There have been vibrant debates about virtually all basic assumptions in discourse theory and analysis. An ongoing discussion is the relationship between discursive practices and the “world-out-there.” Are they intricately bound up with each other, or does the material world deserve a more detached or even autonomous position? Another notable discussion concerns the notion of context: Must a discourse analysis include an analysis of cultural and historical resources, or should a proper study be grounded in how these resources

are actually used in the interaction (see for example the debates between Emanuel Schegloff, Margaret Wetherell, and Michael Billig). Often interwoven is the issue of how far analysts should take into account the detail of talk-in-interaction (for example, transcribed hesitations, timed pauses, and intonation). Can we find everything in the talk as long as we look closely enough, or do we need to take a broader perspective and necessarily leave out some of the particulars?

Hedwig te Molder and Jonathan Potter explored the role of mental concepts in the analysis of interaction. The status of cognition is a gray zone of disagreement between conversation analysts and discursive psychologists and is a clear bone of contention in the debate between the latter and cognitive (social) psychologists. Is cognition first and foremost a topic and interactional resource for participants themselves, or does it count as an empirically grounded explanation for why people say the things they do? Another area of dispute focuses on the critical potential of the various discourse approaches: Does political engagement need to be an explicit part of one’s research program in order to be effective, or does such an “imposed” critical stance obscure the relevance of participants’ own orientations and thus become counterproductive? Related to the issue of political involvement is the status of the analyst’s observations. While the majority of discourse analysts in the social sciences have adopted the conceptualization of discourse as oriented to action rather than merely conveying truth, still open to discussion is to what extent and how this should apply to the analyst himself or herself. How detached or self-reflexive can or need one be?

Despite the differences in opinion and approach, the lively debates in journals such as *Discourse Studies*, *Discourse & Society*, and more recently *Discourse & Communication* and the growing applications of discourse analysis in a variety of disciplines prove discourse theory and analysis to be a dynamic and innovative field of research.

Hedwig te Molder

See also Accounts and Account Giving; Action-Implicative Discourse Analysis; Conversation Analysis; Critical Discourse Analysis; Ethnomethodology; Language and Communication; Poststructuralism; Semiotics and Semiology

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DOCUMENTARY FILM THEORIES

Documentary film theories attempt to accomplish several goals, which include defining the genre of documentary film, articulating its components, and describing its effects and use in society. This entry explores the various definitions of documentary film, the evolving set of documentary filmic components and practices, and how the definitions and construction of documentary films inform documentary film theories. These issues are particularly relevant for the field of communication and rhetoric because most documentary films engage in various forms of persuasion.

Definitions of Documentary

The term *documentary* was coined in 1926 by British filmmaker John Grierson in his review of Robert Flaherty's film *Moana*. Grierson described

the film as visually capturing the daily life of young Polynesians. In the 1930s, Grierson became a documentary filmmaker and producer, and he expanded his definition of documentary film to the "creative treatment of actuality," which was largely uncontested until the early 1960s. Erik Barnouw, who wrote one of the most popular books on documentary film history, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, defines this genre by the films' place in history and societal use. Barnouw distinguishes documentaries from earlier nonfiction films (which were known as travelogues) by their incorporation of a narrative structure and use of multiple close-ups. The use of narrative and close-ups came directly from the influence of fiction film, and one result of their use was a clearer manifestation of the filmmaker's point of view.

One of the tensions that concerns definitions and theories of documentary film is grounded in claims of neutral representation. The film *Nanook of the North*, directed by Robert Flaherty, is generally regarded as one of the first documentaries even though the film is critiqued for its romanticized portrayal of Inuit life and its use of historic recreations. Flaherty's first attempt to depict Inuit life resembled a travelogue (with which he was not happy), and it was destroyed in a fire. He returned to northern Canada determined to create an empathetic depiction of the rapidly disappearing Inuit culture. He decided to focus the film on the life of Nanook and his family in order to more fully engage audiences with their plight and daily struggle for existence. Despite the film's questionable depictions of authentic Inuit life (many scenes were staged), *Nanook of the North* retains its position in documentary film history.

Documentary Practices

Many early documentary film practitioners were primarily interested in making their films persuasive, and they incorporated additional narrative components into their films. Robert Flaherty (father of British documentary), John Grierson (father of American documentary), Dziga Vertov (father of Soviet experimental documentary): all were attracted to what we have come to recognize as a documentary form; however, there was not the concomitant understanding that their films were to be "objective." A prominent critic of

voice-over narration was Leni Riefenstahl, the director of *Triumph of Will*, who believed that her images were more persuasive without an omniscient narrator telling the audience how to interpret her films' images. Although early documentaries clearly embraced nonneutral representation, there was criticism of this approach. Luis Buñuel's 1932 film, *Land Without Bread*, illustrated the inherent biases in the documentary film form by clearly staging scenes and having the film's narrator criticize the film's characters.

The tension between persuasion and authentic neutral representation did not stop several documentary practitioners from using the form for social action. During the 1930s, John Grierson used documentaries to instigate British government economic reforms for the poor. In the 1930s and 1940s, governments around the world used documentary films to inspire their citizenry to support their country's wartime goals. In 1948, Standard Oil of New Jersey hired Robert Flaherty to make the documentary *Louisiana Story*, which would ease fears of oil exploration in the Louisiana bayous. In 1988, Errol Morris's film *Thin Blue Line* played a key role in overturning the murder conviction of an innocent man. In the early 2000s, community activists used the making of a documentary film as a community-organizing tool and as part of a civil disobedience action. The use of documentary film by individuals, governments, and businesses to influence public opinion has been a part of the documentary tradition.

Documentary Components

The filmic component that has been part of the documentary form from the beginning, but still raises issues regarding its role in documentary film, is *historic recreation*. One of the most famous incidents of historic recreation in a documentary film occurred during the making of *Nanook of the North*. Director Robert Flaherty instructed Nanook and his fellow Inuit to use harpoons to capture a walrus although these men were using rifles by that time. The creation of this scene reportedly endangered the lives of the men, but Flaherty insisted on recreating the scene in order to depict a former way of Inuit life. Some documentarists and critics shun this particular filmic component, claiming its inappropriateness for documentary,

while others view the historic recreation as just another filmic device available to tell a story, one that is necessary if no actual film footage of the event exists.

Additional elements from fiction film that appear in documentaries include voice-over narration, graphics, animation, scripts, actors, music, and B roll (images that illustrate a speaker's point). From the 1930s through the 1950s, governments and corporations around the world rapidly adopted these components into documentary filmmaking, which allowed their critics to label some of this output as propagandistic. One reaction to this evolution of the documentary film form came in the early 1960s with the practitioners of *cinéma vérité*. These filmmakers and theorists sought to make the documentary form free of the filmmakers' point of view by eschewing fiction film elements and using only location sound and unstructured filming (e.g., only location sound, no interviews, no voice-over narration, and no scripting of any form). This move to include objectivity in the definition of documentary film forced documentary film theorists to more carefully examine the relationship between documentary film and its representation of reality.

Evolving Theories

Due to the historic belief in a camera's ability to authentically record reality, most early documentary theories included an assumption that documentary film could record reality with no imprint of human interpretation. This belief in the camera as able to record the truth was challenged in the late 1960s and early 1970s with *poststructuralist* theories that observed how the camera and filmmaking were part of a system of cultural values and beliefs. During this time, many film theorists employed the literary theory of *semiotics* in their film analyses. Semiotics is a meaning-centered theory of language in which the critic examines language as *symbols*. In semiotic theory, language is analyzed as a set of symbols in which the symbols themselves contain their own meanings. According to semiotic theory, meaning is the point between the actual object in the world and the language or symbol that describes the object. The study of language as a system of symbols enables the critic to discover the sets of meanings each culture develops in its understandings of the world and the world's

social relationships. Semioticians used the work of linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who described this process as analyzing *signs*, and he assigned the term *signifier* to the language (or symbol) used to describe the *signified*, which is the actual image we see in our minds of the described object. Previous approaches to documentary film theory assumed a denotative relationship between the subject and the filmed image. This relationship came under scrutiny with a new generation of documentary film theorists influenced by semiotics.

The recognition that the camera and all filmic choices are part of a cultural sign system challenged the view of documentary films as objective or representing authentic reality. Roland Barthes wrote in *Image, Music, and Text* of the multitude of interpretations in the cultural signs themselves. Scholars of *postmodernism*, who examine the relationships between representation and reality, observed that reality does not exist outside the individual. With these particular philosophical issues in mind, documentary film's use of cinematic realism came under pressure. Critical issues arose concerning whose reality was in fact being depicted. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the study of documentary film became highly interdisciplinary as theorists used Marxism, feminism, and rhetoric to analyze the implications of documentary's use of cinematic realism. Marxist theorists questioned which events were covered in documentary films and whether their representations empowered the working classes with revolutionary insights into their oppressive conditions. Feminist documentary theorists critiqued the documentary form as primarily representing a male-centered view that perpetuated not only patriarchy but also a mainstream bourgeois reality.

Contemporary documentary theorist Bill Nichols incorporates rhetorical theories in his approach to analyzing the documentary. In particular, he uses a neo-Aristotelian model to analyze a documentary's persuasive arguments. In addition to using the canons of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery as a theoretical approach to understanding a documentary's persuasive qualities, Nichols developed six categories of documentary film that do not question the films' ability to record authentic representations but instead focus on *how* different styles of documentary films tell their stories. Nichols's categories

include poetic (abstract films using pieces of filmed actuality), expository (the most common form, similar to an expository essay), observational (similar to cinema vérité), participatory (the filmmaker on camera interviewing or as part of the story), reflexive (challenges documentary format and is more abstract), and performative (emphasis on subjective observations).

Audience and Ethics

In addition to the analysis of the films as texts, documentary film theorists began to incorporate the role of the audience, the filmmakers' ethics, and the filmmakers' identity in their theorization. Documentary film theorist Brian Winston considers audience reception as key to defining the documentary as well as essential for evaluating any documentary film's truth claims. He observes that the various forms of documentary have no inherent claim to representing authenticity or the truth but that it is up to the audience to evaluate the documentary filmmakers' relationship to the subject and the filmmakers' methodological choices in that representation. Most documentary film theorists also include the role of the filmmaker's ethics in defining and analyzing documentary film. Erik Barnouw notes the problems in the 1920s, when anthropological documentary filmmakers of foreign cultures staged unflattering depictions of their subjects. Several years after the philosophical impact of cinema vérité, one of its foremost U.S. practitioners, Frederick Wiseman, acknowledged the large role that his point of view played in his topic and editing choices. Considering the popularity of Michael Moore and other documentarists who insert themselves into their films, documentary theorist Garnet C. Butchart emphasizes how the entire truth claim of documentaries rests on the filmmakers' ethics in making their films. Documentary theorist Michael Renov views the autobiographical documentary film as the evolution of the documentary form and argues that it has powerful possibilities of oppositional representation. For Renov, theorizing the filmmaker's positionality, or place, in terms of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation is the subject of many contemporary documentaries.

The combination of audience expectations, filmic components, the filmmaker's ethics, and the

use of documentary films to promote social goals have all come to both define the genre and inform documentary film theories. For some documentary theorists, the definition of a documentary film is tied to neutral representation and the claim that a documentary film can make objective truth claims. For other documentary theorists, the influence of the filmmaker, the audience, and the film's form demand interrogation and are part of analyzing any documentary film. For these theorists, visual representation is deeply symbolic and embedded with myriad value-laden images and audio, and their role as theorists is to articulate these values and evaluate their persuasiveness.

Teresa Bergman

See also Feminist Communication Theories; Film Theories; Marxist Theory; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Postmodern Theory; Poststructuralism; Semiotics and Semiology

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DRAMATISM AND DRAMATISTIC PENTAD

Dramatism, or *dramaturgy*, is an approach taken to understand the uses of symbols in the social world. This approach is important to

communication theory because a primary use of symbols occurs through language. Such a focus on the symbolic uses of language to influence is inherently rhetorical. In addition, dramatism seeks to understand the human world as a symbolic world of drama in which language is a strategic, motivated response to specific situations. As such, language is viewed as a mode of symbolic action rather than a repository of knowledge, and the use of language or other symbols to induce cooperation among human beings is the focus of investigation. To develop the concept of dramatism further, this entry will look at the contributors to and key assumptions of dramatism and its associated method, the dramatistic pentad.

Introduced by literary theorist Kenneth Burke in the early 1950s, dramatism has penetrated many disciplines, including political science, sociology, literary criticism, rhetoric, organizational communication, and interpersonal communication. Burke's students have applied the concept of dramatism in philosophy (Susan Sontag), sociology (Hugh Dalziel Duncan), political science (Doris Graber), and interpersonal communication (Erving Goffman). Still others in many additional disciplines have been influenced by dramatism, including Harold Bloom, Stanley Cavell, Clifford Geertz, Rene Girard, Frederic Jameson, Geoffrey Hartman, and Edward Said. Dramatism continues to develop as an aid to understanding the complexity of human symbol use.

Several assumptions undergird dramatism, the most important of which is the understanding of human beings as symbol-using animals. Humans create symbols (language is the most obvious example of a human symbol system), respond to symbols, and understand their circumstances through symbols. It is by way of symbols that humans have the unique ability to conceive of the *negative* or the absence of something. Symbols function to create and sustain hierarchies of power and identification among dissimilar groups. Symbols also allow for incongruities, such as creating the conditions for conflict while simultaneously unifying individuals to resist conflict.

Another assumption is that human interaction can be approached as a drama, hence the name *dramatism*. For Burke, the relationship between life and theater is literal rather than metaphorical. Humans enact real roles on live stages as

they attempt to impact others. These dramas guide the ways that individuals, groups, and organizations conduct their behaviors. Dramatism also acknowledges that human beings act rather than move. The distinction between action and motion is that human beings make choices to act, often through symbols, while animals, plants, and other physical objects simply engage in motion. This human choice to act is the basis of all human motivation. Thus, symbols become sites for discovering motivation.

Finally, dramatism suggests that symbols form a grid or screen through which the world is viewed. Such *terministic screens* select or favor some realities and deflect others; doctors arriving at the scene of a car accident will look first for injuries because of the medical terministic screen operating for them; lawyers, while equally concerned with injury, will also note possible factors of blame because of the terministic screen implicit in their training. The terministic screens through which we apprehend our worlds have larger implications as well; they bristle with embedded values that, in turn, form belief systems or ideologies. These ideologies filter our understanding of others, our communication to them, as well as our choices of action.

The *dramatistic pentad* is the key model used by critics to analyze human use of symbols in communication. The pentad is made up of five elements or terms (hence the name *pentad*): *act*, or what was or will be done; *scene*, or the context of the act that answers the questions of where and when the act occurred; *agent*, or who performed the act; *agency*, or the way the act was performed; and *purpose*, or the goal of the act. These five terms answer the what, where, who, how, and why of human communication. The act serves a pivotal place in the pentad because human society is fundamentally dramatic or driven by action. Later, Burke suggested that *incipient act*, or the first steps toward the act, can substitute for the act in pentadic analysis. The incipient act recognizes the vital connection between thought and behavior. He also later added a sixth term, *attitude*, to further clarify the manner in which the agent approached the doing of the act.

While all human use of symbols in communication shares the same elements or terms, the proportion of those terms varies. Often, pairs of terms, or *ratios*, surface to dominate communication. For

example, when communication focuses on what occurred and who performed the action, a ratio of agent–act dominates, or surfaces. For example, in a courtroom, a prosecuting attorney might argue that the accused did indeed unlawfully enter a house—an agent–act ratio. The defense attorney might prefer to make use of a scene–agent ratio instead, arguing that the accused came on a house with the door broken in and entered to see if there was a problem; in this case, scene dominates the act.

Application of the dramatistic pentad also helps to identify the ideology or worldview from which the communicator constructs the message. Generally, one term of the pentad dominates the communication, providing an ideology that accompanies it. If the act is the central term of the communication, then the form of the communication is realism. In such communication, active language such as verbs would dominate. On the other hand, if the central term is the scene or the setting for the action, we are urged to view the drama as dominated by the material situation, or materialism. If the agent, or the actor in the drama, is featured, then idealism is the corresponding orientation. Agency and purpose both locate the importance of the drama in how action is accomplished. Agency, or the way the act is performed, suggests pragmatism, while purpose, or goal, makes mysticism its compulsive force because the individual is less important than the final objective. For each of these central terms, a corresponding philosophical orientation arises, and when the term dominates the communication, its philosophical orientation forms the point of embarkation.

Burke used the illustration of the human hand to explain the working of the pentad. Each finger becomes a separate term of the pentad, distinct in its form. However, the palm of the hand unifies the fingers so that even though the fingers are separate, they are also united. Through the pentad, human actions are viewed from five interrelated points of motivation that are overlapping. By identifying the separate terms of the pentad, the critic can ultimately understand their common connection.

Kathleen M. German

See also Ideological Rhetoric; Ideology; Meaning Theories; Rhetorical Theory; Symbolic Interactionism

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DUAL-LEVEL CONNECTIONIST MODELS OF GROUP COGNITION AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Dual-level connectionist models (DLCMs) of group communication arose from two very different strains of work in individual psychology—the activation of links in semantic memory and parallel processing models of pattern recognition and learning. Unlike their psychological roots, however, DLCMs integrate individual psychological concepts with group communication. They explain how cognitive states (beliefs, feelings, etc.) are changed by communication among group members. These changes result in changes in the content of communication events, which then influence patterns of group communication. In turn the cognitive states of group members may be changed, and so on. DLCMs go beyond important dual-level theories of influence such as Richard Petty and John Cacioppo's elaboration likelihood theory and Shelly Chaiken's heuristic processing model, which focus primarily on mental processes rather than on the integration of mental processing and temporally embedded social processes. DLCMs have been applied broadly by Dean Hewes to group emotional dynamics, group phase development, and argumentation and influence in

groups. But to understand how DLCMs accomplish this, we need to examine them in detail, sketching their elements and processes and discussing their promise.

Elements and Processes

Regardless of the specific applications, DLCMs contain a common set of components: *nodes*, *links*, *dynamic processes*, and *modules*. Nodes are perceived communication events (inputs), mental states associated with them (processing nodes such as beliefs, policies, and emotions), and communication outputs connected to mental states (arguments, emotional statements, etc.). For example, in a DLCM theory of argumentation and influence in groups, input nodes might be policy-relevant arguments from other group members as perceived by a particular member, the set of policy options relevant to those (processing nodes), and a set of arguments produced by that group member and transmitted to the other group members, and so on for all group members. These nodes are connected to each other, although not fully, and are the potential sites of change, both communicative and mental. Thus, DLCMs are *connectionist* because of the connections between the nodes and *dual-level* since change can occur in both the communicative and cognitive levels.

Connections between nodes, or links, have *constraints*, *valences*, and *activation weights*. Constraints determine the connections between types of nodes. For instance, in the example above, links run (a) from perceived messages (inputs) to policy options, (b) among policy options (processing nodes), (c) from policy options to generated arguments, and (d) from members' arguments to other members' received messages. In a DLCM group argument theory, (a), (c), and (d) are unidirectional flowing forward as described above. Unidirectional links, for example, can run from perceived messages to mental states but not the reverse. Thus, a theoretical constraint is placed on types of links.

Valences specify the negative or positive implications of the links between nodes. For example, a negatively valenced link between a mental state, say an emotion, and an emotional message indicates that the more an emotion is experienced, the less likely it is to be expressed—feeling

anger leads to the repression of expressed anger. A positively valenced link indicates the reverse. Moreover, each link has an activation weight that indexes the strength of a link. Stronger arguments for a policy option have larger activation weights for links to policy options than do weaker arguments.

DLCMs possess dynamic processes that explain how the activation weights can be changed. The continued reception of perceived messages with a positive valence can strengthen those links to thinking processes (processing nodes). In other words, if the links are positive, the more frequently a group member receives a perceived message, the stronger the link between that message and processing node, and the more readily the group member calls the relevant processing node to mind. This, in turn, influences the production of messages because frequently activated processing nodes strengthen the link between them and the produced message, again assuming these links are positive. For example, in a DLCM theory of group development, there might exist a positive link between some functional statement made by other members of a group (say, “defining the problem”) and the receiver thinking about that function. A subsequent functional statement of the same type will move the increment of the activation weight for that link upward. This makes the person more inclined to think about that function over time as functional messages of that type recur. Mixed functional messages (positively valenced links) from other group members, on the other hand, lead to the leveling of weights across nodes for individual members, which, in turn, would lead to more confused thinking about functions and mixed expression of those functions to others. Of course, if the weights are negatively valenced, the weights build up negatively through repeated activation and tend to inhibit the activation of those nodes subsequently.

These dynamic processes are the heart of the DLCMs. They make it possible to track both communication and psychological processes over time. For example, in the study of policy decision making, they can produce increasing differentiation, integration, vacillation, or ambivalence among policy options both within and between individuals, depending on the input messages and structure of links between and among the nodes. They can

also predict both steady movement toward a decision and abrupt shifts in group preferences, as well as tendencies toward *self-organization* or *chaos*.

Modules, the fourth set of elements, are also dynamic mechanisms that, while essential to the complete development of DLCMs, are conceptualized as processes that are distinct from the elements discussed so far. Four modules are posited—the *interpretive*, *strategy production*, and *accessibility modules*, as well as the *turn-taking management device*. The turn-taking management device regulates turn exchanges among the group members. The accessibility module describes when interactions among people do not occur, allowing for predictions of group behavior across multiple meetings, and effects of subgroup meetings and consultation that occur between meetings. Interpretive modules bridge the gap between the meaning of a message for the sender and the meaning given it by its recipient. The strategy production modules serve to edit messages considered by senders before transmission based on their perceived appropriateness, effectiveness, and timeliness.

Conclusions

DLCMs are complex theories of group interaction necessary to explain the integration of individual cognition of all group members and ongoing communication, something beyond the scope of any current theory of group communication. DLCMs have heuristic value because they apply to a range of group phenomena. A DLCM theory of group development explains current data on group phases, presents an account of intrusions in phase development that differs from explanations by Marshall Scott Poole and Joel Doelger and Poole and Carolyn Baldwin, and does so by integrating individual cognitive processes and sequential patterns of communication where these theories do not. A DLCM theory of emotional dynamics fills a gap in available theorizing since virtually all treatments of emotion in groups address individual states rather than the emotional dynamics of those states among group members. A DLCM theory of group argument and social influence integrates separate explanations based on cognitive processes with those primarily anchored in communication processes such as that of Marshall Scott Poole,

David Seibold, and Robert McPhee, to the benefit of both. Thus, the DLCM framework of group communication has considerable promise, though more theoretical and empirical work is needed.

Recently, a number of critics have evaluated this framework, highlighting both its potential and its gaps in coverage. The reviews have been positive but do leave some questions for further development. For example, the dynamic processes in such models need further clarification. Concerns have been raised about the testability of these models. An important question deals with the long-term effects of messages received during the initial stages of group discussion compared to those received later. Some of these objections have been addressed while others need further clarification. All these critiques have proven useful for the subsequent advancement of the DLCM framework or its various instantiations.

DLCMs provide a handle on the most serious gap in the study of group communication. We have been driven to date by purely psychological theories on one hand and those purely sociological on the other. As a field standing between these two monoliths, our task is to find the connection between them through the communication processes connecting them. Even if the DLCMs prove to be incapable of serving this function, they identify the problems and point the way to those frameworks that will.

Dean E. Hewes

See also Cognitive Theories; Elaboration Likelihood Theory; Group Communication Theories; Heuristic-Systematic Model

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DYADIC POWER THEORY

First proposed by Boyd Rollins and Stephen Bahr in 1976 and later revised by Norah Dunbar, dyadic power theory (DPT) emphasizes the relative perceived power of partners in a relationship. From a social–psychological perspective, *power* is generally defined as the capacity to produce intended effects and, in particular, the ability to influence the behavior of another person even in the face of resistance. Dunbar asserts that power is an integral part of any relationship but is especially important in close romantic relationships because it determines how the partners relate to each other and how decisions are made. The theory assumes that perceptions of legitimate authority to make decisions and to exert control over a variety of resources increase individuals' perceptions of their own power compared with that of their partner. Perceptions of power, in turn, increase the likelihood of using dominance as a way to control the interaction through a mechanism Rollins and Bahr call *control attempts* but what Dunbar often refers to as *dominance*.

Rollins and Bahr originally argued for a linear relationship between dominance and power, stating that an increase in a spouse's perception of power in a marriage role relative to that of the partner will produce an increase in attempts to control her or his spouse in the role. Furthermore, they argued that the effectiveness of the control attempts is influenced by the relative power perceived by the recipient such that the greater the relative power of the initiator, the more likely the control attempts will result in compliance. From this perspective, the more powerful someone is, the more dominance he or she will exert through control attempts, and the more his or her partner will comply with his or her requests.

However, recent tests of DPT by Dunbar have not supported Rollins and Bahr's linear proposition but have indicated that the relationship between perceived relative power and manifest dominance is curvilinear, such that partners who perceive their relative power difference as extremely high will use fewer control attempts than partners who perceive their relative power difference as low. This is because high-power individuals do not

need to make a large number of control attempts over low-power individuals; by virtue of their latent power, they can maintain control without dominant behaviors. On the other hand, in line with Michael Roloff and Denise Cloven's research that suggests a lack of power creates a *chilling effect* in conflict situations, low-power individuals are unlikely to express grievances to high-power individuals if they fear that retaliation, violence, or termination of the relationship will result from their control attempt. For example, a battered wife may not openly disagree with her husband, or a subordinate may lie to his or her superior at work for fear of reprisal.

The process of displaying verbal and nonverbal dominance during interaction is central to DPT, but the outcomes of such displays must be examined as well. The model proposed by Rollins and Bahr ends with one partner's compliance, or the outcome of the conflict interaction, but Dunbar extended it to examine the outcomes of the interaction for the health of the relationship and satisfaction with the interaction itself. In ongoing relationships, satisfaction is an especially important outcome to examine because dissatisfaction can "erode" the relationship and lead to distress if left unchecked. For example, in the context of marriages, many researchers have found power equality to be a large determinant of marital satisfaction.

While power equality can enhance satisfaction, the perception of a loss of power can be particularly destructive to relational or interactional satisfaction. Perceived imbalance in the resources of exchange, inequity, and unequal distribution of power are often cited as sources of conflict and reasons for relational dissatisfaction. Powerlessness also should have an influence on an individual's satisfaction within a particular interaction, even one with a total stranger.

Although Rollins and Bahr's theory was originally conceived as a model of marital power, DPT's scope should not be limited to marriage. It has the potential to be applied to friendships, familial relationships, dating relationships, work relationships, and any other setting in which interactants have an established history and expect to have continued interaction in the future.

Norah E. Dunbar

See also Interpersonal Communication Theories; Power, Interpersonal; Relational Communication Theory

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DYNAMIC MEMORY MODEL

See Cognitive Theories

E

EFFECTIVE INTERCULTURAL WORKGROUP COMMUNICATION THEORY

The effective intercultural workgroup communication theory (IWCT), developed by John Oetzel in 1995, explains how cultural variability and diversity influence communication processes and the subsequent outcomes that occur in workgroups. This theory addresses limitations in explaining workgroup communication in culturally diverse groups and has been refined over the past 10 years as more complex understandings of how culture influences communication have been identified.

The theory was developed from the literature attempting to identify models of effective workgroups. The predominant models of workgroup effectiveness ignore culture and emphasize work or task communication only. These models privilege one particular view of how groups should work by emphasizing work outcomes over relational outcomes. The IWCT recognizes that group processes and outcomes include both task and relational aspects. The literature on cultural variability provides a strong theoretical explanation as to why both task and relational aspects are important in effective workgroups. Hence, IWCI merges these two different literatures in providing a practical theory of workgroup communication. This entry examines the three key components of the theory—inputs, processes, and outcomes—and the relationships among these concepts.

Key Concepts

The theory includes three broad inputs in culturally diverse workgroups: contextual factors, group composition, and cultural–individual factors. *Contextual factors* include the following: (a) a history of unresolved conflict among cultural or ethnic groups (e.g., the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians); (b) in-group–out-group balance (i.e., the number of group members from each cultural group); (c) cooperative versus competitive tasks (i.e., does the task require collaboration among members or encourage members to work for their own interests?); and (d) status differences among members (e.g., boss and employee). Essentially, each of these four factors is a condition that helps or hinders the creation of a common identity in a culturally diverse workgroup. *Group composition* is the degree of cultural diversity (or similarity) in the group and ranges from homogeneous to heterogeneous. *Cultural–individual factors* are the values and identities that individual group members have. The primary cultural value difference considered is variability of individualism and collectivism. Individualism is a social pattern that consists of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives and who give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others, while collectivism is a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as part of one or more collectives (family, coworkers, tribe, nation) and are willing to give priority to the goals of these collectives over their own personal goals.

Processes refer to the communication among members of a workgroup. The theory distinguishes between effective and ineffective communication. *Effective communication* consists of four workgroup behaviors: equal participation, consensus decision making, cooperative conflict, and respectful communication. These four behaviors are culturally appropriate in that they relate to both task and relational aspects. Outcomes are the work output of the group and/or the relationships of the members and include such factors as decisions, solutions, creative ideas, satisfaction of members, and cohesion among members. Outcomes are categorized as either task (e.g., decision, solutions, and plans) or relational (e.g., satisfaction and cohesion).

Relationships Among Concepts

The theory has a strong foundation in system theory. From this foundation, IWCT provides a series of general assumptions and specific propositions. The general assumptions of the theory are threefold. First, the context of the group frames the relationships among inputs, processes, and outputs. Second, within a particular context, the inputs influence the communication processes of a group; subsequently the communication processes impact the outcomes of the group. Third, the processes and outcomes serve as feedback for context and input.

IWCT has nine propositions that explain these general assumptions within intercultural workgroups. For the input–process relationship, the propositions specify the inputs that lead to effective or ineffective communication in culturally diverse workgroups. Specifically, the theory proposes the following: (1) the more negative contextual factors that a culturally diverse group faces, the less likely the group will experience effective communication; (2) the more culturally heterogeneous a group, the less likely it will experience effective communication; (3) the more individualistic (or independent) a culturally diverse group, the more likely the group will utilize dominating conflict strategies; (4) the more collectivistic (or interdependent) a culturally diverse group, the more likely the group will utilize collaborating conflict strategies; (5) the more individualistic (or independent) individuals in a

culturally diverse group, the more likely they will take turns; (6) the more collectivist (or interdependent) a culturally diverse group, the more likely the group will have equal participation; and (7) the more members of a culturally diverse group have other- or mutual-face concerns, the more likely the group will have effective communication.

For the process–outcome relationship, the propositions explain how communication processes relate to task and relational outcomes. Specifically, IWCT proposes the following: (8) the more a culturally diverse group utilizes effective communication processes, the more likely the group will achieve task effectiveness; and (9) the more a culturally diverse group utilizes effective communication processes, the more likely the group will achieve relational effectiveness.

In terms of feedback, the theory argues that the outcomes of a group reinforce individual decisions and satisfaction and may influence future work effort in the group. Further, if a culturally diverse workgroup has effective communication, it may improve the quality of intercultural relations that members have with people outside the workgroup (e.g., by encouraging them to see members of other cultural groups in a positive light).

John G. Oetzel

See also Cultural Types Theories; Functional Group Communication Theory; Group Communication Theories; Intercultural Communication Theories; System Theory

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ELABORATED AND RESTRICTED CODES

Codes used in communication may be characterized according to the extent of their elaboration within a specific message or in a communicative style. A message in an elaborated code carries all information needed to understand it within the message itself. Thus, elaborated codes are relatively context free. Restricted codes are context bound and cannot be easily understood without additional information beyond that in the message. This entry describes elaborated and restricted codes, discussing the implications of the elaborated–restricted code distinction for the study of communication.

Description of Elaborated and Restricted Codes

The elaborated–restricted code distinction was proposed by Basil Bernstein in response to questions concerning learning differences among children. Bernstein held that restricted codes occur where social relations are based on closely shared identifications, expectations, and assumptions, where the subculture raises “we” above “I.” Their use creates social solidarity by restricting verbal elaboration of individual experience. In a restricted code, the intentions of a speaker are verbally unelaborated. Speech is normally conducted rapidly and fluently, often with few articulatory clues to the context of the message. From the viewpoint of a third-party listener who is unaware of the topic or context, the meaning gathered from a restricted-code conversation is discontinuous, condensed, and local. Meaning in a restricted code is implicit rather than verbally explicit and is carried in the *how* of saying more than in the *what*. Notions of causality, if present, are limited.

Example of an overheard conversation in a restricted code between A and B:

- A: So?
B: No.
A: No?

- B: Jim.
A: Jim.
B: Jim.
A: Umm.
B: Mmn.

In contrast, an elaborated code encourages the speaker to focus on the experience of others as different from one’s own. Elaboration is required due to a gap between speaker and listener. The other is presumed to be a different person with no direct knowledge of the speaker’s phenomenology. With a restricted code, the gap is presumed to occur, not between speaker and listener, but between those who share the code and those who do not. A restricted code presumes a generalized undifferentiated other, while an elaborated code presumes a single differentiated other.

Example of a somewhat more elaborated code, for the same overheard conversation:

- A: What happened?
B: The answer was no.
A: No? Why not?
B: Unexpectedly, Jim was there.
A: Oh no, Jim. You’re kidding.
B: Jim was there and, you know, they just can’t talk in front of him.
A: So, none of this is going to happen just because Jim showed up unexpectedly.
B: Right, it’s not going to happen.

Implications for Communication

The degree of code elaboration has been proposed as an explanatory mechanism for learning differences among children. Code elaboration requires a form of perspective taking not needed when the code is restricted. A restricted-code speaker is presumed to communicate primarily or exclusively with sharers of the restricted code. Speaking is easy when composing a restricted-code message since the receiver is presumed to possess prior awareness of the topic, situation, and context. These need

not be specified. Speaking is a more difficult and complex process when composing an elaborated code. An elaborated-code speaker must consider the phenomenology of the other and compare what is likely to be known with what is expressed in the message. The required but missing portion of the message, if any, may then be determined by a form of subtraction. The missing information may be composed into an acceptable message format, and the formatted message information may be integrated with that contained in the restricted message. The finalized elaborated message can then be delivered to the listener.

Listening is also more difficult within an elaborated code. While background, situation, context, and topic are clearly specified in an ideal elaborated message, the listener must decode this information from the message, integrate it into the listener's belief system, check it for internal and multiple external consistencies, and evaluate it for credibility, intended humor, and important implications. In a restricted code, that information is already present in the receiver.

Intercultural Implications

In the 1950s, as educational test scores of children became widely used indicators of learning, large differences between mean test scores for Black and White children in some American schools became apparent. In searching for reasons for this disparity beyond genetics, scholars in education examined multiple possible correlated factors, including language. Black English was held by some to be a restricted code. Children learn through language, and restricted codes might lead to restricted abilities and thus restricted learning. Elaborated codes give the child more of the grounds for action and lead to thought in terms of cause, effect, and consequences. Other scholars suggested multiple flaws in this possible explanatory mechanism. Among these are the possible ethnocentrism involved in presuming that structures deemed to be logical in standard English were more than simple habitual conventions of upper-class message construction. Another is the self-fulfilling prophecy effect of teachers' expectations on children's performance, as teachers are taught to be particularly aware of proper use of elaborated codes.

Linguistic Relativity

The possible relation of language structure to thought in the elaborated–restricted code distinction has potential implications for the concept of linguistic relativity. For example, some educators believe language is the common denominator in and the core of the difficulty for disadvantaged children. Children learn their culture's social structure, according to elaborated–restricted codes theory, through the social structure embedded in speech. The form of a child's speech reinforces the social structure, with the social identity becoming the child's psychological reality. Children who learn different roles due to their families' class positions may adopt different social and intellectual orientations and procedures despite equal intelligence.

Thomas M. Steinfatt

See also Communication and Language Acquisition and Development; Culture and Communication; Ethnography of Communication; Language and Communication; Linguistic Relativity; Speech Codes Theory

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ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD THEORY

John Cacioppo and Richard E. Petty's elaboration likelihood theory (ELT) deals with the ways in which communicators process persuasive messages. The theory describes two cognitive levels through which communicators process issue-related arguments and explains how these two routes differ. Human beings want to hold correct

attitudes and opinions but are not always willing or able to evaluate the merits of the issue-related arguments presented in support of an appeal. The persuasive message recipient evaluates some messages in an elaborate way and deals with others with much less critical thinking, if at all. Relevant to communication theory, ELT acknowledges and tries to explain the two different means by which the recipient evaluates issue-related content. ELT tries to predict when and how the recipient will and will not be persuaded.

Cacioppo and Petty's use of the term *elaboration* refers to the extent of critical thinking that an audience member gives to the persuasive message. *Elaboration likelihood* is the two social scientists' metaphor for variable; it can change from little to great, depending on the way the message is evaluated. Cacioppo and Petty posit that a receiver of a persuasive message processes the information through one of two routes—central or peripheral—or sometimes both, toward attitude change.

The Central Route

The *central route* to persuasion is taken when the recipient is guided by an elaborate amount of critical thinking about what is said in the persuasive message. In the central scenario arguments are considered carefully. The compatibility between the message and the receiver's attitude plays a role in persuasion.

The potency of the message also plays a part. Centrally, the message recipient is identifying weak arguments and is being influenced by strong arguments. When the recipient realizes that the message is significant to his or her life, the likelihood of cognitively elaborating on the message increases. After this increase occurs, attitude changes will likely have a long-lasting behavioral effect.

The amount of critical thinking expended is dependent on two general factors: the receiver's motivation and the receiver's ability, *ability* meaning being knowledgeable about the issue involved in the persuasive message and not being distracted from the message. At least three components comprise the motivation factor. The first is the relevance of the topic to the receiver; the more relevant the topic, the more likely the receiver will think critically about the issues involved. The second

component in the receiver's motivation is the variety of credible sources. When listening to several experts speak about the issue, the receiver will typically tend to centrally process the content. In disagreement with this point, however, Ann Bainbridge Frymier and Marjorie Keeshan Nadler, two persuasion scholars, contend that accountability is a determinant of motivation, not the variety of credible sources.

The third component in the receiver's motivation is the penchant for mulling over arguments. Frymier and Nadler point out that this factor affects motivation, but so does the degree of personal responsibility and incongruent information.

The issue-related message recipient, no matter how motivated, cannot use the central route if the recipient is ignorant of the issue. For example, most college students would probably engage in a high elaboration about an informative speech on downloading music rather than a speech on Beverly Sills.

Peripheral Route

Cacioppo and Petty use the term *peripheral* because the receiver looks to less central considerations in processing the message. The decision is not based on the message itself. *Peripheral cues* include an appropriate guiding principle that comes to mind during the message, source credibility, the style and format of the message, and the mood of the receiver. Instead of the receiver's taking into consideration the argument's strength, he or she depends on *heuristics*, the receiver's use of simple decision rules, which are activated by peripheral cues during the persuasive message. Three major heuristics are credibility, likableness, and consensus. The *credibility heuristic* is the propensity to believe sources who have credibility. The *likableness heuristic* is the receiver's propensity to agree with individuals he or she likes. When source credibility is high, the message may be believed regardless of the arguments presented. Moreover, it is natural for a receiver to believe individuals he or she likes, or to be persuaded if there is a variety of credible sources.

An example of persuasion through the peripheral route might involve someone who wants to purchase a cell phone but does not want to take the time to read about and shop for the various

models. Such a person might take a friend's suggestions for which one to buy or base a decision on a 30-second commercial on a radio station's morning show. In this case the liking heuristic and the credibility heuristic are being used. Someone might be persuaded to set out tomato plants simply because neighbors are setting out tomato plants (the consensus heuristic); yet, that person is not persuaded to follow the tips about growing tomatoes given on a horticulturist's television program.

Because elaboration likelihood is a variable, the receiver of a persuasive message will probably use both routes. Persuasion can take place with either route. The two routes to persuasion are not mutually exclusive.

Since the mid-1980s, the elaboration likelihood theory has generated ample research and continues to do so. Daniel O'Keefe has assessed Cacioppo and Petty's theory as the most promising theoretical development, surpassing the theory of cognitive dissonance. ELT, the dominant persuasive theory, is seen in communication, psychology, marketing, health fields, and the like. It is certainly a central topic of communication theory.

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See also Attitude Theory; Cognitive Theories; Dual-Level Connectionist Models of Group Cognition and Social Influence; Intrapersonal Communication Theories; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Social Judgment Theory

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EMOTION AND COMMUNICATION

The human experience of emotion is ubiquitous. Recently, however, communication theorists and researchers have discovered that the *communication* of emotion is similarly omnipresent. Emotions are not just private, subjective experiences; universal communication systems are designed to verbally and nonverbally communicate emotions to others.

Social evolutionary theorists recognize that emotional communication evolved because it conferred a selective advantage on expressive individuals. Fear displays, for example, evolved because they provide rapid danger signals to other members of the group, enhancing their collective survival. Across the gamut of human emotions, social evolutionary theorists have shown that every human emotion developed as more than an internal control system; emotions are consistently communicated because they provide powerful survival advantages.

Throughout primate evolution and human history, emotions have been communicated primarily through nonverbal communication. Emotional expression evolved long before the dawn of human language. Indeed, intercultural communication theorists have shown that human nonverbal emotional displays are primarily universal, though small regional "accents" or cultural variations exist. Cross-cultural similarity of emotional expressions indicates human evolutionary adaptations have occurred across the millennia.

Developmental communication theory also supports the primacy of emotional communication. Nonverbal emotional expression precedes verbal communication in each human's life. Every human infant is well-equipped at birth to express a variety of emotions. Successful communication depends on infants' being well-equipped emotional senders and the skill of adults who vary widely in their ability to read infant displays. Infants show little control over emotional expression; they are biologically adapted to automatically communicate emotions. While socialization inculcates display rules for appropriate emotional communication, even adults frequently produce automatic, spontaneous nonverbal expressions communicated through one's voice, body, arms, and predominantly facial expression.

Every emotion produces recognizable nonverbal displays. Similarly, emotions produce patterns of verbal communication designed to elicit appropriate responses in receivers. Paul Ekman's landmark research revealed that at least six basic emotions are primarily pancultural and communicated similarly in cultures worldwide. Cultural display rules teach each developing individual to mask, amplify, minimize, magnify, substitute, or conceal emotional communication. Recent research and theory suggest that emotions display regional variations or accents in how they are communicated. Nonetheless, the six emotions discussed next—fear, anger, sadness, disgust, happiness, and surprise—are culturally universal and communicated similarly across culture.

Fear

One of Ekman's six basic emotional expressions, fear, is among the most disturbing, but most important. Fear is contagious, and its expression warns others of impending danger, producing both functional danger avoidance behaviors and dysfunctional phobic responses. Like birds on a wire, fear evokes collective avoidance and panic reactions in people. Fear is usually a transient emotion, though long-term fear can produce severe anxiety, paranoia, and phobic responses at both the interpersonal and collective levels. Throughout history, leaders of nations have often kept their citizens in a state of excessive fear, particularly fear of external threats, to control their behavior and enact draconian policies. Machiavelli was the first to write that fear was the most powerful means of social control that a leader could employ.

Fearful expressions accompany fear's experience, providing instant, typically nonverbal warnings to others about impending danger. Fear produces a distinctive facial expression, vocal exclamations, and flight-or-fight response. The classic fear expression is displayed by raised eyebrows and narrowed, triangular-shaped eyes produced by raising the upper eyelid and tightening the lower eyelid, with lips stretched across bared lower teeth. Fear produces functional, spontaneous ducking, fleeing, and cowering and nonverbal paralinguistics that include shouts, screams, and cries. Fear appeals have great pragmatic utility when used by parents, teachers, politicians, and

health agencies to influence attitudes and change behavior.

Anger

The second basic universal emotional expression is anger, an intense feeling of displeasure resulting from injury, harm, or mistreatment by others. Anger results from troubling social events, insults, verbal attacks, injuries, thoughtlessness, rudeness, frustration of a person's goals by another person, threats to a person's identity or reputation, or relational threats such as infidelity or disloyalty.

Anger is communicated rapidly and spontaneously through nonverbal and verbal expressions. Anger feels unpleasant, and though its display is frightening and detestable, it is a crucial form of communication that warns interactants of an angry person's dangerous state and the possibility of impending attack. Without such a warning, anger could result in death or injury to the interactants.

Despite societal norms prohibiting the expression of anger, angry outbursts are relatively common. Angry communication is usually directed at the alleged perpetrator of hurt or harm but may also be shared with friends, family, and health providers for catharsis or to elicit sympathy or social support.

Angry facial expressions include the clenched jaw, knit and lowered eyebrows, and menacing stares that are innate and culturally universal. Vocal behavior communicates anger via loud, harsh, low-pitched vocalizations. Angry verbal behaviors include profanity, berating the perpetrator, threats, or guilt inductions. Anger may result in "getting in one's face," shaking fists, or walking out on the presumed perpetrator. Angry expressions include foot stomping, slamming doors, breaking things, throwing tantrums, threatening gestures, becoming withdrawn, and terminating relationships.

Sadness

Sadness, depression, and grief result from and are expressed through communication. The primary source of sadness is interpersonal loss or troubled social interaction. Infants display sadness and distress in response to parents' sadness displays. Depression, a chronic melancholic state, both results from and causes troubled relationships.

Sadness displays are produced by every healthy infant to communicate distress to caregivers. These innate, spontaneous displays can also be intentionally reproduced to communicate sadness through crying, a downturned mouth, and fussing. People also communicate sadness verbally to potential comforters to elicit relief from this unpleasant state. Sad individuals may speak softly, slowly, and unenthusiastically, without variation, and pause longer. Sad people avoid social interaction, become immobilized, and engage in a number of nonverbal behaviors, including sad facial expressions, slouching, reduced smiling and eye contact, and less open body positions.

Disgust

A fourth basic emotion originated when humans encountered the taste or smell of rotten food, decaying animals, or bodily excrement. The disgust expression is recognized even by preschool children: a downturned mouth, sometimes accompanied by a protruding tongue, a wrinkled nose, with the eyes nearly shut. Theorists reason that the original function of the disgust expression was to close sensory inputs and to eject noxious substances. Disgust is communicated vocally with utterances such as “yuck” or “ick” and by verbal statements such as “gross” or “disgusting.”

Across the millennia humans have applied the disgust expression to distasteful people, relationships, and interactions. Whether gustatory or social, the disgust expression is an innate, cross-cultural response to noxious stimuli. Disgust was one of Darwin’s fundamental emotions and among Ekman’s basic facial expressions.

Happiness

The fourth basic emotion, happiness, is expressed and recognized worldwide as a universal sign of positive affect. An authentic, felt smile includes more than an upturned mouth; it includes raised cheeks, squinting, and smile lines around the eyes. The happiness display typically occurs during social interaction and is seldom displayed in private, suggesting the innately social roots of the experience and expression.

Smiling is an appeasement gesture signaling friendliness and low threat. Smiling occurs among

all primates and evolved as a sign of nonviolence designed to calm other individuals and establish positive relationships. Happiness motivates closer interpersonal distances and friendly tactile communication such as hugs and reduces violent, hostile touch. Happiness produces warm vocal tones and higher pitch during speech.

Surprise

Unlike the other five basic emotions, surprise lacks positive or negative evaluative content. Surprise is an orienting emotion in response to rapidly changing interpersonal or environmental circumstances. The surprise facial expression consists of an open mouth, raised eyebrows, open eyes, widened nostrils, head orientation toward the stimulus, and startled verbal or paralinguistic vocalizations. The universal, cross-cultural recognizability of surprise suggests its evolutionary interpersonal origins. Surprise is the most fleeting emotion, lasting a fraction of a second and quickly blending into expressions such as happiness, fear, or anger.

The Social Emotions

Beyond the six basic emotions are the social emotions, so named because they both result from and are displayed during interpersonal communication. Social emotions evolved to socialize, reward, sanction, and discourage specific behaviors. Appropriate emotional displays and their accurate recognition are taught in every culture to facilitate smooth, harmonious social interaction.

Embarrassment evolved as an inherently social emotion during interaction from failed self-presentation, loss of face, or threats to self-esteem. Remediation of embarrassment occurs through verbal accounts and excuses along with nonverbal apologies including shrugs, sheepish looks, blushing, gaze aversion, feeble smiles, and interpersonal avoidance.

Similarly, *guilt* is a cross-cultural, social emotion functioning as a sanction for hurtful behavior or interpersonal transgressions. Guilt is communicated nonverbally via hiding, isolation, and contrite, apologetic behaviors. Though a specific “guilt” facial expression has not been identified, sad, worried, or sorry facial expressions, particularly during apologies, typify communication of

guilt. Similarly, avoidance, bodily shrinking, and silence typify guilt in most cultures. People failing to display guilt and remorse following improper actions may be ostracized, banished, or even killed. Guilty communication demonstrates a remorseful attitude that reassures other group members. *Guilt trips* are strategic actions that attempt to change another person's behavior.

Closely related to embarrassment and guilt is *shame*, a social emotion in both cause and manifestation. It results from perceived transgressions against others and their negative reactions. Shame is an intense, negative feeling of inferiority and loss of respect from failing to live up to others and one's own expectations. Emotions theorists disagree about whether shame is a primary emotion or an emotional blend including sadness, dejection, anger, and helplessness. Ashamed individuals attempt to disappear, sulk, hide, slouch, cover the face, and avoid social interaction. Verbally, shamed individuals may declare their worthlessness or helplessness, ask for forgiveness, and promise to improve.

Pride is often viewed as a positive emotion though it is also one of the "seven deadly sins" that is said to come before a fall. Excessive pride communicates arrogance and conceit. Nonetheless, a modicum of pride is the basis of self-esteem and a natural reaction to compliments and accomplishments. Pride is inherently social; it depends on a real or imagined audience. Nonverbally, proud individuals stand and sit taller, exhibit signs of strength, expand and display their bodies, smile broadly, and produce celebratory behaviors such as hugs or "high fives." Verbally, pride is displayed through both appropriate disclosure and inappropriate boasting.

Love is a powerful primary emotion that is universally experienced throughout the world. It occurs among people who seek or share a long, rich relationship. Love evolved to create lasting bonds between people that helped ensure the survival of pairs or groups in a dangerous world. It is overtly expressed by saying "I love you" and through nonverbal expressions such as prolonged eye contact; intimate touch including hugging, kissing, or sexual activity; increased smiling; more time spent together; and protective or nurturant actions.

Jealousy, which sometimes accompanies love, occurs when a person perceives that a third-party

rival threatens a primary relationship. Jealousy evolved as friend- and mate-protection from defection into other relationships. Although jealousy is a unique emotion, it is accompanied by other emotions, including sadness, anger, fear, hate, and hurt. Jealousy occurs in close relationships and results in numerous communication behaviors, including negative affect displays toward one's partner and rival through both verbal and nonverbal communication. Jealousy may lead to constructive communication, avoidance behaviors, denial, threats, violence, increased affection, flirtation with potential partners, improvement of appearance or image, and stalking and other surveillance behaviors.

The Unique Role of Emotions

Theorists maintain that in the short term, emotions short-circuit cognitions. Feelings of emotion and their display occur rapidly, often faster than cognitive processing. Emotions evolved to provide rapid, quick, short-term reactions to changing environmental and interpersonal circumstances and long-term information to plan and execute strategic communication. Emotional communication is the result of both biology and learning. Emotional communication evolved to help the individual, the group, and the human species survive. However, culture and individual decisions always play a role in emotional expression. The communication of emotion is a complex mix of inherited, spontaneous emotional expressions along with enculturated displays under the strategic control of individuals.

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See also Communiobiology; Kinesics; Nonverbal Communication Theories

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EMPATHY

Empathy means to feel into another person's biological processes, perceptions, emotional states, and their kinds and forms of consciousness in order to assess their feelings. Further, empathy means not only assessing another's affective communication, but using one's assessments in order to be eventually helpful to another person's communication development. Empathy also means having a purpose to help others with their struggles, their problems, their goals, and so forth. The purpose of practicing empathy is to improve communication between people. Empathy is natural and basic to decent and respectful human communication altogether. Empathy is central to improving human communication in that it helps to develop trust, predictability, and friendlier and more open communication between people. The nature of empathic sharing, a brief history of the study of empathy, and empathic processes will be the focus of this entry.

The Nature of Empathic Sharing

The meanings of the idea of empathy are complex, indicating that various systems of the brain and body are involved in being empathic toward others. Practicing empathy concerns a complex of nonverbal systems. The empathic system is mainly nonverbal in that empathy is mainly an emotional rather than a rational or logical kind of human processing. Sometimes one sensory or nonverbal system is dominant, and at another time several of the senses are involved, depending on levels of friendship and intimacy.

The initiation or avoidance of touching is very important to empathy. How someone touches, the placement of the touch, the length of the touch, the intensity of the touch, can influence empathy acquired and/or intended. The manner of looking, too, can be very important as there are warm

stares and glances, warm and avoiding eye contacts, cold looks, and many other characteristics of visual contacts. One's hearing and auditory acuity are extremely important in the practice of empathy because how someone speaks carries much of the emotional meanings involved. The rate of speech, the loudness, the length of vowels, intonation patterns, pitch, and many other factors involved in vocal variety concern empathic processing of the other. The lengthening and shortening of vowels are especially important, as they carry attitudinal and emotional information from the right hemisphere of the brain into words spoken. The *paralinguistics*, or qualities of voice, are main factors in detecting and deciphering emotions in another person. Also, the kinesics, or movements, of a person are very important. There are *microkinesics*, blinks, facial expressions, twitches, finger movements, and many other small movements that indicate emotional presence. There are *macrokinesics*, or large movements that can also reveal a person's emotional states. It is in recognizing and processing nonverbal communication characteristics, then, that much of empathic information can be collected.

Most people think of empathy as putting yourself into someone else's shoes or walking a mile in those shoes. This is a simple but important definition. What it means is that one should try to see the world from others' perspectives, from their point of view, from their emotions and problem situations, and circumstances in their lives, and not one's own. Stereotyping, mistrustful relationships, and misunderstandings arise when caring and empathic regard are not practiced. Some people are very adept at empathy and are very telepathic. *Telepathy* means *feeling across*, a direct contact by one person and the very accurate description of what another is thinking about or feeling. Most people have some telepathic abilities at certain times.

There are many factors involved in why some people cannot or will not practice empathy with others. Related to the idea of empathy is the notion of apathy, or no feeling, not caring. Many people guard their feelings and emotions, hiding them, and are careful not to reveal how they feel. They do not trust others and keep to themselves. They imagine themselves to be perfectly logical and rational and see feelings and sharing them as a sort of weakness. Some people, although they reveal

much to one another, are not willing to change themselves or their dysfunctional kinds of communication. It is not easy to help others who are angry, hurt, or horribly repressed, and a helper must be cautious. While there are trained therapists, counselors, social workers, and the like, even trained helpers are sometimes not successful with clients who are dysfunctional.

Brief History

The derivation of the concept and meaning of the word *empathy* is informative. In 1897 the word was translated from the Greek language into the German language as *einfehlung*, meaning to “feel oneself into” something during aesthetic perception and appreciation, “feel into” an art object or painting, into a crystal, or into any object to understand its interior structures. The term was adapted from the Greek word *empathia*, which means feeling into, finding or searching one’s way into, or experiencing another. According to *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*, the suffixes *em-* or *en-* mean to *put into* or *go into*, while *path* or *patho*, from the Greek, implies emotion, passion, or suffering. *Pathos* concerns an emotion or sympathetic pity. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *empathy* as the power of projecting one’s personality into an object or person of contemplation.

The scholarship of the French child psychologist Jean Paul Piaget did much to develop the study of how children develop empathy in terms of role taking, or taking into oneself the imagined roles of others. Piaget’s students carried on his investigations, showing that empathic role taking develops rapidly just before and during puberty, while other perceptual forms are developed even earlier.

The Chicago school of sociology did much to carry on the early work in describing empathic processes. George H. Mead and his students began the study of mind, self, and society, studying the smallest of human acts and what was taking place in the moment of interactions, in the here and now. More and more study and writing were developed by professionals in therapeutic circles—psychotherapists, psychologists, counselors, social workers, clergy, and helpers of others of many kinds. The work of Carl Rogers and others developed new ideas about helping and training people who were to practice empathy with clients.

Empathic Processes

Object Identification

One often tries to figure out another person by categorizing him or her. This is a common but limited form of empathy. One tries to localize the other, to find some means of coping with a new person or problems in their lives. Objective kinds of empathy can be very important to classify others, to define them vis-à-vis oneself. This kind of empathy is basic to later forms of empathy based in conceptual and psychological processes. One must be able to identify another for ongoing relationships to develop. What happens is that many people, in order to keep others at a distance, invent names, convenient slots, for those they meet, and put them into categories as a quick way to describe them without getting to know them at all.

Imitation and Simulation

One of the most important aspects of the empathic process concerns early developmental forms of biological, sensory, and perceptual behaviors. This kind of empathic ability seems to develop before cognitive or psychological kinds of empathy process. We often imitate and replicate the behaviors of others close to us. We attempt to act, speak, move, and enact the behaviors of significant others in our lives. Much of early play is the attempt to pretend and create enactments of other people’s behaviors.

The essence of imitation and simulation concerns the sharing of biological and sensory rhythms that people do not realize they are projecting. Indeed, most cues or signs or signals are wave-based neural processes and are processed without conscious recognition. It is an invisible kind of nonverbal communication. The newest field of nonverbal communication is called *chronemics*. Chronemics is very much involved as a silent and hidden language that is an important basis of empathy development. This level of communication continues into adulthood and is not something that is forgotten or overcome.

We attempt to imitate the motorality of another in our own musculature. We respond to others by reproducing the acts of the other(s). Kenneth Burke’s theory of identification noted that we overcome differences when we transcend them by

adopting similar dress, behavior, language, and attitudes. William S. Howell elegantly described this kind of empathy when he discussed empathy as the ability to replicate what one perceives. One can improve one's empathic abilities by learning to process a host of biological and perceptual cues available to anyone. A person need not be a physician or medical expert to begin to pick up these vital kinds of information from another's presence and nonverbal communication.

To be mutually entrained to another means that one is beginning to feel a *synchronicity*, a developing synching or bonding with another person. These synching behaviors are what have been called bonding experiences between people, shared and reflected smiles, shared tears, similar laughings, and many other forms of interaction that become synchronous. *Mirrored reciprocities*, reciprocal interactions, develop that help people to bond with one another. Friendships and intimacies develop from the careful uses of imitations and simulations.

Recently, in brain studies, there has been an attempt to discover the neurology of imitation and simulation. This concerns what have been described as the actions of *mirror neurons*. Mirror neurons are clusters of neurons that seem to be activated in a monkey when it sees another monkey eating or doing something necessary. Both monkeys activate similar neuronal areas in the brain simultaneously. At first, this activity was touted as being basic to all kinds of empathy, but later it was shown to be involved only at the imitation or simulation levels of empathic processing—the biological and signalic levels. However, it seems improbable that some minor clusters of neurons alone could be responsible for many psychological and social aspects of empathy.

Empathic Psychological Processes

Most of the writings about empathy have come from various fields of psychology. Each particular field seems to have some differences of focus in its discussions of empathy. Most views of this topic are what David Berlo defined as a kind of mental empathy related to making inferences about others, the *inference theory of empathy*. Basically, the inference-making process is involved somewhat in all psychological or cognitive-making thinking

about others. Losing consciousness of one's self in the other and the experience of foreign consciousness in general are also common descriptions of empathy as a psychological mode. Some other descriptions of the psychological process are *I-and-the-other*; the *nowness of youness*; trial identification; identification; a creative act; personal introspection about another in the here and now; vicarious introspection; sudden intuition; a mode of cognition; an information-gathering activity; predicting what others will feel, say, or do about you, themselves, and others; projecting one's consciousness into another; resonating the other as a special unconscious ability; and creating an interpersonal space in the analytic and therapeutic situation.

Empathy as Steps in the Interactive Process

Some scholars have tried to describe a step-by-step prescription for counselors, therapists, and helpers to use in their practices. Some of them pertain to professional uses, and some are merely to change the sequence of the therapeutic processes of empathizing. The earliest description was outlined by Theodor Lipps in 1907: (a) one is stimulated by another person and imitates the person; (b) the observer feels himself or herself into the other person; (c) the observer loses consciousness of himself or herself; and then (d) the observer experiences the other, as if he or she had become the other. Another example of a step-by-step empathic process is (a) identifying with the other person by becoming absorbed in the other; (b) capturing and incorporating the experience of the other into ourselves; (c) having the other's experience echo and reverberate within ourselves; and (d) then distancing ourselves from the other by detached, objective analysis.

Others discussed empathic methods more colorfully in the actual, here and now, in the momentary interactive context: There is a meeting of us two, eye to eye, face to face. When you are near I will take your eyes out and place them in my sockets instead of yours, and you will take my eyes out and place them into your sockets. Then, I will look at you with your eyes and you will look at me with mine. This is one of the very first descriptions of what can be called *mutual empathy*, a sharing of empathy in the interactive moment.

Another way in which empathy can have different steps, or kinds of activities in sequences, is the

idea of the interplay of three kinds of empathy: *interactive empathy*, *reflective empathy*, and *projective empathy*. Interactive empathy concerns our focus and levels of attention as well as how perception is involved in the here and now. It is in the actualities, the dynamics of the using one's very high levels of attentional focus and vigilance. High levels of attention are necessary for memories to be remembered by the helper, later. The focus must be highly variable and carefully selective. It requires much practice, with trials and errors as a methodology. One must separate verbal and nonverbal communication, jumping from one to the other, over and over during the actual interactions between a helper and another. One listens carefully so as to attempt to separate what a person is saying from what that person is feeling when speaking. This takes practice. One must create a model of the other's nonverbal behaviors to be remembered later, by focusing on different kinds of nonverbal communication and being highly alert to processing semiotic, emotional, or nonverbal information. One can and should increase one's levels of attention and awareness to a very high degree.

Reflective empathy concerns being away from interactive exchanges, being alone, later. One reflects on the other, seeing him or her again as imagery. It is a re-search, or searching again. One re-sees and re-hears the person. One re-spects the other, or sees them again; one focuses on visual and auditory memories, as well as memories of all the nonverbal systems observed. One reflects on the other's emotions and attitudes expressed in the other's voice and movements. Re-remembering means putting the members of a past communication interaction back together again. This also helps to preserve the memory of the interaction and its recall. This stage is a movement toward the final step, the use of projective or predictive empathy.

Projective empathy is doing imagined interactions, seeing ahead into the future and imaging the next interaction to take place with the other. Projective empathy is sometimes called predictive empathy, if it actually becomes successful. In projective empathy, one thinks ahead with interactive and reflective forms of empathy already in mind. One uses this forecasting information to plan what to say, when and how to say it, and why one should say something or act in some manner when seeing the other person again.

These three kinds of empathy are congruent with all major psychological processes, present, past, and future. Interactive empathy concerns attention and perceptions, sensing in the present moment, in the nowness of the interactions. Reflective empathy concerns the past, preserving memories of the interactive event. Reflections on the interactive event help to recollect and solidify memories of the event, putting them together again, remembering. It concerns human memory and mnemonics, the past. Projective empathy concerns planning; thinking ahead; using futurity, imagined interactions, anticipation and expectancy, the future. These activities are main functions of the human brain and, if used carefully, have much promise for the development of better empathic skills.

Social Role Taking as an Empathic Process

Role taking develops very early in a person's development, as role taking is built on imitating and simulating others in one's communication environments. With maturity and increasing socialization comes the increasing potential to walk a mile in someone else's shoes, and one begins to think about another person's viewpoint. One begins to empathize with the other's life roles and occupational roles.

Life roles are those concerned with family relatives and intimates, important, significant others. One attempts to take the role of others in one's imagination. The nature of the role obligations of that person is of major concern. Take your own mother's role, seeing how she sees her motherhood, and you. Think of acting like your mother. See her many viewpoints. Role enactments are excellent family therapy tools.

One can mentally take on the role obligations, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and values of others. Actors and actresses do role-playing continually. Taking or playing life roles is very important as learning devices, in that these social roles concern our primary connections with significant others. How we perceive another's occupational role, too, can give us important clues, important information, in how we can or should communicate with others in organizations and elsewhere.

Tom Bruneau

See also Chronemics; Emotion and Communication; I and Thou; Identification; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Rhetorical Sensitivity; Rogerian Dialogue Theory; Symbolic Interactionism

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EMPIRICISM

Empiricism is not a theory as such; it is a foundational system that governs the elements and relationships from which theories are formed. One may think of it as a set of specifications that determine what theories can be and what they might be able to do. Empiricists believe that knowledge comes to us via observation through our senses or that its claims should be based on observations. Statements not validated by an observation of a

physical event do not qualify as knowledge. This rules out theories about the Flying Spaghetti Monster or the Great Pumpkin, because no valid observations are available about either entity. At the same time, empiricists find certain unobservable concepts acceptable because they are based on other, more fundamental observations. Examples are the orbit of Mars, behavioral intentions, comforting communication, or couple types.

Empiricism relies on a further assumption that events can be observed, recorded, and compared in sensible ways and that these records are the equivalent of direct observations. This assumption depends on the usefulness of various procedures, such as controlled experiments and validated instruments that remove the subjectivity inherent in human information processing. Empiricists also believe that there is a real world separate from our evaluation of it. For example, many persons believe in “metaphysical” entities such as the soul, but empiricists deny that such nonphysical elements are real because they cannot be observed through the senses.

Historical Roots

Ancient skeptics were atheists, the most prominent of which was Sextus Empiricus (about 150 CE). Skeptics denied Plato’s assertion that there existed a *noumenal*, or real, world (in contrast to a phenomenal world, which is inside the person) in which entities such as justice and honor had their true existence. This naive skepticism is not very useful, because we all believe in things we have not seen. Few persons have ever seen their liver, but most of us believe that we have one. Emily Dickinson never saw the sea (even though Amherst is only about 100 miles from the ocean) but felt that she was justified in believing in its existence. So most empiricists not only believe in the evidence of one’s senses but also extend that belief to descriptions of entities furnished by other persons and, in addition, entities that could *possibly* be observed given sufficient effort and expenditure to do so.

Most historians of philosophy agree with Bertrand Russell that Western thought has long been divided into two basic groups: those inspired by the nature of mathematics, and those who rely instead on empirical principles. Russell placed

Plato, Thomas Aquinas, Spinoza, and Immanuel Kant in the former group because they relied on a priori principles derivable from language as the source of fundamental knowledge. In the other group Russell placed Democritus, Aristotle, and empiricists from John Locke onward.

Values of Empirical Research

Because empiricism seems so obvious, many people wonder why theorists need to argue for it as a foundation of theory building. The answer is that human history is riddled with nonempirical beliefs that have had significant harmful effects. For example, Aristotle believed that women had fewer teeth than men and that this was a manifestation of woman's "essence," which was inferior to that of men. This view was accepted for centuries without question because Aristotle said it. An empiricist would insist on counting teeth rather than believing Aristotle. When one does so, the dentition of men and women proves to be the same. Today a few people still believe that race and intelligence are associated in a causal fashion, in spite of the mountains of empirical evidence to the contrary.

Many researchers believe that communication (as well as sociology and psychology) can be studied using a variety of methods. Probably the most fundamental paradigmatic division in communication theory is a separation between interpretive/critical and empirical (or objective) thought. This distinction provides support for such formulations as rules theory, social construction theory, cultural climates, narrative theory, and other interpretive schemes. A currently popular manifestation of interpretive thought finds its justification in qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, research.

Most proponents of empirical method feel it is necessary to separate observation from evaluation, worrying that empirical issues should not be mixed with moral ones. They argue that confusing observed fact with evaluation has historically created terrible problems. The holocaust resulted from Hitler's position that Blacks, Gypsies, homosexuals, and Jews were *Untermenschen*, or less than human. The attribution of subhuman characteristics to other persons is a value claim masquerading as a factual one. Today the AIDS epidemic is one of the most serious public health problems facing the world, yet the efforts of the

U.S. government to deal with it have been hampered by the intrusion of moral evaluations, such as the characterization of AIDS as a "gay disease" and condemnation of alternate lifestyles. This is not to say that moral issues and values are unimportant but to argue against confusing them with factual observations. This is a value of empiricism.

Problems With Empiricism

Strict empiricism, however, can lead to problems of its own. Reliance only on sensory experience ignores a good deal of information that may be quite useful, making logical inference essential. Health care, for example, must rely on causal assumptions that are not actually observed. If an individual's blood reacts in a particular way in a laboratory, a physician examining the results of this test may conclude that the individual's circulatory system has a good deal of a substance called cholesterol and that this condition might result in heart disease. If the patient agrees, the physician may ask the patient to take medicine to reduce the condition. A later, more favorable test leads the physician to conclude that the patient's cholesterol is reduced and that the risk is alleviated. Notice that at no point does either the doctor or the patient actually see any of this substance in the circulatory system. Both of them are satisfied that the blood test in and of itself is a satisfactory index of the cholesterol level. The doctor might explain that persons with a certain kind of blood have been observed to have more heart disease and shorter life spans. These direct observations are taken for granted. However, there is a good deal of medical research for which no direct cause and effects can be cited, and here empirical principles fail, and logic and judgment have to be relied on.

Most communication researchers in the empirical tradition also rely on logic and judgment to complete the picture started with empirical observations. Every published experimental study, for example, has a discussion section in which the authors speculate about possible logical connections and conclusions based on the data. These interpretations are important because they open areas for further exploration and observation and the development of theory.

Many theorists see inherent difficulty in empirical research stemming from a tendency of a researcher to see what he or she wants to see. This is a problem everywhere. One classic example occurred in the debate about evolution. Almost every textbook in biology cites the example of the spotted moth evolving as the atmosphere changed in Britain. As the air became more sooty, the moths supposedly evolved their wing colors, making them more difficult for predators to find. Actually, the data cited in this effect were highly suspect.

If theories begin with observations, then induction is required to analyze them and point out similarities and formulate general principles. But induction from observables is sharply limited. A valuable extension is to formulate principles through inductive observation and then derive new principles from these through deduction. Indeed, theories are always more than single generalizations based on a set of observations. They must connect these general ideas with other ideas in a logical system. Albert Einstein once observed that the more general and far-reaching the theory becomes, the less value basic observation could be for building theory.

Robert Bostrom

See also Epistemology; Humanistic Perspective; Inquiry Processes; Interpretive Theory; Phenomenology; Realism and the Received View

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ENTERTAINMENT–EDUCATION

Entertainment–education (E-E) is a theory-based communication strategy for purposefully embedding educational and social issues in the creation, production, processing, and dissemination process of an entertainment program in order to achieve desired individual, community, institutional, and societal changes among the intended media user populations.

Theorizing is an integral part of every aspect of the E-E strategy, from designing a program to its evaluation. For example, Miguel Sabido, a television writer–producer–director in Mexico, developed a methodology for E-E soap operas, centering on Stanford psychologist Albert Bandura’s social learning theory, which explains how human beings learn new behaviors by observing mass-mediated role models. In operationalizing Bandura’s concept of role modeling, Sabido hypothesized that the relationship between an audience member and a media role model goes beyond the cognitive information-processing domain. For instance, audience members participate in *parasocial relationships*, analogous to real relationships, with media personalities and readily invite these people into their homes via television or radio. They may even talk to these characters by addressing the television or radio set.

Thoughtful, deliberate, and purposeful embedding of educational messages in entertainment genres, in all their nuance and complexity, is central to the E-E strategy. That is, E-E is not just inserting an educational message in an entertainment program but involves the development of creative ideas for programming, the actual production and dissemination, audience-centered information processing and interpersonal dialogue, and individual and collective decisions and actions. E-E programs often contribute to social change at the middle- and macrolevel by influencing social dynamics between and among individuals, cultural groups, communities, organizations, and social systems at large. An E-E strategy is directed at an intended media user population, comprising audiences of mass media products (newspapers, films, television, and radio) and/or consumers of games and virtual environments. Consider the following examples of mass media–sparked social changes in three locations on three continents.

In 1996, All India Radio in New Delhi, India, then broadcasting a radio soap opera *Tinka Tinka Sukh* (Happiness Lies in Small Things), received a colorful poster–letter signed by 184 community members from a village named Lutsaan in India’s Uttar Pradesh state. It stated that listening to *Tinka Tinka Sukh* had benefited the village, particularly the women, and that listeners came to oppose dowries and would not participate in this practice. Listeners in Lutsaan said they were stirred by Poonam’s character—a young bride, who is beaten and verbally abused by her husband and in-laws for not providing an adequate dowry, the payment by a bride’s parents to the groom’s parents.

In 2000, when Camilla, the protagonist on *Lazos de Sangre* (Blood Ties), a popular Brazilian *telenovela*, was diagnosed with leukemia, the Brazilian National Registry of Bone Marrow Donors reported that new donor registrations increased by 45 times: from about 20 a month to 900 a month.

On August 3, 2001, when Tony was diagnosed with HIV on an episode of the popular soap opera *The Bold and the Beautiful*, the number of calls within the hour to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s AIDS hotline increased 16 times over the previous hour. This storyline, which ran during 7 months, was seen in over 100 countries, for an estimated audience of about 400 million people.

Theoretical Bases of E-E

Albert Bandura’s social learning/cognitive theory has dominated the theory-based production and investigation of E-E programs—not surprising, since E-E programs seek to influence the behaviors of audience members through positive and negative role models. Bandura’s theory states that individuals learn through modeling by observing and imitating others. Social learning theory is both behaviorist, in that it explains behavior, and cognitive, in that it explains behavior in terms of individuals’ cognitive processes of attention, memory, and motivation.

Most E-E investigations have focused on providing cognitive and rational explanations of audience effects, utilizing theoretical frameworks such as the elaboration likelihood model, which shows when people are more likely to evaluate arguments critically and when they are more likely to be influenced by peripheral concerns, and the health belief

model. This work also relies in part on theories related to the hierarchy of communication effects, stages of change, and others. However, scholarly interest in focusing on the rhetorical, play, and affective aspects of E-E, emphasizing the entertainment rather than the education aspect of E-E, is on the rise.

Scholars realize that E-E interventions that are soap opera centered represent highly complex narratives with multiple plotlines, protagonists and antagonists, and twists and turns. E-E investigations now theoretically seek to explain why certain narratives may be perceived by audience members as more involving, engaging, coherent, and believable than certain others. Questions are being broached about how a narrative’s rhetorical punch may be influenced by the E-E intervention’s medium, broadcast frequency, length, time of broadcast, and other attributes. Scholars now conduct research on how a complex E-E narrative may “transport” audience members from their present situation into a hypothetical situation, influencing their repertoire of possible actions. Scholars also investigate how an audience member’s repeated and prolonged distress from seeing a favorite character in deep trouble enhances the involvement and enjoyment of the drama and its resolution.

Theoretical investigations of E-E now have begun to take the role of audience emotions more seriously. While emotions have primarily been investigated in interpersonal contexts, and on a limited basis in organizational contexts, they were not systematically broached in mass-mediated contexts. E-E investigations now increasingly focus on the communication of affect from media characters to audience members. For instance, how are audience members “infected” by the emotional state of characters? Might witnessing the death of a favorite character from AIDS, and the grief experienced by his parents, widow, and three young children, serve as a more powerful trigger to adopting a health prevention behavior than a rational media message that promotes condom use? The field of E-E is charting new directions in terms of theory, characterized by increasing breadth and depth.

Today and Tomorrow

E-E today is a worldwide phenomenon, with almost every nation and every well-known social

change agency having, or having had, an E-E project. Diverse opinions now characterize the E-E field, including the voices of enthusiasts, dissenters, and skeptics. More organizations are engaged in the practice of E-E, and now teaching and scholarship on E-E are finding their way into university-based schools of communication, public health, and international development. Evaluations of E-E interventions, over the years, have become increasingly sophisticated, employing multiple theoretical perspectives and research methods. In the past decade or so, the E-E strategy emerged as an important issue in the fields of communication, health, and development practice and research.

The field of E-E will move into various expressive forms such as arts, crafts, textiles, murals, and other forms well beyond mass-mediated communication. In South Africa, for example, *positive pottery* includes colorful AIDS ribbons, made by individuals with HIV, etched with various African images. E-E is expected in the future to integrate “modern” and “traditional” entertainment outlets, along with “big” and “little” media technologies, an eventuality made possible by advances in the Internet. Web-based delivery makes it possible to tailor a communication message to audience members. Further, such interventions will probably become more closely in touch with participatory methods, as the work of Brazilian theater director Augusto Boal illustrates. Boal, who founded the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) movement, based his work on Paulo Freire’s principles of dialogue and interaction. Here active spectators (“spect-actors”) address and reflect on problems and take control of situations so that they are not put in the role of passive receiver or victim.

E-E is already starting to go beyond traditional communication forms in areas such as family planning and HIV prevention to address other pressing social issues, including, for example, peace, conflict mediation, terrorism, and race relations. The role of E-E will be recognized as a factor in understanding how people work toward liberation and empowerment through using traditional songs and performances to protest, resist, invite dialogue, engage in debate, and cope with the circumstances in which they live.

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See also Elaboration Likelihood Theory; Media and Mass Communication Theories

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ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Environmental communication is a field within the communication discipline, as well as a meta-field that cuts across disciplines. Research and theory within the field are united by the topical focus on communication and human relations with the environment. Scholars who study environmental communication are particularly concerned with the ways people communicate about the natural world because they believe that such communication has far-reaching effects at a time of largely human-caused environmental crises. This entry outlines some ways researchers who study environmental communication use existing theory to investigate their particular questions about *human–nature relations*. The entry also illustrates ways scholars have developed and are currently developing theory that is specific to environmental communication. The final section of this entry explores the ways some environmental communication scholars see their goals of applying and creating theory not only as trying to understand and explain but also as striving to improve human relations with nature.

Central to environmental communication theory are these assumptions: The ways we communicate powerfully affect our perceptions of the living world; in turn, these perceptions help shape how we define our relations with and within nature and how we act toward nature. Thus, environmental communication scholars often speak of communication as not only reflecting but also constructing, producing, and naturalizing particular human relations with the environment.

Many environmental communication theories include the assumption that human representations of nature, be they verbal or nonverbal, public or interpersonal, face-to-face or mediated communication, are *interested*. This, in part, means that communication about nature is informed by social, economic, and political contexts and interests. These contexts and interests help to shape our communication, often in ways we are unaware of, and direct us to see nature through particular lenses while also obscuring other views of nature.

The theories that scholars use to investigate these assumptions range widely in their epistemological and methodological orientations. Because human relations with nature are negotiated within cultural communication, mass media, public communication, interpersonal communication, popular culture, and so forth, environmental communication theory draws from cultural theory, media theory, rhetorical theory, social movement theory, pop-culture theory, and many other areas. In this way, environmental communication researchers have accessed existing theories to serve as conceptual frameworks for their questions and studies.

For example, in media studies of environmental communication, researchers have at times used framing theory to analyze media coverage of the environment, finding, for example, that the mainstream media increasingly frame environmental activist *ecotage* (eco-sabotage) as ecoterrorism. In examining cultural manifestations of human-nature relations in face-to-face communication, some researchers have used ethnographic approaches, finding, for example, that members of a particular non-Western culture speak of “listening” to nature, a cultural form of communication that supports a highly reflective and revelatory mode of communication that opens one to the relationships between natural and human forms.

Environmental communication scholars also borrow from and add to transdisciplinary theory that is both environment specific, such as ecofeminist theory and political ecology, and non-environment-specific, such as social constructionist theory, systems theory, and performance theory. In addition, scholars have created theories that emanate specifically from environmental communication issues. These borrowed and generated theories are applied to a variety of sites of human-nature relations. For instance, some theories focus on explaining public dialogue about the environment, including political, media, and advocate discourses, while some focus on explaining cultural views or everyday communication about the environment. Other, more general theories span these and other sites of communication because they deal with fundamental ways humans communicate about nature.

Origins of Environmental Communication

Environmental communication is thought to have emerged as a distinct field in the United States in the early 1980s from the tradition of rhetorical theory. In historical accounts of the young discipline, scholars often cite the 1984 publication of a generative rhetorical study as definitively announcing the field to the rest of the communication discipline. In this study, Christine Oravec analyzed the discourse of early-1900s preservationists and conservationists, two sides of a controversy over whether to build a dam in a highly regarded natural site. Oravec illustrated how conservationists won—and the dam was built—by appealing to a “progressive” view of the “public” and its relationship to nature. The debate signaled the defeat of one view of society—the preservationist view that the intact beauty of nature served the nation as an organic whole—and the rise of the conservationist view of progressivism, in which the material needs of individuals determine the uses of nature, a view which is still a dominant discursive force in the ways environmental decisions are made today.

While early environmental communication work was not limited to rhetorical theory, a range of important environmental communication theory has emerged from the application of rhetorical theory, including historical explorations of the *sublime response* to nature and explanations of the rhetorical uses of the *locus of the irreparable* in

environmental issues. More recent rhetorical research has theorized about the ways environmental activists use widely televised *image events*, such as the positioning of activist boats between whaling harpoon and whale or the occupying of old-growth trees marked for logging, in efforts to confront profit-motive-driven industrialism with community and ecological needs. Other scholars have used rhetorical theory to grapple with ways the inventional resources of melodrama might transform environmental controversies and oppose dominant discourses that rationalize or obscure environmental threats and to explore how certain Native communities' arguments are excluded from decisions about where to store nuclear waste. Many of these studies critically expand on notions and theories of rhetoric by focusing on the reproductive and transformative potentials of such forms of environmental communication.

Recent work using critical rhetorical theory also points to crossovers with critical discourse analysis, a largely European theoretical and methodological tradition. Critical discourse analysis is often used to explore human–nature issues in the discipline of ecolinguistics, the parallel or sister discipline of environmental communication, which has a strong presence in Europe. As in critical discourse analysis and ecolinguistics, critical efforts to ground rhetorical theory in issues of power and the material world have been central to environmental communication research. Some environmental communication rhetorical theorists have turned to theories outside rhetoric and communication to purposefully ground their work in the environmental and social spheres. For instance, some environmental communication rhetoric scholars have incorporated social systems theory to explore more holistic analyses of human–nature relations. Others have turned to political economy and political ecology to explain how rhetorical representations of the environment reflect and reproduce a particular political economy of interests.

Material–Symbolic Discourse

Because environmental communication research looks at human society as well as the natural world beyond the human, many environmental communication scholars have been interested in discourse theory informed by poststructuralism, as well as

contemporary disciplines such as science studies and cultural studies. Informed by these traditions, many environmental communication scholars view our systems of representation as both symbolic and material. This means that scholars view the material world as helping to shape communication and communication as helping to shape the material world.

An example is the word *environment*. *Environment* is a symbol we dominantly use in Western culture to describe the natural world in a way that connotes a material nature that surrounds us and is separate from us. The symbol, or metaphor, of *environment* is not only shaped by material and symbolic Western historical and contemporary relations with nature, but also helps to shape our contemporary ideas of and actions toward nature, allowing us to perceive and treat the living world as separate from and often as secondary to the human species. Environmental communication scholars explain that the word *environment* reflects anthropocentric, or human-centered, cultural views of and relations with the living Earth. At the same time, the dominant use of the term *environment* to describe nature helps to reproduce such anthropocentric views, reconstructing perceptions that allow for exploitive and destructive actions that continuously materially shape the biosphere.

The ontological orientation of viewing discourse as both material and symbolic necessarily brings issues of power to the forefront of theories of environmental communication. Communication about the “environment” is embedded within social systems and within the power that is negotiated within these systems. As such, social, cultural, economic, and ideological forces inform representations of nature, constraining or allowing for particular ways of communicating about the “environment.” Societal responses to ecological degradation are filtered through dominant systems of environmental representation. Environmental communication scholars critique and raise awareness about existing dominant discourses that are harmful to the environment. In doing so, they look, not only at communication that is directly about the environment, but also at communication that is not necessarily about the environment but that has an impact on the environment—such as neoliberal discourses of free trade that indirectly cause enormous environmental damage.

In addition, environmental communication scholars explore and theorize about alternative ways of speaking about human relations with nature that may be beneficial to the biosphere. Some environmental communication scholars theorize that such alternative ways of communicating about nature may help human society overcome or subvert destructive culturally dominant ways of relating with nature. In this way, while environmental communication scholars are interested in exploring the ways symbols, such as “environment,” might be shaped by worldviews that situate humans as separate from and often superior to nature, scholars are also often interested in illustrating other representations of human–nature relations that might allow for different views and inform different actions.

Mediating Human–Nature Relations

Environmental communication scholars have explored the notion that communication *mediates* human–nature relations in a variety of ways and from a variety of orientations. On one hand, much like a material–symbolic discursive approach to environmental communication, this theory of communication mediating nature understands human communication as mediating human views and actions toward nature. Studies that explore this notion include rhetorical critiques of core cultural environmental narratives that find human–nature or culture–nature binaries as ideological organizing factors; critical reads of popular media representations of nature that find the reproduction or the undoing of dominant environmental narratives; and interpretations of ways that attitudes of ethnocentrism, anthropocentrism, or ecocentrism might inform the communication of everyone, from the average citizen to environmental advocates. Still others have investigated how multiple and varied discourses mediate notions and relations with nature in single everyday utterances.

On the other hand, some environmental communication scholars are also interested in how nature might mediate communication. In this sense, these scholars are interested not only in how human representations of nature mediate views of and actions toward nature, but also in how nature “speaks.” This theoretical move is symptomatic of an environmental communication scholarly

orientation that sees importance in how nature is represented in research. Just as many environmental communication scholars view dominant Western environmental discourse as separating nature from the human, many also see much academic research as doing the same kind of work in creating culture–nature binaries. In countless examples of communication research and other humanities, social-science, and physical-science research, nature is represented as a mute object, separated from humans, which exists as a static background, as an economic resource, or as an object to which things are done.

In situating nature as an integrated and dynamic communicatory participant that has a role in mediating human–nature relations, environmental communication scholars explore ways of understanding and articulating environmental copresence. This more recent theoretical move in environmental communication scholarship is an attempt not only to explain but also to subvert anthropocentric and hierarchical articulations of human–nature relations. To aid in this endeavor, some environmental communication scholars have turned to existing theory, such as phenomenology, which stitches the human back into the fabric of the Earth. Others have worked to articulate a materialist theory of communication in order to overcome the objectification of nature in constitutive theories. Others have empirically illustrated ways people of Western cultures discuss nature “speaking.” Still others argue that nature, or the “extrahuman,” must be included not only in communication but also in democratic practices.

All these approaches represent a notable departure from a traditional communication scholarship theoretical assumption that communication is what makes humans different from other animals or delineates us from nature as human. Here, instead, the scholarly effort is to undo such binary assumptions and to include nature in an effort to hear the interaction of myriad voices of the ecosystems of which humanity is a part.

Applied and Activist Theory

Much environmental communication scholarship is critically engaged not only with understanding human–nature relations but also in aiding somehow in social–environmental change. This aid ranges from scholars articulating via theory and

research how communication helps to shape and shift nature all the way to explicitly activist research in which theory directly emerges and/or is directly applied to particular socioenvironmental situations in an effort to help enact transformation.

Recent conversations within environmental communication have been particularly interested in the ethical role of scholars. Some researchers have gone so far as to claim that environmental communication is a *crisis discipline* because it deals either directly or indirectly with pressing issues such as climate crisis, endangered species, and toxic pollution. Much as the trans-discipline of conservation biology strives to illustrate and explain the biological elements of ecological collapse in an attempt to both halt and reverse this collapse, some claim environmental communication scholars have an ethical duty to not only try to explain but also help change the society that has caused ecological collapse and at the same time not responded adequately to this crisis.

Environmental communication scholars who are driven by this urgency to address the environmental failures and healing possibilities of communication not only explore and critique discourses but also often engage directly in these discourses by facilitating public processes, sharing critiques with discourse producers, and even providing alternative discourses that are more sustainable. Some environmental communication scholars choose research sites that involve environmental activism and in turn raise awareness about existing alternative or resistant discourses by writing about such practices (e.g., toxic tours led by marginalized communities). Some scholars study emerging sites of environmental action in an effort to articulate effective activist practices (e.g., studies of climate crisis activism such as the recent nationally networked Step It Up actions designed to address global warming). Still others choose sites and approaches to their research that ensure they are not only observers but also participants in the environmental work going on in their research sites (e.g., as volunteers for environmental protection groups or as active participants in environmental movements).

Many of these scholars develop theories that they apply directly to the sites they study in an effort to try to change unjust or unproductive environmental practices in these settings. For instance,

the theory of the *trinity of public participation* attempts to illustrate the role of practical theory in both planning and evaluating the effectiveness of participatory processes regarding contentious environmental issues. Another example includes the theory of *self-in-place*, which has been applied to everything from public participation in informing adaptive environmental management to exploring ways to understand and combat urban sprawl. Thus, in a variety of ways, some environmental communication scholars both apply existing theory and generate new theory in efforts to contribute to the empowerment of citizens to act on environmental issues.

Tema Milstein

See also Constructivism; Critical Discourse Analysis; Critical Rhetoric; Critical Theory; Cultural Studies; Culture and Communication; Ideology; Materiality of Discourse; Performance Theories; Phenomenology; Popular Culture Theories; Poststructuralism; Power and Power Relations; Rhetorical Theory

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EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that considers the nature, scope, and limits of human knowledge. The term derives from the Greek language: *epistēmē* (knowledge; from *epistasthai* = know, know how to do) and *logos* (study of the nature and properties of, logic or theory). Epistemologists ask whether and to what extent knowledge is based on the existence of phenomena and/or on human perceptions. Their goal is to provide a general basis that would ensure the possibility of knowledge. A continuum of epistemological assumptions exists, ranging from the perspective that there is an objective “real” truth that humans can discover to the perspective that humans create their own meanings, resulting in the possibility of many meanings for a particular object or event. With respect to human communication theory, every theory includes assumptions about the nature of knowledge and how humans obtain knowledge. Epistemology provides background understanding about how to examine the

interconnections between aspects of human communication and the best research protocol to serve as an instrument of knowledge for understanding human communication. Discussions related to processes of scholarly inquiry and theory development are inevitably grounded in epistemological issues.

History of Epistemology

The philosophical area of epistemology dates back to antiquity. During the 5th century BCE, an ongoing debate between various schools existed regarding what counts as knowledge and how we come to know what we think we know. The Sophists questioned the possibility of reliable and objective knowledge. Plato rebutted the Sophists by proposing the existence of a world of unchanging abstract forms about which it is possible to have exact and certain knowledge through reasoning. Aristotle maintained that almost all knowledge is built from experience. If people think they have a proper knowledge of something, then they know the reason or cause of the thing. This requires understanding an object within a context of explanatory propositions. Pyrrho founded a school of skeptical philosophy in the period following Aristotelian philosophy. The Skeptics maintained that they were inquirers, refusing to acknowledge claims to knowledge unless a criterion of truth could be established. The rival philosophical schools, particularly the Stoics and Epicureans, tried to produce such a criterion—something in experience that had the mark of certain truth. During the Middle Ages, philosophers blended rational methods and faith into a unified system of beliefs, restoring confidence in reason and experience.

The shift to modern philosophy is often taken to be the publication of René Descartes’s *Meditations* in 1641, since it posits a radical break with the Aristotelian scholastic tradition. During Descartes’s time there was a renewed interest in skepticism. There are several varieties of skepticism, including views that there can be no knowledge of other persons or other minds, no knowledge of the past, no knowledge of contingent truths, and even the stance that nothing can be known. Descartes sought a sure foundation for knowledge by employing his *method of doubt*, a form of systematic skepticism, created to ascertain what could

not be doubted. Descartes's systematic skepticism went further than any previous form of skepticism in that he was willing to apply the issue of doubt to himself (the existence of the self as a thinking thing). The culmination of modern philosophy is generally marked by the critical philosophy of Kant in the late 1700s. Kant's work arose out of an assessment of the shortcomings of both empiricism and rationalism; he synthesized the constructive insights of these philosophies. From the 17th to the late 19th centuries, the main argument in epistemology was whether knowledge was acquired through reasoning (a priori knowledge) or sense perception (a posteriori knowledge). Rationalists contended that all genuine knowledge of the real world is a priori knowledge. Empiricists argued that all such knowledge is a posteriori knowledge. Other philosophers sought to reconcile these positions, aiming to preserve important features of both rationalism and empiricism. Different epistemological directions were advanced during the 19th and 20th centuries, including additional inquiry into rationalist and empiricist lines of thought, as well as the emergence of continental and analytic philosophical traditions.

Epistemologists explore and debate the nature of knowledge with a desire to provide an explanation for the nature, scope, and limits of human knowledge that would make an epistemology immune to skepticism. Epistemology has traditionally pursued two different tasks: description and justification. These tasks are not inconsistent and are often connected in the writings of epistemologists. The study of epistemology has generated many debates over these broad tasks, and varying epistemological schools, including empiricism and rationalism, approach description and justification differently.

Epistemological Issues in Communication Scholarship

Communication theorists take as their task the construction of knowledge about human communication. In generating a basis for the possibility of knowledge, epistemologists have identified various forms of knowledge. These include propositional knowledge, which asserts that something is so; nonpropositional knowledge, whereby knowledge of something is gained by acquaintance or direct

awareness; empirical propositional knowledge; nonempirical propositional knowledge; and the knowledge of how to do something. There are controversies about how these forms of knowledge are related and even whether some of these are viable forms of knowledge. Historically, the empiricist and rationalist schools of epistemology approach the description and justification of knowledge in different ways.

Epistemological Task of Description

The descriptive task aims to accurately depict features of the world, including the human mind, and to determine what kinds of cognitive content ought to count as knowledge. Epistemologists are interested in discerning whether knowledge has foundations and in what sense these foundations may exist. Empiricists objectively begin with the belief that truth or reality is material, independent of feelings, the same for everyone, and external to the human mind. According to empiricists, who identify a posteriori propositional knowledge, sense experience is the foundation of knowledge; all our knowledge must ultimately be derived from our sense experience. Through their senses, people see, hear, taste, smell, and/or touch reality. Our senses do not alter or affect objective reality. Knowledge is assumed to be discovered by humans. Since the 17th and 18th centuries, a posteriori knowledge has been widely regarded as knowledge that depends for its supporting ground on some specific sensory or perceptual experience. Empiricists hold that basic beliefs exhibit knowledge initially gained through the senses or introspection.

Rationalists, who reveal a priori propositional knowledge, claim that human intellect is the foundation of all knowledge. This view claims the quality of reasons for one's true beliefs determines whether those beliefs are converted into knowledge. For rationalists, knowledge requires direct insight obtainable through the faculty of reason. They deny foundational propositions and claim that every belief derives some of its justification from other beliefs. In that way, beliefs are mutually reinforcing. Rationalist epistemologies generally assign a greater weight to the set of basic propositions that are more difficult to dislodge. Rationalists assume there are multiple views of reality and

meanings vary widely. What a person calls reality is a subjective interpretation since individuals have different experiences, values, perceptions, and life situations. For theorists who assume there are multiple legitimate realities, differences in interpretation about knowledge—and therefore human communication—are to be expected.

Fundamentally, the descriptive task of epistemologists is to seek an account of propositional knowledge, examine how we go about knowing things, and determine what counts as knowledge. Discussions of research protocol in scholarly inquiry address the specific way that scholars gather and analyze information in their attempt to generate and expand knowledge about communication phenomena. How researchers see the world, truth, and human nature influences how they seek to learn about human communication.

Epistemological Task of Justification

The justification task of epistemology aims to understand what kinds of belief can be rationally justified and how they are justified. There exists an association between research methods and research paradigms. The research methods a scholar uses can be seen as a proxy for the epistemological stance he or she adopts. The epistemological stance a communication theorist takes determines how one conducts research, interprets findings, and advances claims. Each epistemological stance holds a different ontological view of humans, most significantly regarding the extent to which human communication is determined by one's environment or one's free will. *Positivist* and *interpretivist* epistemologies reflect different views of what it means to be human and the nature of knowledge.

In the positivist epistemological tradition (empiricism), truth is justified as an objective phenomenon that can be discovered through careful observation or other scientific methods. Empiricist scholars seek to test communication theory, which appears in the form of universal or covering laws that hold true across time and space in a range of different circumstances. If human behavior is determined by biological and social forces, then we should expect to be able to predict behavior with relative certainty. Positivist epistemology holds that it is possible to explain the world because there is some type of objective truth that exists

apart from our knowing of it. Theories are sufficiently general to explain a range of different observations or experiences. By combining or aggregating various research findings, scholars can weave together information about human communication. Objectivity is the quality of being uninfluenced by values, biases, personal feelings, and other subjective factors when conducting research. People may perceive things differently, but only one perception is consistent with the real world.

The interpretive epistemological tradition (rationalism) seeks to justify knowledge by articulating rules that describe patterns or regularities in human behavior within various contexts or circumstances. Interpretivist epistemologies describe patterns that occur within limited spheres of activity. A particular text may have multiple meanings for researchers (and subjects alike). Interpretivists examine how “what we know” is intimately tied up with “who we are”: truth cannot exist apart from the knower of the truth. The social world is best understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the activities that are to be studied. Some epistemologists endorse contextualism in justifying epistemic claims. These contextually basic propositions serve as starting points for inquiry and provide support for other propositions. Contextually basic propositions can vary from context to context and from social group to social group.

The epistemological tasks of description and justification are approached differently by various philosophers. Different schools of thought enhance our understanding of the nature, scope, and limits of knowledge. What theorists know about human communication is grounded in this intellectual discussion.

A scholar's epistemological assumptions influence the way he or she conducts inquiry and constructs theories. What counts as knowledge and how knowledge is obtained determines what communication scholars posit as theory. While empiricists adopt an objective approach to developing communication theory (the truth about human communication is out there to be discovered), rationalists take a subjective approach to research (how people know is directly related to how they understand and act in the social world). Epistemological ground is present in all communication theory, particularly with respect to issues

such as whether knowledge exists before experience, how knowledge arises, if knowledge is changing or unchanging, if knowledge is best conceived in parts or as a whole, and to what extent knowledge can be made explicit or remains tacit. Philosophers wish to know what knowledge is and how it arises, relying on the assumption that the origin of knowledge can assist in understanding the nature of knowledge. Epistemological questions about the nature, scope, and function of knowledge are primary to the development of communication theory.

Pat Arneson

See also Axiology; Inquiry Processes; Linguistic Relativity; Metatheory; Ontology; Philosophy of Communication; Realism and the Received View; Social Construction of Reality

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ETHICS THEORIES

Theories about ethics attempt to answer the ancient human question, What is good? They are thereby inextricably linked to morals, values, and customs. In fact the words *moral* and *ethics* are not only cross-referenced in most English dictionaries, but the word *moral* comes from the Latin translation of the Greek word *ethics*, meaning *moral character* or *custom*. Throughout history all cultures have developed particular doctrines or philosophies of the good, many of which are classified in the West along four primary albeit overlapping lines: *virtue ethics*, which locates the good in virtuous character

and qualities; *deontological ethics*, which locates the good in adherence to duties or principles; *teleological ethics*, which locates the good in the consequences of actions and choices; and *dialogic ethics*, which locates the good in the relations between persons. During the 20th century, *postmodern ethics*, which developed largely in the West, has called these prior ethical systems into question by challenging the value of rules, procedures, systems, and fixed categories for understanding or theorizing ethics. In the field of *communication ethics*, scholars draw on all these ethical theories to address questions pertaining to issues such as truth, deception, and misrepresentation; propaganda, persuasion and argumentation; hate speech, harassment, and freedom of speech; secrecy, disclosure, and access; group decision making and institutional and corporate responsibility; ideology, hegemony, and justice; and conflict, diplomacy, and judgment, to name only a few.

Virtue Ethics

Most commonly associated with the 5th-century BCE Greek philosopher Aristotle, virtue ethics focuses on the choice, cultivation, and enactment of “virtuous” qualities, such as courage, temperance, truthfulness, and justice in both individuals and civic life. In his foundational *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle describes how virtue is an expression of character in which we become temperate by doing temperate acts. In the Aristotelian sense, then, ethics is a human activity rather than a creed, principle, or goal. Most religious traditions articulate a number of overlapping virtues, many of which derive in turn from even earlier traditions and cultures. For example, the so-called *cardinal virtues* of 12th-century Roman Christianity emphasize courage, prudence, temperance, and justice; these were derived from the earlier Greek philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, which in turn derive from far earlier Egyptian wisdom literature (circa 3000 BCE). Similarly, the 5th-century BCE *paramitas* of Indian Buddhism stress generosity, patience, honesty, and compassion and are derived in part from virtues articulated in Hindu scriptures that originated around 1000 BCE. Further east, in 5th-century BCE China, both Confucianism and Taoism identified virtues such as empathy, reciprocity, and harmony for the cultivation of ethical personal and

civic life. Even the 18th-century American political virtues of Jeffersonian democracy (inscribed in the Declaration of Independence as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness) derive in part from the Aristotelian idea of *eudaimonia*, the happiness caused by living a virtuous life. Outside religious traditions, contemporary Euro-American theorists of ethical virtue, sometimes called neo-Aristotelians, locate virtue variously, for example, in the enactment of intentions and motives (Phillipa Foot, Michael Slote); in practical action, or *phronesis* (Alisdair McIntyre); and in the civic value of emotions, especially compassion (Martha Nussbaum).

Deontological Ethics

Deontological ethics (derived from the Greek word for *duty*) is most commonly associated with the 18th-century Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant, who constructed a theory of moral reasoning that was based not on virtues, outcomes, or emotions but on duties and obligations. In his book *Foundations for a Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant proposes that ethics is based on a *universal law* that he calls the categorical imperative. Sometimes mistakenly confused with the Golden Rule (i.e., do unto others as you would have them do unto you), the categorical imperative holds that a person should act only on the principles that she or he would want everyone else to always act on. Kant's so-called universal law is therefore *categorical* because there are absolutely no exceptions under any conditions, and it is *imperative* because it is a necessary duty to which everyone must adhere. For example, Kant argues that the ethical prohibition against lying is a categorical imperative regardless of whether a seemingly greater good, such as saving a life, could be served by lying. In the same work, Kant proposes what he calls the *second formulation* of the categorical imperative, which states that we should never treat people as means to our ends, but always as ends in and of themselves. Other deontological ethical theories include religious and monastic approaches (such as adhering to divine commands, doctrinal principles, and the fulfillment of monastic vows) and social-contract theories based on the philosophers Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In contemporary Euro-American contexts, deontologists, also called neo-Kantians, have developed rights-based approaches (e.g., John

Rawls's theory of justice), discourse-based approaches (e.g., Jürgen Habermas's discourse ethics), and contract-based approaches (e.g., Thomas Scanlon's contractualism). Significantly for communication, both Habermas's and Rawls's theories center on processes of communication from which ethical norms and principles are derived. For example, Habermas's discourse ethics prescribes the development and acceptance of rationally grounded validity claims and nontranscendable norms that are produced in democratic argumentation, whereas Rawls's theory of justice relies on the discursive achievement of overlapping consensus and public reason. Both these approaches have been critiqued on a number of grounds from differing theoretical perspectives, including feminist, postmodernist, Marxist, communitarian, libertarian, and noncognitivist. For example, Chantal Mouffe critiques both Habermas's and Rawls's theories because they rely on idealized, conceptually impossible, and hyper-rational models of deliberative democracy.

Teleological Ethics

Sometimes considered the foil of deontological ethics, teleological (from the Greek word for *goal*) ethical theories (also known as *consequentialist*) exercise moral judgments based on the outcomes and consequences of actions rather than on principles, duties, or virtues. Among the most common ethical theories are *utilitarianism* and *ethical egoism*. Utilitarianism, associated with the 18th-century British philosophies of John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, theorizes that we are ethically bound to do what is best for the most people. According to Mill, for example, actions are good when they promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number. In the contemporary Euro-American context, consequentialist theorists include Peter Singer, who extends utilitarianism to include the good of animals and other beings on the planet; Shelly Kagan, who defends consequentialism from critiques by contemporary deontological ethicists; and Amarta Sen, who applies utilitarian ethics to economics, democracy, and public health. Another form of teleological ethics—ethical egoism (which is sometimes called *rational self-interest theory*)—theorizes that all ethical actions are ultimately self-serving, even those that appear to be self-sacrificing. Some contemporary

theorists argue an ethical egoist position from a psychological point of view that stresses the emotional and social benefits of ethical actions to self, whereas others argue ethical egoism from an evolutionary point of view that stresses the genetic and biological benefits to self. Still others argue ethical egoism from a rational point of view that posits that both individuals and society benefit when each individual self benefits. Teleological ethics has been critiqued on a number of grounds from a number of perspectives, most especially the deontological and virtue-based approaches. Martha Nussbaum, for example, argues that consequentialist reasoning all too easily leads to a kind of heartless cost-benefit calculation that excludes the full expanses of the ethical.

Dialogic Ethics

Rather than theorizing an ethics based in individual character, duty, outcome, or interest, *dialogic ethics* locates the ethical in the intersubjective sphere of communicative relationships between and among persons. Associated largely with the work of two 20th-century Jewish European philosophers, Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, dialogic ethics posits ethics as *first philosophy* wherein the ethical relation with the other, rather than the *ontology* of the self, is understood to be foundational to human experience. To Buber, the person becomes a person by saying *Thou* and thereby entering into relation with other persons. The *Thou*, in Buber's understanding, is not a monadic subjectivity but a relation of intersubjectivity, or development of mutual meaning, that arises from people cohabiting communication exchanges in which understanding arises from what happens in between the subjectivity of persons. To Levinas, one's personal subjectivity can arise only through one's own responsibility to the other, who is utterly different from oneself and to whom one owes everything. Dialogic ethics thus requires a healthy respect for the irreducible alterity, or otherness, of persons with whom one has dialogue, wherein the self never mistakes its own understanding of the other for the other himself or herself. In the context of communication studies, dialogic ethics has generated a rich body of research by contemporary scholars such as Rob

Anderson, Ronald Arnett, Kenneth Cissna, Michael Hyde, and Jeffrey Murray wherein the ultimate issues in communication ethics pertain not so much to words themselves, but rather to the ethical realm in which communication is constitutive of persons, cultures, publics, and relationships. For example, to Cissna and Anderson, dialogic ethics involves an awakening of *other-awareness* that occurs in and through a moment of meeting.

Postmodern Ethics

Associated largely with late-20th-century Euro-American philosophers such as Zygmunt Bauman, Joseph Caputo, and Michel Foucault, and with feminist ethicists such as Carol Gilligan, Joan Tronto, and Nel Noddings, postmodern ethicists critique so-called *modernist* and *enlightenment* ethical philosophies such as virtue, deontological, and teleological ethics. Rather than conceptualize human beings as free, autonomous, independent, and rational agents, as do the modernist theorists, postmodernists view human beings as interrelated, interdependent, contradictory, emotional, and, occasionally at least, irrational social beings. Drawing in part on the 19th-century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who crafted a brilliant challenge to traditional religion, philosophy, and morality, postmodern ethicists further reject modernist ideals of certainty, universalism, and essentialism, as well as rules, codifications, and systems. In place of ethical rules or precepts, for example, Zygmunt Bauman posits the idea of moral responsibility, in which each person must stretch out toward others in pursuit of *the good* in all situations, even, or perhaps most especially, when what is the good is most uncertain. Thus Bauman cautions against certainty, calculation, and precept, arguing that reason alone is an insufficient basis for ethical action. Similarly, feminist ethicists from a range of perspectives, such as Annette Baier's virtue-oriented ethics and Chantal Mouffe's Marxist-oriented ethics, critique deontological perspectives such as Rawls's idea of the priority of the right over the good because it categorically privileges individualistic and abstract rights over collective goods and values. From a somewhat different postmodern perspective, Michel Foucault posits ethics as caring for the self through what he

calls a practice of freedom. Joseph Caputo, in contrast, argues against ethics itself and in its place posits the affirmation of the other, the singularity of each ethical situation, and the centrality of the unqualified, unconditional *gift* that requires precisely those things that are not required. The ideas of moral responsibility, care, and the gift are also central in feminist care-based postmodern ethics, which rather than focus solely on the *rights* of individuals, focuses on caring responsibilities in relationships. In her book *A Different Voice*, Carol Gilligan describes an ethic of care in which one is responsive and careful rather than careless with other people. Similarly, Noddings rejects what she calls a peculiarly rational, Western, and male conception of empathy and instead describes a process of *engrossment*, in which one does not objectively analyze or debate ethical situations.

Communication Ethics

In the field of communication, ethicists make use of all the above theories in approaching questions of ethics in interpersonal, intercultural, mediated, institutional, organizational, rhetorical, political, and public communication contexts. Clifford Christians and Michael Traber, for example, take a deontological approach in searching for ethical universals and protonorms across cultures. In contrast, Josina Makau and Ronald Arnett take a more dialogic approach in a volume on communication ethics and diversity. In contrast, Fred Casmir takes a multiperspectival approach to intercultural and international communication ethics. More recently, Michael Hyde has drawn on the dialogic ethics of Emmanuel Levinas to explore ethical rhetorical action in personal and public life, and Sharon Bracci and Clifford Christians have brought a wide range of ethical perspectives to bear on a range of communication questions in their book titled *Moral Engagement in Public Life*.

Lisbeth Lipari

See also Buddhist Communication Theory; Confucian Communication Theory; Deliberative Democratic Theories; Dialogue Theories; Empathy; Feminist Communication Theories; Hindu Communication Theory; Media Ethics Theories; Philosophy of Communication; Public Sphere

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ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMMUNICATION

The ethnography of communication (EOC), originated by linguistic anthropologist Dell Hymes, is a field of study fundamentally concerned with the idea that culture and communication are inseparably intertwined. Within communication, the shared belief and value systems comprising culture are constructed. And within communication, people build the social structures that comprise their everyday communal way of life. Thus, whenever community members communicate, they display the verbal and nonverbal elements particular to their society while simultaneously creating (and recreating) the value systems that structure that society. By attending, then, to people's routine communication, many of the core abstract elements that characterize their worldviews or cultural life can be observed, understood, compared, contrasted, and theorized. The EOC offers both theoretical and methodological lenses in order to illuminate the particular cultures of a particular group of people.

History

The ethnography of communication was initially called the *ethnography of speaking* (EOS) by Dell Hymes in 1962. Hymes's goal for his approach to the analysis of discourse centered on the role of speech in human behavior. This work coupled two fields of study—linguistics and ethnography. With the interrelationships among language, culture, and society as a traditional anthropological concern, Hymes's proposal diverged from linguistic approaches that, until that time, studied speaking as grammars or abstract linguistic systems. Hymes's proposal also diverged from ethnographic or anthropological models that traditionally studied culture as geographic boundaries, languages, races, and/or ethnicities. Hymes sought to make speech the object of investigation and rectify the problem of taking it for granted. In 1964, Hymes renamed his perspective the *ethnography of communication* in order to more expressly account for the context-dependent uses of nonvocal (e.g., drumming and whistling) and nonverbal (e.g., gestures, silence) communication.

In 1992, Gerry Philipsen broadened the EOC by introducing speech codes theory (SCT). SCT offers a communication-based analytic framework designed for describing, explaining, and/or predicting cultural communication within the context of speech communities. As an interpretive tool, SCT seeks to answer questions about the existence of codes, their substance, the ways in which they can be discovered, and their social force on the members of cultural communities. Ultimately, the study of codes serves to describe the sets of precepts and rules by which different societies enact and interpret their ways of life. In other words, SCT helps reveal how people feel and talk about what is going on in their collective lives. It helps bring to light, for example, what identities and interpersonal relationships community members can and do construct, how community members relate to their physical (natural) and metaphysical (spiritual) environment, and how different peoples approach uses of time.

Since its inception, the EOC has resulted in hundreds of studies applied across a variety of contexts, including family, leisure, and organizational life; online communication; broadcast media; and myriad other oral and written applications. Over

time, the EOC has been subject to criticisms not dealing with matters of power in social interaction. Indeed, the EOC does not advocate prejudging the incidence of particular social meanings (e.g., power and status) prior to examination of the situated interaction in question. To do so would undermine the community-based, culture-rich description the EOC calls for. Because this is a point that has too often been misunderstood, it should be underscored that the EOC can and does take power into account when it is made obvious by speech community members themselves. In such cases, ethnographers must remain open to hearing, describing, interpreting, and reporting on performances of power. For example, Philipsen's critique of a controversial speaking event involving Chicago mayor Richard Daley unveils key power-laden rules for the conduct of public discourse. Further, in a study combining the ethnography of communication and critical Whiteness theory, Patricia Covarrubias demonstrates how silence-mediated discrimination against American Indian college students is enacted in some college classrooms, thereby exposing power-laden structures.

Assumptions

The EOC operates according to particular assumptions. These assumptions reveal *what* practitioners study and *how* they study it—what, from a given perspective, counts as evidence, how evidence is interpreted, what generalizations are made about communication and communicators, and, ultimately, how those generalizations are written and presented. The EOC includes the following assumptions:

1. Communication can be described in terms of systems of rules. Community members make communication choices beyond grammar. They make choices based on what is appropriate in their sociocultural contexts. For example, blue-collar workers in Chicago, who acknowledge their speech contrasts with Standard English, deliberately use their speaking practices to garner valued in-group memberships. In fact, community members' attempts to adopt Standard English often are interpreted as symbolic moves to reject their group of origin.

2. People are users of symbols, and the particular configuration of symbols nestles the structures of sociocultural life. For example, using the Spanish pronouns *usted* (formal *you*) or *tú* (informal *you*) can help create relationships based on hierarchy or along more democratic alignments in many Latino contexts.

3. Communication is patterned. Even though an individual's personality and personal idiosyncrasies can influence communication choices, much, if not most, of human communication is structured. By and large, people's daily lives comprise many communication sequences that are repeated across contexts during the course of a routine day (e.g., what counts as polite and impolite ways for addressing others; what is the expected order of conversation in classes, at business meetings, or during doctors' appointments or religious services; and what favorite words or jargon routinely come up in conversation).

4. Communication is distinctive. What resources are available for performing communication, how communication is performed, and how communication is valued differ across sociocultural contexts. For example, the Koasati language of Louisiana provides no word for *good-bye*, thus suggesting a place to inquire about how interpersonal separations are viewed in this culture. Extending compliments between European-American communicators would most likely be considered a friendly move, whereas this might not be the case with some Chinese or Japanese communicators, whose norms about modesty would prompt them to feel uncomfortable in the same situation.

5. Communication is socially consequential, and people bear the consequences of breaches to the normative structures defined by a given society. For example, a European-American man who uses talk to resolve conflicts rather than using physical aggression could be evaluated as homosexual by some blue-collar workers in Chicago.

6. Communication is strategic, and conversants can and do artfully use verbal and nonverbal codes as cultural resources within which to achieve individual and group outcomes. Having a drink with a romantic partner every evening to talk over the day and meeting with the same group of friends for lunch regularly to blow off steam are two

examples of using verbal and nonverbal codes as resources. In such situations, everyday communication rituals involve getting together with the same people and generally talking about the same topics and using the same tone, and with each shared conversation, relationships among participants become either closer or more distant. In these particular cases, episodes of communication, involving a sequence of actions, are used in culturally preferred ways to reaffirm a sense of self and a sense of relationship through talk.

7. Communication is not absolutely determined by culture or group. Because, as Hymes noted, speech communities are organizations of diversity, people are free to circumvent, challenge, and revise communicative patterns. For example, some construction workers in Veracruz, Mexico, resist adhering to their community's generally agreed on norms for using pronouns; young employees expressly use the informal *tú* with elders, a practice that in earlier decades would have been seen as very disrespectful.

The EOC as Theory and Method

The EOC's theoretical call, ultimately, is the description of a people's means of communication and the meanings these strategies have for those who use them. As a theoretical lens, the EOC seeks to generate explanations about how, in the particular case, community members use particular communication symbols (e.g., words, phrases, silences) to make sense of their experiences. Listening for these symbols enables ethnographers (and others) to isolate the sets of ideas that inform a community's worldview. Theorizing includes identifying the rules for social behavior—prescriptions (what is allowed) and proscriptions (what is not allowed)—that shape the interpersonal structures of communities.

The EOC's methodological call, ultimately, is the abstraction of an *emic* (culture specific, insider-focused) descriptive framework. This outcome is possible via the ethnographer's engagement through participation, observation, and interviews in the field within particular communities. That is, the EOC requires the researcher to join a particular group to study the group's culture. In a way of speaking, the ethnographer works "from the

inside,” to be better poised to investigate naturally occurring communication patterns in the course of community members’ everyday activities. To isolate patterns, the ethnographer listens and watches for *who* says *what* to *whom*, *where*, *how*, *why*, and for *what* social objectives. By examining these patterns, the ethnographer can then extract themes and other details that will serve as evidence for articulating a coherent statement about the particular community’s culture.

Speech Communities and the EOC

If, as Hymes proposed, culture should not be delineated by a geographic region, a language, an ethnicity, or a race, then what should be the unit of observation? In 1968, Hymes offered an alternative unit of observation—the speech community. He defined *speech community* as a group of people who share at least one code or system of rules for enacting and interpreting their own and others’ communicative conduct.

Codes, as defined by Philipsen, are historically transmitted, socially constructed systems of symbols and meanings, premises and rules that pertain to communicative conduct. That is, the components of codes, which inextricably are woven into communication itself, are the observable expressions of beliefs of existence (what is and is not) and of value (what is good and bad). Codes comprise the inspectable infrastructure that orients a people’s real time, communicatively based social behaviors.

Moreover, participants within speech communities reveal themselves to be users of *multicodality*. In other words, members of speech communities use multiple codes to conduct their daily lives. For example, construction workers in Veracruz, Mexico, routinely use two codes of communication—the code of *confianza* (code of trust, confidence, honesty, confidentiality) and the code of *respeto* (code of respect). Workers used these distinctive and contradictory paradigms to manage their interpersonal networks and, in turn, negotiate workplace cooperation.

According to Hymes, communication practices should be studied according to the following basic social units—*communicative situation*, *communicative event*, and *communicative act*. Additional elements such as particular words, social dramas,

narratives, and even silence are available for the ethnographer to investigate.

Communicative situation is the general context of the communication. A communicative situation maintains a more or less consistent frame for observing and interpreting the particulars of communication. Examples include a class in school, a birthday party, a committee meeting, a court trial, a religious service, a dentist appointment, or a dinner with friends.

Communicative events are locally defined contexts for communication that occur, generally, within communicative situations. Communicative events constitute entry points for ethnographic analysis as they suggest unified sets of components (e.g., the same setting, the same participants, the same general topic, and the same rules for interaction). Examples include a conversation between friends during a birthday party, a call to worship during a religious service, or the opening and closing at a conference. It is during communicative events that sociocultural rules surface and can be inspected.

Communicative acts refer to the use of language to *do* or *perform* some act, to bring about some reality in the world. Examples of speech acts include commands, promises, requests, warnings, threats, compliments, apologies, suggestions, gossip, cursing, joking, and declarations of marriage. Speech acts help identify meaningful contexts for action in particular cultures. For example, cursing and swearing might be appropriate at a bar or a construction site, whereas this behavior would not be as acceptable during the delivery of a eulogy. Each context would suggest different interpersonal meanings.

Thematized terms are words that become core symbols for particular communities. Core terms or words point to concepts whose meanings are shared by community members. These terms point to places for action that are significant and relevant to the particular community members and indicate very important shared attitudes, feelings, and perspectives. For example, for the Israeli Sabra community member, the term *dugri* defines a type of communication that is immediate, blunt, and frank and expresses disagreement. The concept also is used as a cultural element to affirm a particular group identity. The particular Sabra communicators set themselves apart from other interactants

because they can and do establish common ground by speaking *dugri* to each other.

Personal address involves the expressions speakers use to point to self and other in interaction. Because personal address inherently invokes relationships among communicators, this serves as uniquely rich means for accessing cultural meanings. Personal address can include a variety of options and a variety of combinations of options. Each possible configuration conveys different meanings depending on the context. For example, titles might be followed by a last name (e.g., Mr. Smith) in a boardroom or by a first name in a kindergarten classroom (Miss Jenny) to show respect. Nicknames are very prevalent in Mexican societies to indicate intimacy and friendship. Honorifics (e.g., *san*) are common in Japanese cultures to show respect (e.g., *okaasan*, or *mother*). Honorific titles are common in many societies (e.g., Dr., Your Honor, Madame President) to showcase the importance of status and authority. Occupational titles (e.g., *Arquitecto* [Architect] and *Contador* [Accountant]) are common in cultures where people set themselves apart by attaining a formal education.

Social dramas are communicative sequences in everyday life wherein the local sociocultural rules for behavior are invoked and publicly challenged. A social drama also can involve the alienation or integration from a social group of the person whose conduct is brought into question. An example of a social drama is the sex scandal involving president Bill Clinton and intern Monica Lewinsky when the president's sexual conduct was challenged by an entire nation. Another example is the controversial event involving accusations of nepotism against Chicago mayor Richard Daley.

Narratives, or stories, are sequential accounts that are told from a particular point of view. These are useful sites for hearing culture, especially when these narratives are told and retold. The fact that the stories are retold suggests that they are important and probably entail cultural significance. A narrative that is part of European-American folklore is that of Horatio Alger. Horatio Alger stories are rags-to-riches narratives that are told and retold to illustrate how impoverished persons might be able to achieve the American Dream. These stories embody American cultural values about hard work, determination, and concern for others.

Silence is the absence of oral speech. Because silence, like speech, also is subject to a community's rules for appropriate conduct, silence offers rich possibilities for gaining insight into what is going on in a particular context. Many American Indian students, for example, use silence very differently from many of their European American counterparts. For Native students, silence often is generative or productive and positive, and they use this communication resource to shape individual and group identities, connect with other community members, and promote a traditional way of life.

SPEAKING as Device for Locating Codes

In 1974, Hymes introduced an *etic* (universal, researcher-centered) descriptive framework designed to guide the uncovering, understanding, and description of communicative patterns in any culture. Culture-specific communication patterns, an *emic* (culture-specific, insider-focused) framework, could be abstracted within these categories. Under the mnemonically coded acronym *SPEAKING*, the *etic* framework comprises eight social units useful for describing patterns of communication and for isolating cultural themes—*scene* or *setting* (physical arena and/or psychological situation); *participants* (persons involved in the interaction and their relationships to each other); *ends* (purposes and outcome of the interaction); *key* (tone or manner in which the communication is enacted); *instrumentalities* (channels or codes of communication); *norms* of interaction and interpretation (rules for how one should behave and rules for ascertaining what the particular behavior means); and *genre* (categories or types of speech acts and events).

The framework is not intended as a mechanical checklist. Rather, it is intended to provide an initial set of questions to guide the discovery and subsequent accounting of a community's ways of life as reflected and constituted by its way of communicating. *SPEAKING* also serves as a useful tool for making sociocultural comparisons.

Conclusion

As a theory and a method, the EOC seeks to expose the cultural systems of meaning making—including the tensions and contradictions—that orient a people's everyday communal life. Dedicated

to the production of nuanced understandings, the EOC centers inquiry squarely on communication. Moreover, the communication studied is that of the particular people producing it. A focus on locally produced communication helps reveal how interactants use verbal and nonverbal codes to achieve particular personal and social outcomes. It also helps describe how community members affirm, challenge, and/or transform their cultures by changing their ways of communicating. Finally, the EOC helps create cross-cultural understandings via comparative analyses and theories.

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See also Critical Ethnography; Cultural Performance Theory; Culture and Communication; Social Construction of Reality; Social Interaction Theories; Speech Act Theory; Speech Codes Theory

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ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

Ethnomethodology is an empirical study of folk or *ethno* methods of practical action and practical reasoning that examines the cultural and linguistic competencies and practices used in everyday life, from quite mundane practices such as forming a line and buying groceries to specialized practices such as forming the social bases of scientific research. Founded by American sociologist Harold Garfinkel in the 1950s and 1960s, ethnomethodology soon inspired a variety of scholars and studies that, by the mid-1970s, had established a radically new research program, not only within American sociology but within an ever-increasing international and interdisciplinary context as well.

Influences and Impacts

Ethnomethodology draws from such diverse resources as classical sociological theory, social phenomenology, linguistic phenomenology, ordinary language philosophy, and Gestalt psychology. Influenced especially by the social phenomenology of Alfred Schutz, Garfinkel and others created a

tradition of inquiry that quickly developed beyond the boundaries of phenomenology, while retaining important phenomenological interests and orientations. Schutz extended the sociology of knowledge to include the study of commonsense knowledge, and this became a foundational insight for ethnomethodology as well as for the development of social constructionism by Schutz's students Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. The phenomenological technique of suspending or bracketing one's natural experience in order to subject this experience to analytic study also became a crucial move in ethnomethodological studies.

The emphasis on the centrality of language use, interpretation, and communication sets ethnomethodology apart from much conventional sociology. Even in comparison with scholarship in linguistics and communication studies, where issues of language and communication are central, the ethnomethodological understanding of language and communication can still be quite distinctive. Despite its distinctiveness, ethnomethodology's emphasis on social practices and language use is at least generally consistent with broad shifts in contemporary philosophy, social science, and humanities, referred to as the *culture turn*, the *linguistic turn*, and the *practice turn*, that share an emphasis on questions of meaning, interpretation, and agency. Therefore, it is understandable that ethnomethodological insights have been taken up within such traditions as sociological theory, sociological and sociolinguistic ethnographies, various communication studies, pragmatics and discourse analysis, and other specialized subdisciplines or research programs such as social problems analysis and discursive psychology.

Focus on Practical Interaction

Ethnomethodology analyzes methods of practical action and practical reasoning, including language use, as they are observable in social interaction. Ethnomethodology typically examines specific courses of action or talk-in-interaction within specific settings, and it does so in much closer detail than is found in inductive or quantitative analysis. It understands mundane, vernacular methods of practical action and practical reasoning as foundational for social order and social science, deserving of study in their own right. By contrast, other

varieties of social science are understood to rely unreflectively on these practical methods, taking them for granted and treating them as uninteresting. Ethnomethodology's focus on people's practical understandings and actions in local contexts is not a variety of individualism or subjectivism, as is sometimes claimed, but rather draws attention to the importance of shared, intersubjective methods for understanding and acting. This approach is not an alternative to the study of social structure but involves an alternative conceptualization of social structure, centered around the insight that the properties, meanings, and relevances of social structure are socially accomplished by people within social interaction.

Ethnomethodological Interests in Language and Meaning

Indexicality

Indexicality was addressed prior to ethnomethodology by scholars such as Edmund Husserl and Yehoshua Bar-Hillel and refers to the contextual or embedded nature of meaning. Ethnomethodology expanded previous scholarship on indexicality, observing that the meaning of talk and texts is irredeemably indexical, always relying for its specific sense on unstated knowledge of relevant context.

Talk as Practical Action

John Searle achieved much recognition for his treatment of speech acts, drawing on the ordinary language philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein and especially J. L. Austin's discussion of *performatives*—utterances, such as “I promise,” that perform actions. Ethnomethodology radically generalizes this insight, emphasizing the thoroughly practical nature of language use. Thus language is understood in terms of language *use*, and language use is recognized as a primary type and medium of social interaction and social action.

Accountability

The literature on accounts, including such social actions as excuses and justifications, has become a significant topic in interpretive sociological studies of deviance. Ethnomethodology has applied a

much broader interest in accounting and accountability to all social phenomena, not just those problem occasions in which excuses and justifications become relevant. A broader understanding of accountability refers to the fact that speech and actions are produced and perceived methodically and conventionally, in terms of shared and mutually intelligible categories for making sense of social interaction and communication.

Documentary Method of Interpretation and Reflexivity

Another aspect of ethnomethodology in matters of sense-making and practical reasoning is suggested by its interest in what Garfinkel called the *documentary method of interpretation*, extending a notion from Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. This refers to a common type of practical inferential reasoning by which an underlying pattern is understood on the basis of certain parts, or vice versa. Certain elements come to be treated as documents of a perceived underlying pattern that both organizes and is organized by the understanding of its particular elements. Thus, for example, questions and answers are understood with reference to each other and to the context and purposes in and for which they occur. The context itself is understood with reference to the questions and answers taking place "within" it. The *hermeneutic circle* is a similar insight popularized by Hans-Georg Gadamer and others. Ethnomethodology's interest in the documentary method of interpretation is much closer to empirically available, pragmatic social action and interaction than were previous contributions in the sociology of knowledge and hermeneutic thought.

The ethnomethodological notion of *reflexivity* draws attention to the fact that descriptions partly constitute their own referents and contexts, rather than standing as independent, neutral reportage. For example, descriptions of personal schedules often perform the role of prompting or preempting invitations, actually creating and managing the schedules which are being described. The relational methods of reasoning emphasized in ethnomethodology's treatments of reflexivity and the documentary method of interpretation stand in stark contrast to traditions of research or theory that treat social phenomena as having discernible,

definitive meanings independent of each other and independent of context and independent of practices of description, as is often presupposed in causal explanation.

Programs of Research

Ethnomethodology was accompanied by the development of *conversation analysis*, founded by Harvey Sacks, whose strikingly original approach to the order of naturally occurring talk and texts was one of the forms taken by early ethnomethodology. Both the sequential analysis of conversation, associated with contemporary conversation analysis, and the analysis of talk and texts emphasizing the practical use of identity categories, as in *membership categorization analysis*, remain meaningfully rooted in ethnomethodological insights and initiatives.

On other fronts, ethnomethodological studies have progressed along a variety of lines, often related to studies of work and institutional interaction, making significant contributions, for example, to social studies of scientific knowledge, the study of computer-human interaction, the study of communication in educational settings, and the operation of rules and laws in human service agencies and legal settings. These examples merely suggest some of the clusters of ethnomethodological scholarship. Additional studies address such varied topics as improvisational jazz piano, human-animal communication, ethnic identifications in Thailand, and Tibetan philosophical discourse. Given the vast breadth and variety of members' methods of practical action and practical reasoning and their foundational importance for social interaction and social science, ethnomethodological studies will continue to inform a broad variety of scholarly inquiries and professional endeavors, even as they remain a distinctive minority interest within any particular discipline or professional field.

Tim Berard

See also Accounts and Account Giving; Conversation Analysis; Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA); Phenomenology; Pragmatics; Social Construction of Reality; Social Interaction Theories; Speech Act Theory

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EVALUATING COMMUNICATION THEORY

Scholars use several criteria to evaluate theories in order to establish their contribution to the body of knowledge and usefulness. This entry summarizes several evaluative criteria and provides a measure of the overall qualities of a good theory.

Evaluation Criteria

Theoretical Scope

Scope refers to the comprehensiveness or breadth of a theory. Although theories vary in coverage, some level of *generality* is necessary for a theory to have value. In other words, a theory must explain events beyond a single observation. One can explain an observation, but that explanation is not theoretical if it does not apply to other observations as well. In other words, a theory must cover a range of events. The more observations that a theory covers, the better the theory is judged to be.

A theory can have two types of generality. The first is the extent of a theory’s coverage. If a theory

addresses a wide spectrum of topics, it has value in helping us understand characteristics that span many aspects of communication. For example, a theory might explain how people create meaning in all forms of communication. Because the topic of meaning is so broad and covers such a wide spectrum of events, the theory would help us understand many things about communication in all its forms.

The second type of generality applies a narrow concept across many situations. The theory in this case would not address very many topics but would be widely applicable across many situations. For example, a theory might explain attitude change, a relatively narrow topic applicable in many kinds of communication, from interpersonal exchanges to media campaigns. Such theories have *power* because they explain something in many different kinds of situations.

Good theories can possess either of these types of generality. In applying this criterion, the critic looks at the usefulness of the theory in explaining a range of experiences. Does it have an appropriate level of generality? Is its coverage so narrow that it is not very helpful or so broad that it is meaningless? To whom is the theory’s breadth most relevant? A theory that looks very narrow from one vantage point may actually turn out to be quite useful to certain scholars and practitioners who work in a relatively limited field. For example, general communication scholars may find a theory of early childhood communication development too narrow to help understand communication processes across the life span, yet early childhood specialists may find the scope of such a theory just right for the kind of work they do.

Consistency

The criterion of consistency refers generally to the coherence or fit between a theory’s philosophical assumptions and substantive claims. Are the theory’s concepts and explanations consistent with the theory’s assumptions? For example, if a theory assumes that genetics and learning determine behavior, then it leaves little room for individual human choice. We might question such a theory’s appropriateness in making claims about decision making, since deterministic premises cannot lead logically to decision-making conclusions.

Appropriateness is related to the language used in theoretical statements. For example, the term *decision making* implies weighing options and making choices, while the term *behavior* does not necessarily imply choice. On the other hand, if a theorist claims that behavior is determined by previous events, then he or she would be perfectly consistent in making behavioral predictions.

Theoretical publications are not always explicit about a theory's philosophical assumptions. Often these need to be inferred from the various statements and claims within the theory, leading to the need for internal consistency among claims and explanations. Also, we get insight into a theory's premises by the methods used to verify it. For example, case studies are often used to verify theories that rely on differences among situations, while experimental studies are often used to verify theories that make causal predictions across situations. If a critic perceives that the methods used to test the theory are inconsistent with the claims of the theory itself, he or she might fault the theory on the grounds of consistency.

Heuristic Value

A heuristic is a tool that helps set direction, solve problems, or suggest ideas. A theory can be valuable if it leads to further ideas for research and additional theory development. Theories in the social sciences are rarely ends in themselves but serve to suggest fruitful avenues for investigation and concept development. Scholars may ask the questions, Where can we go with this theory? Where does it lead us in our investigations? A theory that is helpful in this way is said to have heuristic value.

A theory has heuristic value if it suggests new ways to look at old variables, provides new hypotheses to test, points to fresh situations to investigate, or opens new fields of practice. A theory may have validity in that it seems true but does little to promote ongoing scholarship. Such a theory would fail the heuristic test.

Validity

Validity is the extent to which a theory is "true." However, truth can be measured in a variety of ways, so validity is really a great deal more than

simple truth. Depending on the type of theory, validity can be assessed in three ways.

The first form of validity is the *correspondence* between the theory's claims and observations. If the theory corresponds with what people have observed in their research, it is said to be valid in this sense of the word. Indeed, one of the primary functions of research is to test the validity of theories, or, conversely, to lead to theoretical claims that are valid by establishing a correspondence between research results and theoretical claims. This first form of validity is traditional and commonly used. It is perhaps the only form of validity recognized in mainstream sciences. However, social sciences typically use theory for reasons to explain concrete reality, requiring an expansion of the criterion.

The second form of validity is *generalizability*, or scope, as defined above. A theory is valid if you can predict outcomes in new situations based on claims developed from research in known situations. Sometimes called predictive validity, this standard values theories that accurately predict what will happen in a situation that has not yet been examined. If an experiment results in outcomes expected based on the theory, this experiment adds weight to the validity of the theory. However, a theory does not have to predict a cause-effect relationship to be generalizable. A theory might explain that people use a certain type of expression in certain kinds of situations. When this is apparent in a case previously not studied, validity is at work.

Third, validity can refer to the utility or usefulness of a theory. A theory can be said to have practical validity, which means that it is valuable for some use. This is the primary form of validity applied to practical, as opposed to predictive, theories. Here the critic asks, Does this theory help us achieve an important goal? Does it highlight certain ideas that help us understand or navigate a challenging life situation? Does it identify the dimensions of situations that should be taken into account when engaging in a certain practice? Does it describe certain outcomes that might be possible and thereby help us identify our goals?

Obviously, a theory may have more than one type of validity. We already know that every theory should have some level of generalizability. In addition to this, however, the theory may display correspondence and utility. In general, the more a theory can do, the better that theory is judged to be.

Parsimony

Parsimony is logical simplicity or theoretical elegance. A theory that reaches a claim in a few simple steps is superior to one that reaches the same claim through a longer chain of logical steps. Stated differently, a theory's power is increased when it can reach its conclusions with just a few key concepts rather than many. If a theory is parsimonious, it has gotten to the bottom of things quickly: It has identified the most basic explanatory variables or mechanisms. It predicts a lot from just a little.

Like all the criteria, however, parsimony is relative. A theory should be logically simple, but not simplistic. A good theory reduces complex experiences to a manageable and understandable set of factors without losing the richness and complexity of human experience. A theory may be highly parsimonious but in the process lose much of its heuristic value. It may be parsimonious but not very generalizable. The theory may be so parsimonious that it is closed and resistant to productive change.

Openness

Although the classical ideal for a theory in science is to be final and closed—answering all questions—in many branches of the social sciences, openness is held as a higher value. Even in physics, which aims to end itself by producing a Theory of Everything, many scientists know this is unrealistic and always want openings for the next step. Thus a good theory is actually tentative and open to new extensions. A good theory acknowledges that it is incomplete.

Theories can be open in three ways. They may invite development through *intension*, or development of more detail within particular concepts; by *extension*, or development of additional concepts; and by *revolution*, meaning that there are questions the theory cannot answer, and when these are addressed, entirely new concepts come to light.

Making an Overall Judgment

Although these six criteria provide a set of measuring sticks, a good theory integrates these and emphasizes those most relevant to the goals of the

theory. If a theory is successful, it will have several characteristics:

1. The theory will provide new insights. It will not belabor the obvious but lead scholars to see phenomena in ways they might not otherwise have considered. Studying a theory, or producing one, as the case may be, leads the scholar to gain new ideas.
2. The theory will be conceptually interesting. It will provide insights that are fascinating to contemplate.
3. The theory will develop over time and evolve from one set of concepts to a better, more useful set. It has a history and a literature attached to it. It continues to attract interest and new contributors.
4. It is a collaborative product. It has developed as the result of numerous contributions by various scholars. One person may be responsible for providing a key or central idea in the theory, but the theory has gotten better over the years by teams of scholars working together.
5. The theory is durable. It passes the test of time. It is not easily abandoned. Even after its heyday, the theory is still taught because its concepts are useful.

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See also Metatheory; Theory; Traditions of Communication Theory

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EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism is difficult to define. This is due, in large part, to the fact that although it was conceived as a serious philosophical doctrine, it has been frequently vulgarized to the level of some loosely related styles of writing or, worse yet, to a fad, so that the existentialist label gets applied to authors or ideas that are only remotely, if at all, connected to existentialist philosophy. More significantly, a further complication derives from the fact that, as is the case with so many philosophies, the ideas proposed by various existentialist thinkers often do not share any one cardinal point. For example, Martin Heidegger, one of the major voices of the existential philosophy, vehemently chides Jean-Paul Sartre, a giant of existentialist thinking in his own right, for misunderstanding the term *existence* and thus debasing the label *existentialism* to mean some kind of nihilistic view on life and human history. Moreover, even when existential philosophers draw on the same author as a common source of their thinking, they disagree so substantially over the interpretation of this source that the end products are hard pressed to form a coherent system of thought.

Despite all the differences among existentialist thinkers, however, there is nevertheless a core theme around which their respective works orbit, a theme that gives what is called existentialism a recognizable contour and helps gather diverse writings as parts of a distinct philosophical perspective. This theme—also known as one of the battle cries of a general philosophical revolt taking place in Europe during the early decades of the 20th century—can be stated as follows: *Existence precedes essence*. If existentialism has made any significant contribution to philosophy, this contribution can be measured by what this statement means to suggest.

The relation between existence and essence is one of the oldest problems in philosophy. To say that something exists is simply to point to the fact that “it is.” Existence is therefore characterized by concreteness and particularity, in short, by a sheer givenness. The idea of “essence” is different in a significant way from that of the “givenness” that defines existence. If the existence of something has to do with the fact that “it is,” the essence of that

something consists in “what it is.” The essence of an object, a silver dollar, for example, is constituted by the specific characteristics that make this object, this silver dollar, one kind of object rather than another. Seen in this way, essence is something that lends itself to rational thought, to analysis, comparison, and synthesis, in ways that the sheer particularity and “thatness” of existence do not.

As the statement “existence precedes essence” suggests, existentialism prioritizes existence and conceives of essence as derivative or secondary. In contrast to rationalist thinking, which exalts existence at the expense of essence, existentialism begins by emphasizing the *fact* of existence—the undeniable fact that *there is* something rather than nothing. This emphasis is meant by existentialists to drive home two ideas that challenge what they take to be a type of anemic thinking characteristic of idealist philosophers, most notably Plato and Georg Hegel. First, existence is not to be understood as a property, as the point one makes when one says that “height” is the property of a tall person; second, the priority of existence over essence must be affirmed when one makes the metaphysical distinction between *reality* and *appearance*, if only because, as Kierkegaard, following Kant, argues, no concept of a given object entails the existence of that object. Put simply, while essences are something that can be thought about, existence is a fact that has *always* and *already* taken place, and being a *fait accompli*, it cannot be wished away. Existence, as existentialists would say, is irreducibly *factual*; it is the very datum, the first principle, from which philosophical reflections begin and in which they should finally end.

Now, it should be noted that by *existence*, existentialists do not mean something being there in the abstract. Rather than designating a general concept arrived at by abstracting what is common to all that appears, *existence* here means—exclusively and precisely—*individual* existence or, we can say, existence grasped according to one’s inalienable individuality. This emphasis on the individual follows from existentialists’ insistence that existence be approached and comprehended from the first-person perspective. This perspective opens a new vista of philosophical exploration in two ways. On one hand, it constitutes the individual as a legitimate category of philosophical reflection; on the other, it calls for confronting and

rethinking the individual according to the horizon of possibilities that defines his or her identity, that is, not in terms of contingent sociocultural determinations but in terms of the individual's fundamental truth as an ongoing engagement with what lies ahead of him or her. Unlike an object, a chair, which is simply and indifferently there, an individual *exists concretely*. The individual exists concretely in the sense that his or her existence is *lived* by himself or herself only—lived, that is, in the singularity of a life that is his or her own, and about which he or she cannot but be concerned in the most intimate manner.

Existentialism highlights the concept of agency as it relates to the human condition. Existence means living and acting in the world. By extension, to act is to make a choice; action is always the outcome of choice making. This is the case, not simply because we make choices all the time, but because we cannot avoid doing so; indeed, even when we refuse to make a choice, the refusal is nonetheless a choice. In this sense, choice making is always *of* the self, in that a choice is always made by the self and for the same self as well. Because one must make a choice on one's own and because the choice made is for oneself only—although the choice made might have consequence for others—one is essentially responsible for oneself and for the choices one has made. Moreover, because one is responsible for oneself as one responds to one's own calling to make a choice, one must be considered *free*. According to existentialism, in the strict sense, humans are essentially free, for no one can prevent us from making choices. Or, as existentialists phrase it aptly, we are “condemned” to freedom. In existentialism, freedom and existence collapse into each other in the figure of the individual who, willingly or not, must be held responsible for himself or herself.

Existentialism is one of the major movements in philosophy of the 20th century. Although its fundamental tenets have been challenged by subsequent developments such as structuralism and critical hermeneutics, the deep analyses of the human condition made by existentialists have continued to fascinate writers and artists working across the spectrum of the humanities. From Fyodor Dostoyevsky to Albert Camus, from Edvard Munch to Mark Rothko, the theme of human freedom and anguish in existence can be found across

literary and artistic expressions in our own time. As made clear by existentialism, the question of existence is one that comes to us all, even if we try to repress it. In existentialism, philosophy meets life in its bare truth. To understand existentialism, one must read existentialist philosophers. When we read these philosophers, we might not find any consolation for the difficulties we face in life, but we will not fail to find the truth—the all too cruel truth—of who we are and why we cannot but face a future that is solely of our own making.

Briankle G. Chang

See also Hermeneutics; Ontology; Phenomenology; Philosophy of Communication

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EXPECTANCY VIOLATIONS THEORY

Expectancy violations theory (EVT) was developed by Judee K. Burgoon and several colleagues to predict and explain the impact of unexpected communication behavior. Inspired partly by Michael Burgoon's linguistic-based expectancy theory and by Robert Rosenthal's expectancy signaling work, it originated as a theory of the effects of interpersonal proxemic violations. It has subsequently been expanded to cover other forms of nonverbal and verbal communication violations.

Key Concepts

Expectations are enduring cognitions about the anticipated verbal and nonverbal communication of others. Expectations are comprised of two components, the social and the idiosyncratic. At the social level they encompass the roles, rules, norms, and practices that typify a given culture, community, or context. At the idiosyncratic level, they

encompass person-specific knowledge related to another's typical communication practices. Predictions for any given individual, message, or transaction rely on a combination of generic expectancies and any individuating knowledge of how the actor's behavior deviates from those general patterns.

Expectations derive from three classes of variables: actor, relationship, and context. *Actor variables* refer to characteristics related to individuals, such as their gender, age, or country of origin. For example, women are expected to stand closer to one another than are men; people who are similar in age are expected to stand closer together than pairings of younger and older. People from "contact" cultures are expected to stand closer together than are those from "noncontact" cultures.

Relationship variables refer to characteristics jointly defined by two or more individuals, such as their status, familial relationship, or attraction. When two people are of equal status, they expect to stand closer to one another and use more mutual gaze than when there is a status difference; in the latter case, the more deferential individual may stand at a more respectful distance and avoid direct eye contact. In parent-child relationships, proximity is expected to be closer than in stranger interactions. Likewise, interactions between people who like one another are expected to be characterized by closer proximity and more eye contact than are interactions between people who dislike one another.

Context variables refer to features of the setting and the type of interaction in which communication takes place. Seated interactions have different expectations from standing ones. So do formal interactions relative to informal ones.

The combination of all these factors yields a net expectation for what communication practices are normative. Rather than being a fixed value such as a particular distance or percentage of eye gaze, expectations take the form of a range of behavior that is customary. An *expectancy violation* occurs when another's behavior falls outside this range and is sufficiently deviant to be noticed. Sometimes violations are registered consciously. Other times, the behavior may fall outside a given *limen*, or perceptual threshold, and still not be noticed at a conscious level. In these cases, whether an expectancy violation has occurred or not falls into a gray

area. It may be inferred only from changes in another's behavior that it precipitates.

Expectancy violations are given a *valence* from positive to negative. The valence is partly governed by *communicator reward valence*. *Reward valence* draws from traditional rhetorical views of communicator *ethos*, in which communicators are evaluated according to character, competence, composure, sociability, and dynamism (among other dimensions of credibility), and from B. F. Skinner's models of reinforcement learning, in which the positive or negative consequences of an act affect subsequent responding. According to EVT, receivers assess (albeit usually unconsciously) the net reward value that a communicator holds for them. Reward valence is influenced by the same classes of factors that influence expectations, such as a person's gender, age, communicator style, status, and attractiveness.

Three other relevant concepts are *arousal-distraction*, *interpretation-appraisal*, and *violation valence*. These are incorporated into the predictions that are made.

Predictions

EVT predicts that violations are arousing—they elicit psychological and/or physiological activation—and distract a recipient's attention from the ostensible main topic of conversation and toward the source of the violation. Violations should cause more arousal and distraction than expectancy confirmations (i.e., conforming to the expected behavior pattern).

As sense-making organisms, humans are next predicted to engage in a two-stage interpretation and appraisal process. They attempt to assign meaning to the violation act itself. Does, for example, a personal-space violation mean that the perpetrator is being aggressive or ingratiating? They also appraise the act as desirable or undesirable. Is close proximity wanted or unwanted? In both cases, the interpretation and the appraisal may be moderated by who is committing the violation. For example, a move closer by a very attractive member of the opposite sex may be "read" as a sign of interest and may be quite welcome. The same move by a repulsive individual may be "read" as sexual harassment and may be quite unwelcome. The net result of this process, which may occur

almost instantaneously, is a valencing of the violation itself as positive or negative.

The final step of the theory is predicting the effects of expectancy violations relative to nonviolations. Positive violations are predicted to produce more favorable outcomes than are positive confirmations; negative violations are predicted to produce more negative outcomes than are negative confirmations. The theory makes a strong point that the comparison of interest is not between positive and negative violations but between positive violations and positive confirmations or negative violations and negative confirmations. In other words, it makes the counterintuitive claim that violations are sometimes better than doing what is expected (when the violation is a positive one). The theory also calls attention to the prospect of violations' actually being positively valenced, unlike the common claim that violations are by definition negative.

The theory also can apply to positive confirmations of behavior, in that expectations and communicator reward valence should be influenced by the same variables as in the violation case, and the interpretation-appraisal process should still take place. However, the intensified reactions due to arousal and distraction are missing in the confirmation case.

Empirical Support

Initial tests of the theory focused on violations of conversational distance and predicted that close violations exceeding a very close threshold called the threat threshold would have negative consequences regardless of who committed them. However, the results did not support the existence of a threat threshold. The theory was then revised, and the role of violation interpretation became more prominent. Tests of arousal established that both close and far violations elicited arousal, and

tests of positive-violation and negative-violation predictions garnered support for such violations as proximity, eye gaze, immediacy, involvement, touch, and posture. The theory has been applied to persuasion, adaptation patterns in interpersonal interaction, intercultural interactions, deception, and group decision making.

Judee K. Burgoon

See also Cognitive Theories; Deception Detection; Immediacy; Interaction Adaptation Theory; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Learning and Communication; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Proxemics

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EXTENDED PARALLEL PROCESS MODEL

See Campaign Communication Theories; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories

F

FACE NEGOTIATION THEORY

The face negotiation theory, developed by Stella Ting-Toomey, explains the culture-based and situational factors that shape communicators' tendencies in approaching and managing conflicts. The meaning of *face* is generally conceptualized as how we want others to see us and treat us and how we actually treat others in association with their social self-conception expectations. In everyday interactions, individuals are constantly making conscious or unconscious choices concerning face-saving and face-honoring issues across interpersonal, workplace, and international contexts. Although face is about a claimed sense of interactional identity, *facework* is about verbal and non-verbal behaviors that protect-save self, other, or mutual face.

The researching of facework can be found in a wide range of disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, linguistics, management, international diplomacy, and human communication studies, among others. The concept of face has been used to explain linguistic politeness rituals, apology acts, embarrassment situations, requesting behaviors, and conflict interactions. The root of the face negotiation (FN) theory was influenced by Hsien Chin Hu's 1944 anthropological essay "The Chinese Concept of Face," Erving Goffman's 1955 sociological article "On Face-Work," and Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's 1987 linguistics monograph on "Politeness."

The foundational concepts of the FN theory first appeared in Ting-Toomey's 1985 article "Toward a Theory of Conflict and Culture." In a subsequent article in 1988, "Intercultural Conflict Styles: A Face-Negotiation Theory," the formal version of the theory became available—with five core assumptions and 12 theoretical propositions stating the relationship between individualism-collectivism and different facework interaction styles. In 1998, a second rendition of the FN theory with seven assumptions and 32 propositions was published in an essay on "Facework Competence." Based on the results of several large data sets, a third version of the FN theory appeared in 2005 in "The Matrix of Face" and contained an updated 24 FN theoretical propositions.

Core Assumptions and Face Orientations

The seven core assumptions of the FN theory are as follows: (1) people in all cultures try to maintain and negotiate face in all communication situations; (2) the concept of face is especially problematic in emotionally threatening or identity-vulnerable situations when the situated identities of the communicators are called into question; (3) the cultural value spectra of individualism-collectivism and small-large power distance shape facework concerns and styles; (4) individualism and collectivism value patterns shape members' preferences for self-oriented face concern versus other-oriented or mutual-oriented concern; (5) small and large power distance value patterns shape members'

preferences for horizontal-based facework versus vertical-based facework; (6) the value dimensions, in conjunction with individual, relational, and situational factors, influence the use of particular facework behaviors in particular cultural scenes; and (7) intercultural facework competence refers to the optimal integration of knowledge, mindfulness, and communication skills in managing vulnerable identity-based conflict situations appropriately, effectively, and adaptively.

Cultural Membership and Face Concerns

Self-face concern is the protective concern for one's own identity image when one's own face is threatened in the conflict episode. *Other-face concern* is the concern for accommodating the other conflict party's identity image in the conflict situation. *Mutual-face concern* is the concern for both parties' images and the image of the relationship. Whether we choose to engage in self-face protection or mutual-face protection often depends on our ingrained cultural socialization process, individual trait tendencies, and embedded situational factors.

More specifically, for example, in a direct empirical test of the theory by John Oetzel and Ting-Toomey in 2003, the research program tested the underlying assumption of the FN theory that face is an explanatory mechanism for cultural membership's influence on conflict behavior. A questionnaire was administered to 768 participants in four national cultures: China, Germany, Japan, and the United States in their respective languages asking them to recall and describe a recent interpersonal conflict. The major results of the study are as follows: First, cultural individualism-collectivism had direct effects on conflict styles, as well as mediated effects through self-construal and face concerns. Second, self-face concern was associated positively with dominating style, and other-face concern was associated positively with avoiding and integrating styles. Third, German respondents reported the frequent use of direct-confrontative facework strategies; Japanese reported the use of different pretending and accommodating strategies and minimize the severity of the conflict situation; Chinese engaged in a variety of avoiding, accommodating, and third-party appeals' tactics;

and U.S. Americans reported the use of up-front expression of feelings and remaining calm as conflict facework tactics.

Within the pluralistic U.S. sample, multiethnic research by Ting-Toomey and her co-researchers in 2000 has also uncovered distinctive conflict interaction styles in relationship to particular ethnic identity salience issues.

Although previous research studies have focused on testing the relationship between individualism-collectivism value dimension and facework strategies, recent research effort has focused more on unpacking the small and large power distance value spectrums with particular facework practice.

Face Threatening Process Conditions

It seems that when an individual's face image is being threatened in a conflict situation, she or he would likely experience identity-based frustration, emotional vulnerability, anger, hurt, and even vengeance. The threats to face can be on a group membership level or an individual level.

In the 2005 FN theory version, the following conditions were posited concerning the valence direction of an intercultural face threatening process (FTP): First, the more important the culturally appropriate facework rule is violated, the more severe the perceived FTP. Second, the larger the cultural distance between the conflict parties, the more mistrust or misunderstanding cumulate in the FTP. Third, the more important the conflict topic or imposition of the conflict demand, as interpreted from distinctive cultural angles, the more severe the perceived FTP. Fourth, the more power the conflict initiator has over the conflict recipient, the more severe the perceived FTP by the recipient. Fifth, the more harm or hurtful the FTP produces, the more time and effort is needed to repair the FTP. Self-face concern becomes incrementally more salient if several of these conditions are present in an FTP.

For example, individuals are likely to move toward self-face saving and in-group face-saving emphasis as they perceive the escalation of the various face threatening conditions directed at them or their in-groups. Cultural assumptions, individual personality tendencies, and situational pressures frame the underlying interpretations of what count as a severe face threatening interaction episode.

Individual, Situational, and Facework Competence

Individual Personality Factors

The term *self-construal* was coined by Hazel Markus and Shinobu Kitayama in 1991 and is concerned with one's self-image as emphasizing either an independent or an interdependent self. The independent construal of self involves the view that an individual is a unique entity with an individuated repertoire of feelings, cognitions, and motivations. In comparison, the interdependent construal of self involves an emphasis on the importance of in-group-relational connectedness and intertwined interdependent fate focus. Self-construal is the individual-level equivalent of the cultural variability dimension of individualism-collectivism.

In individualistic cultural communities, there may be more situations that evoke the need for independent-based actions. In collectivistic communities, there may be more situations that demand the sensitivity for interdependent-based decisions. The manner in which individuals conceive of their self-images should have a profound influence on the expectancies of what constitute appropriate and effective responses in diverse facework situations. Both dimensions of self also exist within each individual, regardless of cultural membership identity.

For example, Oetzel and Ting-Toomey in 2003 found that independent self-construal is associated positively with self-face concern and the use of dominating-competing conflict strategies. Interdependent self-construal, on the other hand, is associated positively with other-face concern and the use of avoiding and integrating conflict tactics. It would appear that independent self-construal fosters the use of up-front and low-context demanding interaction responses, while interdependent self-construal emphasizes circumspective and high-context yielding interaction patterns.

Situational Appraisal Factors

Two other possible factors that moderate the activation of an independent versus an interdependent self are situational role appraisal and in-group-out-group distance factors. Situational role appraisal factors can include the degree of

formality of the conflict setting, the interaction climate of the situation, the role relationship between the conflict participants, and the perceived goals of the facework negotiation process. To illustrate, the role-appraisal process can include an assessment of the role expectancies between the conflict parties such as professional role identities and other salient group membership and personal identity concerns. For example, Rebecca Merkin in 2006 integrated small-large power distance value dimension to the individualism-collectivism value dimension in explaining face threatening response messages and conflict styles in multiple cultures. She found that high-status individuals from large power distance cultures tend to use both direct and indirect facework strategies to deal with face threatening situations—depending on whether they were delivering positive or negative messages. Thus, an accurate assessment of the culture-based situational factors that frame facework strategy usage can be critical in promoting competent conflict management outcome.

Furthermore, many relational distance factors are important in competent facework negotiation. One of the key factors would be the intricate relationship between in-group-out-group conceptualization and facework strategy enactment. For example, according to Ting-Toomey and Jiro Takai in 2006, the broad-based in-group category in the Japanese language can be further refined into *inner-intimate in-group members* and *familiar in-group members*. Likewise, the broad-based out-group category can be further fine-tuned into *familiar out-group members* and *peripheral out-group members*. In the archetypical form, appropriate facework rituals can be suspended in the inner-intimate in-group category or the peripheral out-group category. Instead, deep heart-to-heart talks can exist in the former category, and indifferent facework tactics can permeate the latter category.

Facework Interaction Competence

The factors in the situational role and the relational distance processes have a strong impact on facework interaction competence in different cultural communities. A competent facework negotiator would need to increase his or her awareness concerning self's and other's cultural and individual facework conditioning process. An optimal

degree of facework competence emphasizes the integration of *culture-sensitive knowledge*, *mindfulness*, and adaptive *communication skills*. Culture-sensitive knowledge is considered as the most important component that underscores the other components of facework competence. Without culture-sensitive knowledge, conflict parties cannot learn to uncover the implicit ethnocentric lenses they use to evaluate behaviors in an intercultural conflict situation. Without knowledge, negotiators cannot reframe their interpretation of a conflict situation accurately from the other's cultural frame of reference. In-depth cultural knowledge can lead to some truly "aha!" intercultural learning moments.

These aha moments coupled with mindful reflections can help an individual to develop constructive conflict skills and build competent interaction capacities. To be a mindful interpreter of intercultural conflict, individuals must develop a holistic view of the critical factors that frame the face negotiation process of a conflict situation. According to Ting-Toomey in 1999, mindfulness means attending to one's internal assumptions, cognitions, and emotions and at the same time, becoming attuned to the other's conflict assumptions, cognitions, and emotions. To be mindful of intercultural differences, individuals have to learn to see the unfamiliar behavior from a nonjudgmental, nonreactive standpoint. Mindfulness can be practiced through a deep state of listening with an uncluttered mind. To cultivate competent facework consciousness, communication skills such as mindful reframing, mutual face validation, decentering, adaptive code switching, and dialogue bridging skills are all needed to connect the culture-based knowledge with the transformative, respectful facework practice.

Stella Ting-Toomey

See also Conflict Communication Theories; Cross-Cultural Communication; Cultural Types Theories; Facework Theories; Intercultural Communication Competence; Intercultural Communication Theories

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FACEWORK THEORIES

Physical faces are one of the primary means by which we distinguish individuals. In facework theories, however, instead of referring to one's physical face, the word *face* is a metaphorical allusion to one's desired social identity or image(s). One's metaphorical face is manifested through communication. Researchers have coined a variety of words to represent different types of facework, including: *face-honoring*, *face-threatening*, *face-saving*, *face-protecting*, *face-building*, *face-depreciating*, *face-giving*, *face-negotiating*, *face-compensating*, *face-restoring*, *face-neutral*, and *face-constituting*. Facework theories, largely grounded in Erving Goffman's writings on facework and Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's model of politeness, have been used to examine communication practices in multiple contexts.

Origins and Definitions of Facework

Goffman's 1955 publication, "On Face-Work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements of Social Interaction," in which he explicitly linked communication practices and facework, is often credited as the origin of facework theories about communication in the United States. Goffman referenced publications on

face from Chinese and American Indian perspectives published between 1894 and 1954. In one of these publications, Hsien Chin Hu linked the word *face* to two Chinese concepts: *mien-tz*, for the kind of prestige that comes from personal success, and *lien*, for the regard bestowed upon an individual by a group based on his or her moral reputation. Through a series of illuminating contrasts, Yu-tang Lin noted that face is psychological not physiological; not washed or shaven, but granted, lost, fought for, and given as a gift; intangible, but nonetheless regulates interactions; invisible, yet shown in public; governed not by reason, but by social conventions; not purchased with money, but the most prized possession. Goffman conceptualized face as a public image (line) that is performed in front of others, an image that is consistent with approved social values and rules for social interaction.

Even though face is often treated as a psychological concept, as though the face of an individual is distinct from the face of others, it may be more accurate to conceptualize face as a sociological or interactional concept. Scholars have argued that face does not reside in the body or personality of an individual, but in interactions of communicators and the meanings assigned to those interactions. Individuals do not own fixed, unchanging faces; rather faces are coconstructed and reconstructed in social interactions. The specific rules for honoring one's own face or the face of others can vary from culture to culture, group to group, or context to context. The word *work* is appropriate in reference to face because face is dynamic and ever changing, and one has to work to create and maintain desired faces. The phrase *impression management*, as a descriptor of one type of facework, also indicates that maintaining or enhancing images requires labor; face is something communicators "manage." Unfortunately, there are also some individuals who work at threatening the face of others, as in conflicts between rivals and negative political advertisements. Still, most of the scholarship on facework has focused on its positive applications.

Politeness as One Type of Facework

Brown and Levinson developed a model of politeness grounded in Goffman's notion of face. Brown

and Levinson maintained that humans possess two face-wants: the desire to have one's actions unimpeded (*negative face*) and the desire to be liked by others (*positive face*). Other scholars have described these desires as the need for autonomy and the need for approval. Tae-Seop Li and John Waite Bowers further subdivided the desire for approval into two, leading them to identify three types of face: *fellowship face*, the desire to be included; *competence face*, the desire to be respected; and *autonomy face*, the desire not to be imposed upon.

Brown and Levinson conceptualized politeness as a redress to a face threatening act (FTA). Utterances that honor one's autonomy or compensate for an imposition on autonomy (e.g., "If you are not too busy, I would really appreciate your help on party preparations") are called *negative politeness*, while utterances that expressed positive regard for the listener are called *positive politeness* (e.g., "Thank you for being such a great friend"). A single utterance can contain both negative and positive politeness (e.g., "Could I please have one of your fabulous cookies?").

Although the means for fulfilling the desires of autonomy and approval vary culturally, Brown and Levinson argued that the desires themselves are universal. Other scholars called into question whether the need for autonomy is a universal desire and demonstrated that face-needs may conflict. For example, requests were defined as inherently face threatening in that they imply a desire to impose on another, to threaten the addressee's autonomy. However, these definitional assumptions ignore other possibilities. Requests can also be signals for increasing intimacy and trust, which in turn can honor one's approval and competence face-desires.

Facework in Multiple Contexts

A review of the book in which Brown and Levinson's work first appeared was published in *Philosophy and Rhetoric* in 1980. In the early 1980s, scholars in the discipline of communication conducted research on accounts for failures, compliance-gaining, and politeness using Brown and Levinson's model. Since then, there have been many extensions and applications of facework theories to communication.

Beyond Politeness

Facework encompasses more and is more complex than politeness. Although politeness is aimed at meeting the autonomy, solidarity, and competence face-desires of others (*other-face*), facework can be threatening, as well as honoring, and it can be directed toward oneself (*self-face*), as well as others. *Mutual-face* is concerned with the face-desires of speakers and hearers and their relationship. Facework includes avoiding FTAs (e.g., criticizing, complaining, disagreeing, cursing, insulting, interrogating, stereotyping, stigmatizing, drawing attention to mistakes or limitations, challenging, demanding acquiescence, refusing a request or offer), as well as engaging in such acts. Confessions, apologies, and admissions of vulnerabilities can be simultaneous FTAs for the speakers and face-honoring or face-compensating acts for certain kinds of listeners. Celebrations of successes can be face-honoring, unless they are viewed as bragging or disrupting harmony by singling out individuals or by implying criticism of others, in which case they become face threatening. Finally, the face one tries to claim for oneself may not be the same face recognized or granted by others. Facework involves dialectical tensions in which participants balance each other's face-desires along the continuums of autonomy-inclusion and dignity-humility.

In addition, some scholars have maintained that face should not be conceptualized as belonging to an individual or as being encoded and decoded through a single utterance, but rather as something that is created interactionally. Victoria Chen describes an interconnected enactment of face for both the host and guest through her explication of the accomplishment of *mien-tz* and *keh chee* (guest spirit) at the Chinese dinner table. Her analysis also demonstrates a paradox; in order to meet the positive face-desires of both the guest and the host to be perceived as valued and competent, the host has to violate the guest's negative face (desire for autonomy) by insisting that the guest eat more. In his *Face Constituting Theory*, Robert Arundale noted that face is conjointly coconstituted in interaction. For example, an utterance such as "That's a nice dress" is understood as a compliment, as a positive face act when it is followed by "Thanks," but as a request, a negative face threat, when followed by "You can't borrow it."

Facework in Various Communication Practices

Facework is associated with a wide range of communication practices. In explorations of autonomy, researchers have used facework models to look at advice, compliance gaining, conflict, demands, instruction, negotiation, and requests. In investigations of solidarity desires, researchers have examined emotional expressiveness and responsiveness, empathic or supportive messages, relational development and decay, gratitude, invitations, listening, and offers. Competence desires are addressed in research about affirmations, appreciative inquiry, blame, compliments, criticisms, feedback, praise, and tact. In recognition of social rules regarding social status and other relational expectations, facework has included examinations of deference, demeanor, and respect. Studies that focus on accounts, apologies, denials, excuses, and explanations have included information about repairing damage to face. Facework has been associated with a wide range of emotions, including affection, anger, anxiety, contempt, embarrassment, fear, hurt, joy, pride, regret, and shame.

Some researchers have hypothesized gendered differences in facework. They reasoned that males would be more concerned with the desire for autonomy, while females would focus more on the desire for inclusion. Further, males and females were expected to vary in their attention to competence-face depending on whether a competency was linked to stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity. The findings from research on gender and facework are mixed, with stronger differences found in beliefs about gendered behavior than in the behavior itself. One explanation for the inconsistency in the findings is that males and females sometimes occupy different social roles, which carry rights and obligations that may influence facework more than gender itself.

Communication researchers have studied facework in multiple contexts across different types of relationships, in life and in fiction. Interpersonal scholars have investigated facework in the communication of strangers, acquaintances, close friends, intimate partners, and family members. Communication that supports face-desires has been associated with greater trust, liking, satisfaction, and commitment in relationships. Facework among

peers and individuals varying in organizational stature within the workplace has been the focus of several studies. In educational contexts, researchers have found that teachers and students engage in facework throughout the educational process from instruction, to feedback and evaluation, to the negotiation of grades, and that when the facework is skillful, it facilitates learning. Other investigations probed the place of facework in delivering bad news, crisis negotiations, and 911 calls. The significant role of facework in conflict resolutions has been the subject of extensive research and theoretical development by Stella Ting-Toomey and her associates in a theory called *face negotiation theory*. This theory gives considerable attention to the place of individualistic and collectivistic cultural values in facework, as well as one's view of oneself as relatively independent or interdependent.

Most of the scholarship applying facework theories to communication practices has focused on interpersonal, educational, or organizational encounters, but Kathy Domenici and Stephen W. Littlejohn illustrate the relevance of facework to community and global issues, including its central role in bringing about peaceful resolutions to conflicts between nations. Drawing upon their own work and that of others, Domenici and Littlejohn stress the importance of various aspects of facework: building face, inquiring appreciatively, looking for positive resources for change, taking risks, delaying responses, focusing on issues rather than blame or credit, and reframing problems as opportunities that lead to new ways of seeing and acting. They suggest that just as an individual's face is not a static entity, but a dynamic construction, reinforced through communication practices, so too are the faces of communities and nations. Facework can be found in all communication encounters.

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See also Face Negotiation Theory; Impression Management; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Politeness Theory; Rules Theories

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FAMILY AND MARITAL SCHEMAS AND TYPES

The way people think about and act in marital and family relationships can be represented in terms of schemas and types. On the individual level, schemas determine communication behaviors in these relationships and a person's psychological and behavioral responses to these relationships. On the social level, typologies show how laypersons and scholars perceive of and evaluate relationships. Together, schemas and types play an important role in conducting and interpreting marital and family relationships.

Family and Marriage Schemas

Mental schemas are generally defined as cognitive structures representing some concept (or object)

that contain acquired knowledge of the attributes and functions of the concept. In other words, mental schemas are patterns of simultaneous activation of knowledge bits stored in long-term memory that together represent a coherent representation of the concept or object. Thus, relationship schemas in general are mental representations of relationships, and family and marital schemas specifically are mental representations of one's familial and marital relationships, respectively.

Structure of Schemas

Research specifically on relationship schemas has defined them further as interrelated pieces of declarative and procedural knowledge about relationships that reside in long-term memory. Declarative knowledge is defined as descriptive knowledge of the attributes and features of things, whereas procedural knowledge refers to a person's knowledge of if-then contingencies that often take the form of interpersonal scripts or memory organization packets, which are memories of how to do things.

The declarative and procedural knowledge contained in relationship schemas overlaps with three subsets of knowledge that, in other areas of psychology, are considered to be more or less independent: the self-, other-, and relational-schema. A self-schema contains knowledge about the self, including knowledge of one's thoughts and emotions, goals and plans for the future, and memory of past experiences. An other-schema contains knowledge about the other that mirrors knowledge of self in that it includes representations of the other's thoughts and emotions, goals and plans for the future, and past experiences. The main difference is that, depending on how well one knows the other, other-schemas are more limited than those of self. Finally, relational-schemas contain knowledge of past and future interactions with others. They include knowledge of experienced and expected interaction sequences between self and other used to interpret and to plan behavior. Although self and other schemas traditionally were thought of as independent, recent research on interpersonal cognition strongly suggests they are so highly interdependent on one another that they more likely belong to the same cognitive structure—the relationship schema.

Like many other schemas, relationship schemas consist of knowledge that exists at three levels of generality. The most general level is general social knowledge that applies to all interpersonal relationships. Examples of such knowledge include beliefs and pragmatic rules that apply to all interactions, such as the norm of reciprocity or the need to be truthful and relevant when communicating. Because it applies to all relationships, knowledge at the general social level is part of any relationship schema. At the second level of abstraction is relationship-type knowledge that includes knowledge specific to the type of relationship one has, such as romantic partner, coworker, sibling, and best friend. The knowledge stored at this level is different from that stored at the general social level in that it only applies to relationships of the specific type. It is at the relationship-type level that cultural knowledge, such as rules and norms for specific types of relationships, are stored. The most specific and least abstract level is relationship specific. Knowledge at this level applies to only the particular relationship a person has with one specific other person. Such knowledge includes memories, attributions, and experiences made within the context of that particular relationship and allow individuals to adapt their thoughts, behaviors, and interpretations to that specific relationship partner. These specific relationship beliefs, including those related to one's family, are what make each relationship unique and distinguishable from other relationships.

The knowledge contained at the relationship-specific level is different from the knowledge that exists at more general levels, and a person's complete mental representation of a relationship combines knowledge from all three levels. Thus, similarities or overlap of mental representations of relationships with different persons are the result of shared knowledge drawn from either the general social level or the relationship-type level. By contrast, differences in mental representations of relationships with different persons are due to information contained either at the relationship-type or relationship-specific level. As a rule, if knowledge at different levels of generality conflicts, the more specific knowledge takes precedent. Consequently, there must be a process that determines which information is retrieved and used in relational information processing. This could be a

sequential process in which relationship-specific knowledge is accessed first, relationship-type knowledge second, and general social knowledge last. An equally plausible alternative that is more consistent with notions of parallel information processing in the brain is a recursive or iterative process that accesses knowledge at all levels of specificity simultaneously and that assigns more specific knowledge primacy over more general knowledge if there is a conflict between them. A similar process could be involved when storing relationship experiences in memory. Truly unique experiences are stored at the relationship-specific level, whereas experiences that are made with several others are stored at the relationship type or the general social level, respectively.

Content of Schemas

In regard to content, one can expect a fair degree of similarity between marriage and family relationship schemas. Obviously, relationship-specific knowledge is highly dependent on the actual persons constituting the relationships and thus varies widely between different marriages and families. Knowledge at the relationship-type level, however, which is much more dependent on culture and the norms and rules of a speech community, shows significant overlap between individuals. Furthermore, within individuals, marital, and family relationship schemas also overlap, not the least because marriage is, of course, a family relationship. Research investigating the content of marital schemas, for example, has shown that it contains beliefs related to ideology of marriage, relationship between individuals and the institution of marriage, relationship between the couple and the outside world, gender roles in marriages, communication behaviors, expression of positive and negative affect, conflict and problem-solving behaviors, the sharing of space and time, child-rearing practices, and spiritual aspects of the relationship.

Research on the content of family schemas is somewhat more limited, but it suggests similar knowledge to that of marriage schemas, such as communication norms and rules, parenting, conflict and problem solving, sharing of emotions, cohesion and adaptability, and decision making. Also, the family schema is somewhat more complex than the marriage schema because it contains

knowledge at the relationship-specific level that is associated with multiple family members, whereas the marriage relationship schema only incorporates the relationship-specific knowledge associated with one other person.

Functions of Schemas

Schemas function to direct attention to specific aspects of one's environment, help interpret stimuli, guide the retrieval of information from memory, and store new information in memory. Thus, schemas play a central role in information processing and how persons understand and act in their (social) worlds. It follows that relationship schemas, such as marriage and family schemas, organize a person's knowledge of these relationships and play an important role in the cognitive processes that precede, accompany, and follow interpersonal communication in these relationships. As such, they also play an important role when scholars try to explain and predict interpersonal communication in these relationships.

Marriage and Family Types

Whereas marriage and family schemas refer to coherent mental representations of these relationships that exist as cognitive structures within individuals, marriage and family types are symbolic representations of these relationships used in lay or scholarly discourse—that is, relationship typologies are classifications of relationships imposed by outside or participant observers. If the observers are scholars, the purpose is to get a better understanding of and to theorize about relationships by grouping them based on some sort of characteristic(s), such as structural properties, composition, process, or outcome. If the observers are laypersons or participants, the purpose is also understanding, prediction, and evaluation, although in a less formalized and often implicit manner. Also, the purpose for laypersons is application of this knowledge in their social environment and their own relationships, whereas the interest of scholarly observers is often more theoretical than practical. Despite their divergent interests and the formalized process by which scholars construct and use typologies, there is a substantial amount of overlap between scholarly and lay typologies. This is probably because both

scholars and laypersons use typologies to explain the same phenomena within the same social context.

Types of Typologies

Typologies are fundamentally sense-making devices, and humans have the propensity to associate structure with function. Consequently, many typologies of marriages and families are based on structure and/or membership that imply some important differences in how these relationships function or the outcomes they produce. For marriages, examples include first and remarriages, interracial, homosexual, dual-career, long-distance, interfaith, and childless marriages. Examples for family typologies include step, blended, and patchwork families; single-parent; interracial; intergenerational; interfaith; same-sex parent; and interfaith families.

Other typologies focus on characteristics more ostensibly important to researchers, such as outcomes for couples and children. Much of early research on marriages and families, for example, was based on comparing satisfied (i.e., enduring) versus dissatisfied (i.e., divorcing) marriages and families that had well-adjusted children versus families with children that showed evidence of maladjustment, such as delinquency, criminality, or social and academic problems. The shortcoming of such typologies, however, is that they assume that either all structurally similar relationships have similar outcomes, or that all outcomes are arrived at through similar means—and empirical evidence supports neither assumption.

Recognizing these limitations, other typologies, especially those developed by communication scholars, have focused on processes and communication behaviors to distinguish marriages and families. The more successful typologies focus on communication behaviors that affect several outcomes of interest, not just on satisfaction, stability, and child adjustment. These more complex typologies also recognize that the processes that define types associated with positive outcomes in one domain (e.g., satisfaction) are not necessarily associated with positive outcomes in other domains (e.g., adjustment). Examples for such marital typologies include John Gottman's typology based on conflict styles that identifies

three functional couple types (validating, volatile, and avoidant) and two dysfunctional styles (hostile and hostile-detached).

An example for family types is family communication patterns theory, developed by Mary Ann Fitzpatrick, Ascan Koerner, and their colleagues, which classifies families based on their conversation and conformity orientation as either *consensual* (high in both), *pluralistic* (high conversation, low conformity), *protective* (low conversation, high conformity), or *laissez-faire* (low in both). An increasing body of research has shown that family types differ in a number of significant outcomes, including child social and academic adjustment, resiliency, and child mental health; family satisfaction; family social support; and family violence and abuse. In addition, these families also differ predictably in how they communicate in specific domains such as conflict, problem solving and decision making, and expressions of positive and negative affect.

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See also Cognitive Theories; Family Communication Theories; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Relational Communication Theory; Relational Development

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FAMILY COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Family communication theories are coherent accounts of family communication processes and family relationships that provide explanations for phenomena of interests, which frequently are the relationships or communication behaviors themselves or their outcomes for family members. As such, family communication theories are central to any investigation of family communication processes and of outcomes that might be affected by them. Family communication theories stem from a number of different academic disciplines and are based on a wide range of methodologies, ranging from critical to scientific. As a result, there is substantial disagreement about the very nature of theory, the role theory plays in research, and the appropriate methods for studying family communication. This entry provides an overview of the theoretical approaches that are most frequently found in family communication research and introduces a few of the more influential theories in some detail.

Divergent Origins

Research on family communication is not an exclusive domain of communication scholars. Rather, academic interest in families and their communication exists in a number of academic disciplines, including child development, family social sciences psychology, and sociology. As a result, there exist many very different theories related to family communication that create very divergent accounts of family communication. Contributing to this diversity is the fact that as a discipline, communication is a relative newcomer compared to other disciplines, which have much longer histories of interest in family communication processes, their antecedents, and outcomes.

Thus, most theories of family communication originated outside the communication discipline and often share the particular assumptions and biases of the disciplines from which they originated. Even among those theories used in family communication research that originated from within the communication discipline, a majority was not developed explicitly with family communication in mind, but rather in regard to interpersonal communication more generally or in regard to specific communication processes that happen to also take place in the family context, such as self-disclosure or uncertainty reduction. As a consequence, family communication theories vary widely in the basic assumptions they make about what is important for family communication, what explains communication behaviors, and what effects communication has on other variables.

Divergent Epistemologies and Methods

The lack of coherence among family communication theories is amplified because family communication scholars employ a wide range of methods that are based on often conflicting epistemologies, from critical theory to quantitative social science. Consequently, there is significant disagreement among family communication scholars not only as to what exactly constitutes a theory of family communication, but also about the purposes and functions of theory in general and about the appropriate methods for studying family communication.

Critical Family Theory

The purpose of critical theory in general is to delineate the social processes and institutions by which individuals are oppressed and to suggest ways by which individuals can become emancipated. As such, applications of critical theory are contextually and historically specific, which necessarily limits their generalizability beyond the specific cases or time periods they address. A consequence of this lack of generalizability is that it is difficult to quantify the impact of any one application of critical theory on the field of family communication. Two recent reviews of scholarly articles in family communication, however, suggest that critical theory as an approach plays only a relatively minor role in published family communication

research. Nonetheless, its impact on practical application, such as counseling or public policy, and to a lesser extent teaching, is significant.

Because of its focus on oppression and emancipation and its roots in sociology, critical family theory focuses on social practices and institutions that negatively affect families or family members, such as gender roles or how power relationships are enacted to the detriment of women, children, and minorities in social institutions such as marriage and family. When explaining family communication, critical theories usually draw parallels between family relationships and other social relationships that define societal power structures, such as the relationships between employers and laborers, how knowledge is managed in society, and ways by which governments restrict individual freedom and choice. By delineating how these larger social relationships and power structures affect family relationships, they suggest ways they can be overcome.

Social Scientific Family Theory

In contrast to critical theory, which has as its goal emancipation, the goal of social scientific approaches to the study of family communication is to discover what is important about human relationships by observing associations between variables and outcomes. Although social scientific theories are also often context specific (e.g., close relationships, marriages, or families), they assume that behavior and the underlying processes determining behavior are universal and therefore that theoretical models are generalizable, at least in principle. Because of their generalizability, social scientific studies dominate published research and textbooks in family communication.

Even among family communication scholars using social scientific approaches, however, there is substantial disagreement about the nature of the phenomena under investigation and consequently, the appropriateness of qualitative and quantitative methods, respectively. The disagreement fundamentally concerns the significance of meaning for human behavior and researchers' ability to assess meaning. For qualitative researchers, meaning is central to human behavior, is created in the interaction, and ultimately is dependent on processes specific to the participants or the interaction.

Consequently, meaning cannot be objectively assessed, and researchers must rely on some form of interpretation that is informed by the participants and/or the researchers' thorough knowledge of the participants or interaction. Furthermore, participants as well as observers of social processes can assign divergent meaning to the same processes, thus creating divergent social realities. Qualitative theories, then, function mainly as heuristic devices that enable understanding of how social processes might be understood, with no claim being made that this understanding reflects an objective reality.

Quantitative researchers, by contrast, either do not assume that meaning is as central to human behavior or they assume that the processes by which individuals assign meaning are universal (or at least sufficiently shared in a culture, for example). For them, therefore, objective observation is possible, and research should rely heavily on inferential statistics to interpret findings. The purpose of theory in quantitative social science is to model relationships between key variables to explain and predict psychological or behavioral outcomes. Theories are developed and tested by comparing their predictions to observed outcomes, which allows for falsification of a theory.

Shared Assumptions

Despite the numerous disagreements among family communication researchers about crucial aspects of human communication and relationships, there seems to be general agreement that families constitute social systems. With this view come a number of basic assumptions, most importantly that of *nonsummativity* and *interdependence*. Nonsummativity means that families are more than the sum of their parts—that is, they cannot be understood by even a complete understanding of individual family members in isolation. Rather, crucial processes and outcomes are the result of the interaction between family members, and these interactions add to the family. Similarly, interdependence in the family context means that family members influence one another and that their behavior cannot be understood without taking account of their families. It also suggests that a change in the behavior of any one family member affects all other family members as well.

Another important shared assumption among family communication scholars is that families are best defined using transactional-functional rather than structural definitions. Transactional-functional definitions use criteria based on how families interact and what they do to determine which groups of persons constitute families. Examples are definitions that include criteria such as shared household responsibilities, problem solving, and children rearing, for example. Structural definitions, in contrast, define families based on the presence of certain members, such as the definition of family as consisting of parent(s) and their biological and/or adopted child(ren). Because structural definitions exclude a large number of what obviously are families, they have fallen out of favor with most researchers. The ostensible exceptions are theories that explicitly address structural characteristics of families, such as theories of stepfamilies or of adopted families. But even here the structural characteristics are of interest because they are assumed to impact how families interact or function. Thus, the structural criterion is really a proxy for what essentially are transactional-functional characteristics.

Representative Family Communication Theories

As the preceding discussion has shown, there is significant disagreement among family communication scholars about even the most fundamental assumptions of theory and research. Consequently, it is impossible to present any one family communication theory as typical for, or representative of, the field. Nonetheless, this entry concludes with some examples of family communication theories that have reached a fair degree of sophistication and elaboration and also have had significant impact on the field. They are presented here to give the reader an idea about the range of family communication theories and not to suggest that these are necessarily the best or most important theories of family communication.

Circumplex Model of Family Functioning

One interesting theory of family communication originating from another discipline is the circumplex model of family functioning, attributable to David Olson and his colleagues. It is unique

among outside theories because communication is a central concept in the theory and is defined in sophisticated terms. It is also among the broadest theories of family communication because it links family communication to family functioning in general, which it associates with a large array of child and family outcomes. The model assesses family functioning based on cohesion and adaptability of families, which exist along continua from disengaged to enmeshed and from rigid to chaotic, respectively. Moderate levels on both dimensions are associated with optimal functioning, whereas extremes on either dimension are associated with less than optimal functioning. Thus, families that are separated or engaged function better than families that are either disengaged or enmeshed, and families that are flexible or structured function better than families that are rigid or chaotic. Considering both dimensions simultaneously, families that are medium on both dimensions function best, followed by families that are medium on one dimension but extreme on the other dimension, and families that are extreme on both dimensions are the least functional.

Family communication in the circumplex model is a third, facilitating dimension. This means that family communication determines families' location along the two dimensions of cohesion and adaptability. Communication also enables families to change their cohesion and adaptability, which is particularly important for the application of the circumplex model to family therapy. Specific communication skills identified in the model that facilitate such movements include speaking skills, such as speaking for self and avoiding speaking for others; listening skills, such as active listening and empathy; and general communication skills, such as self-disclosure, clarity, continuity, tracking, and showing respect and regard for one another.

Family Communication Patterns Theory

One theory emerging from within the communication discipline that links communication behaviors in families to a similarly wide range of family and child outcomes is family communication patterns theory (FCPT) developed by Mary Anne Fitzpatrick and her colleagues. FCPT is based on the assumption that creating shared social reality is a basic function of family communication. Families

create shared reality through two communication behaviors: *conversation* orientation and *conformity* orientation, which in turn affect family relationships and outcomes. Conversation orientation refers to frequent and unrestrained communication between parents and children with the purpose of codiscovering the meaning of symbols and objects that constitute the social environment. It is associated with warm and supportive relationships characterized by mutual respect and concern for one another. Conformity orientation, in contrast, refers to more restricted communication between parents and children in which the parents define social reality for the family. It is associated with more authoritarian parenting and less concern for the children's thoughts and feelings.

Theoretically orthogonal or independent, these two orientations define four family types. *Consensual* families are high on both conversation and conformity orientation. Their communication is characterized by a tension between open exploration, on the one hand, and pressure to agree and to preserve the existing hierarchy within the family, on the other hand. Families resolve this tension by parents listening to their children while simultaneously persuading them to adopt the parents' belief system. These families are well functioning and have superior outcomes for all family members.

Pluralistic families emphasize conversation orientation over conformity orientation. Their communication is characterized by open and unconstrained interactions involving all family members. Although parents are open about their values and beliefs in these families, they do not aim to control their children and accept their children's different opinions. Children of these families learn to be independent and autonomous and to communicate persuasively, and they are generally satisfied with their family relationships.

Protective families emphasize conformity over conversation orientation. Their communication is characterized by parental authority and child obedience and by little concern for conceptual matters. Parents in these families decide for their children and see little value in explaining their reasoning to them, although they clearly state rules and expect their children to follow them. Children in protective families learn to rely on rules for behaving; there is little value accorded to family discussions to figure things out, and

children tend not to trust their own decision-making abilities.

Laissez-faire families are low on both conformity and conversation orientation. Their communication is characterized by infrequent and typically uninvolved interactions. Members of *laissez-faire* families are emotionally divorced from one another and have little interest in the thoughts and feelings of others. Children of these families learn that there is little value in family conversations and that they have to make their own decisions. Because they do receive little behavioral guidance from their parents, they question their decision-making ability and are more susceptible to external influences from peers and media.

Family communication patterns have been associated with a number of family processes, such as conflict, confirmation and affection, family rituals, and understanding. They also have been associated with child outcomes, such as communication apprehension, conflict with romantic partners, resiliency, and children's mental and physical health.

Dialectical Theory of Family Communication

An example of an important interpersonal communication theory that has been particularly popular with family communication scholars is dialectical theory. Based on the dialectical thinking of Leslie Baxter and others, dialectical theory proposes that family communication is the result of dialectical, or opposing and inherently incompatible, goals pursued by families and family members. Unlike Hegel's dialectics, which are resolved through a synthesis of the opposing forces, relational dialectics are not permanently resolved, but the back and forth between forces permeates family communication and gives meaning to it. Although dialectical tensions can be experienced in a number of relationship domains, the most relevant ones to families are those of affiliation, predictability, and closeness; these can be experienced in intrafamilial relationships, as well as in the relationships of families with their social environment. Although dialectics are irresolvable, they are often experienced as threatening to family relationships, and families employ various strategies to manage them. Not all of these strategies are equally effective and equally functional, however. Some strategies, such as attempts to integrate opposing desires into the family and to

reaffirm the centrality and interdependence of the relationship, usually lead to more positive outcomes, whereas others, such as denial or disorientation, usually lead to more negative outcomes.

Although dialectical tensions are assumed to affect all family communication, the specific dialectics experienced by each family are unique, and their effects depend to a large extent on the meaning given to them by family members. As a result, research employing dialectical theory most frequently relies on qualitative research methods.

Affective Exchange Theory

One example of a family communication theory addressing a relatively narrow phenomenon in family communication while simultaneously being grounded in and testing a metatheoretical framework is affective exchange theory (AET). AET is different from most other theories of family communication, which typically investigate how humans communicate without explicitly considering the roots of human communication, because it explicitly makes and tests the assumption that human communication is shaped by evolutionary processes. By arguing that humans' ability to experience and express affection was selected for because it created significant benefits in terms of survival and reproduction, AET connects to the large and powerful explanatory framework of human behavior that evolutionary theory provides.

Tying AET to the theory of evolution also led to very specific and unique hypotheses about family communication. For example, evolutionary theory would suggest that parental affection functions to enable one's offspring to survive and propagate. Consequently, fathers should be more affectionate with children that do propagate the father's genes—biological as opposed to stepchildren and heterosexual as opposed to bisexual or homosexual sons, for example. Both predictions were supported.

In addition, AET has been investigated mainly in the context of father-son relationships. Not only did this provide important information on an underresearched family relationship, but also demonstrated the importance of affection in nonromantic interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, by looking at how father-son communication changes in subsequent generations, research using the AET framework was also able to demonstrate

the concurrent influence of evolutionary forces and cultural forces, thereby further demonstrating that genes and culture both play important roles in the behavior of families.

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See also Communibiology; Critical Theory; Epistemology; Family and Marital Schemas and Types; Relational Communication Theory; Relational Dialectics; Scientific Approach; Social Construction of Reality; System Theory

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FANS, FANDOM, AND FAN STUDIES

The word *fan* has been in constant use since the 19th century, and the term *fandom* dates from the turn of the 20th century. Fan and fandom initially denoted sports-club fans and soon after, the quickly growing fanbase of science fiction. Organized fan communities existed before these groups, however; readers of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories, for example, corresponded with his fictional creation and mourned Sherlock

Holmes's death. In all cases, fan implies some or all the following: a fascination, interest, and emotional investment in a particular subject; (often communal) engagement with a particular leisure activity; and an emphasis on amateur endeavors.

Fan studies is situated mainly in two areas: the social sciences and film and media studies. Psychology and sociology study the group behavior of fans as well as the passionate engagement with and possession of objects that appear uninteresting or ridiculous to others. Sports, music, and film fans are likely subjects, and the culture at large tends to accept them more readily—sports fandom, possibly because of its masculine connotations of physical exertion and competition; music and film fandom, mostly as passing teenage behavior. In fact, the more extreme edges of fandom such as football hooligans or punks tend to be seen as exceptions rather than fannish representatives. Film and media studies focuses mostly on the relation between media texts and their audiences, looking toward fans as often exemplary readers-viewers. The following will restrict itself to research and debates within fan studies that focus on television, film, and new media, with its adjacent focus on science fiction, comics, gaming, and related fields.

In media fandom, adult fans—especially of less respected and marginal cultural objects such as science fiction or television shows—often are regarded with suspicion and reproached for wasting their energies. Whereas dressing up may be acceptable for children, cosplay (i.e., costuming in media characters) is not; whereas playacting is fine on the playground and theatre stage, larping (i.e., live action role-playing games) is pathologized; whereas making up stories about one's favorite characters is a beloved tradition shared in many bedtime rituals, fan fiction is regarded less positively. Yet these examples suggest that fan behavior is an extension of behavior considered acceptable in general culture. In fact, much recent fan-studies discourse has begun to look at fannish behavior rather than fannish identity, thus suggesting that everyone may be a fan of sorts.

Especially in media studies, where the media convergence of industry and audiences encourages fannish modes of engagement, the gap is narrowing between fully immersed fans exchanging stories, analyses, and interpretations among themselves

and casual viewers hitting up the bulletin board of a favorite show to discuss it after an episode airs. Media fans thus are at the center of a media convergence of text and context, producer and consumer, appropriation and ownership; they showcase ideal investment in a media product and its trans-media branding and the marketing strategies of their communities.

Media convergence also affects industry discourses around viewers and fans. Although the borders between professionals and fans always have been permeable, the past decade has celebrated the rise of the auteur fan boy in such show runners as Joss Whedon (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel: The Series*), Russell T. Davies (*Dr. Who*), and Ron Moore (*Battlestar Galactica*) as well as an increasing interest in fan-generated and fan-created content, such as fan-created advertisements or even episode writing contests. Fans are ever present in the contemporary media landscape, and fandom is growing both more mainstream and more difficult to define as a result. In a climate in which fannish behavior is becoming more normalized and more marketable, fan research has become a subdiscipline that interrogates the very definitions of fan, fandom, and fan studies.

History

U.S. science fiction fandom initially organized in the 1920s around Hugo Gernsback's "pulp" magazines, which published science fiction stories on cheap paper. These publications actively invited commentary from readers, which they then printed in dedicated letters sections. This focus from the text to commentary and readers and the inclusion of mailing addresses allowed fans to communicate with one another unmediated. As fans communicated with one another, they began to form clubs and organize conventions that offered ways not only to meet with one another, but also to connect with professionals. Many famous science fiction editors and writers, such as Isaac Asimov, James Blish, and Frederik Pohl, started out as members of fandom. Demographics were overwhelmingly White and male, both among professional science fiction writers and their fans.

The late 1960s saw a substantial split that would become important for fan studies, media studies, and audience research. With the rise of *Star Trek*

and televisual science fiction in general, some fans—mostly women—began creating their own fanzines that focused less on criticism and scientific debates and more on creative responses. This rise of media fandom shifted fan focus away from plot and action and foregrounded characters and character interaction, often creatively expanding the fictional universes or interpolating missing scenes and backgrounds. However, what would become known as fan fiction had existed at least since readers wrote sequels to Jane Austen and *Sherlock Holmes* novels—if not since ancient retellings of Homer or John Lydgate's self-insertion into the *Canterbury Tales*. Nevertheless, media fandom was new in its organization and community focus.

Logistically, media fandom created a strong, self-aware community by using the infrastructure of science fiction fandom: conventions, APAs (Amateur Press Association, the compilation and distribution of amateur writing to all its contributing members), and fanzines (amateur publication, sold at cost to interested parties). Whereas conventions allowed fans to meet, create personal connections, and initiate new members, APAs and fanzines allowed fans to stay in contact and disseminated creative interpretations via fan fiction and fan art, often criticizing or expanding the stories provided by the media industry and illustrating their beloved characters and stories.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, media fandom was a small but solid community situated around various fannish sources. The Internet and rise of digital technologies afforded fans the ability to connect and communicate more easily. Fandom began to grow exponentially, its demographics shifting to include more and younger television viewers. From local bulletin boards in the 1980s through Usenet newsgroups and diverse mailing lists and archives in the 1990s to social networking sites like LiveJournal.com, fandoms have shifted, expanded, and changed to accommodate ever-changing technologies at the same time as they manipulate these interfaces to fit their demands. Meanwhile, as visual and audiovisual editing programs become more affordable and easier to use, more fans create more varied fannish artifacts. Fan works today range from poems, short stories, and multivolume novels to drawings, comics, photo manipulations, and fan vids, cartoons, and multimedia installations.

Fannish behavior is becoming more mainstream as new technologies make it easier to access media, engage with others, and create one's own content. In turn, the media industry has recognized the marketing potential of both transmedia products and user-generated content as forms of viral marketing. Meanwhile, fandoms as diverse as gaming, comics, anime, music, literature, celebrity, and sports find increasing contacts and influence one another with such fan creations as real-people fiction, which connects celebrity and fan fiction cultures or fantasy baseball, ultimately bringing narrative elements into sports fandom. The image of the extreme fan as subcultural identity is thus giving way to fannish engagement as marketable and transferable behavior that crosses interests and objects. Media fandom has grown in 40 years from a handful of women sharing their fan works to an online phenomenon that has projected fans into the limelight of media research as ideal viewers of media, early adapters and adopters of technological interfaces, and exemplary creators of user-generated content.

Research

Research into fans and fandom comes from a number of disciplines, most particularly sociology, psychology, and anthropology on the one hand, and English, communication, and media studies on the other. Whereas the former tend to look at the psychology of individuals as well as group dynamics, often with a focus on the more visible and acceptable sports fandoms, the latter tend to connect media texts to fannish communities, often working within postmodern theoretical frameworks that read culture as a text in its own right. As Kimberly Schimmel, C. Lee Harrington, and Denise Bielby note, fan studies divides theoretically along the lines of fannish objects, with more psychological interpretations of sports fans and fandoms on one side, and more cultural studies approaches to celebrity and media fans and fandoms on the other.

Most of current media fan studies can be traced to an increased research focus on audiences as well as an interest among cultural studies' scholars in subcultural communities, starting in the 1970s. The Birmingham School may be the single most influential theoretical framework for fan studies. Stuart Hall's viewer paradigm is an influential

example of audience studies and reader response: He distinguished between different modes of viewing strategies in which viewers are not necessarily passive and easily manipulated, but instead can choose to agree or reject the dominant message of the text, to incorporate or resist the media text's ideology. Similarly emphasizing active engagement with cultural texts, Dick Hebdidge's work on resistant subcultures also became a desirable paradigm. As a result, fan studies of the 1980s and 1990s emphasized both the outsider status of fans and their subversive status.

The most central and influential studies connected these two interests by looking at the subcultural communities of female media fans of *Star Trek* (and other TV shows) who constituted an active audience that critiqued, interpreted, and often altered the source text of the shows of which they were fans: Henry Jenkins' *Textual Poachers* and Camille Bacon-Smith's *Enterprising Women* both closely studied these particular communities and argued for their creative and often resistant readings, thus positing fans as an exemplary audience. Rather than being passive consumers, these television viewers engaged critically and creatively; this allowed fan scholars to present a model of audience engagement that complicated earlier notions of media as simplistic ideological tools and exemplified the more complex and politically more desirable subversive viewers. Moreover, given that these studies focused primarily on creative fandom responses such as fan fiction, fan art, filk, and fan vids and that these communities were largely female, creative fan responses were often read with and against a feminist paradigm, celebrating the critical feminist take on an often misogynist media culture.

This emphasis on resistance and subversion was challenged by the next generation of scholars. Understanding fannishness as a natural aspect of human engagement, these scholars rejected the central ethos of fans as resistant and subversive viewers that had dominated the field of fan studies in the 1980s and 1990s. Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst opposed the incorporation-resistance paradigm with a spectacle-performance paradigm. Rather than viewing fan behavior through the lens of a political or social agenda that read fan activities as subversive and thus worthy of studying, this approach to fan studies focused on engagements with media as an everyday part of

audiences' lives. In turn, Matt Hills' *Fan Cultures* and Cornel Sandvoss's *Fans* focus on the psychology of fans and fan groups and the ways fannish objects get constituted in the fans' imagination. Both studies focus on fans as individuals who might be fannish at different times and to different degrees about various things.

Considerable range characterizes contemporary fan studies: Jenkins' *Convergence Culture* focuses on the various intersections between industry and viewers-fans; Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse's *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet* gathers a group of academics who are all active fans to discuss specific texts and issues in the particularly active and self-aware subset of fans usually defined as media fans. Jonathan Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington's *Fandom* stretches the definitions of fandom to study international, high culture, and antifans—issues otherwise ignored. Together they address the variety of issues that face the role of fans and the focus of fan studies in the changing environment of online engagement, industry awareness, and an ever-growing and more activist fan community.

Debates

Possibly the most central debate in fan studies at present is the relationship between fandom and audiences at large. Fannish behavior is becoming ever-more mainstream as the media industry purposefully tries to court audiences by offering transmedia entertainment, such as online games, background character information, or Webisodes, and community-building spaces, such as bulletin boards or chat rooms. After all, fans are the most loyal viewers, willing to buy tie-in products, and thus are ideal candidates for viral marketing campaigns. Jenkins's *Convergence Culture* describes how ever-more involved and active audiences are changing media culture as well as how the media industry can make use of these behavioral shifts in useful and economically successful ways.

One result of this convergence culture is a need to redefine the concept of what constitutes a fan and how we define fandom. One way to characterize the current definitional debates is around distinctions made between fannish identity and fannish behavior. For some, being a fan is defined by behavior only, whereas for others an entire

ethos is attached to the term. The question is whether members of fandom are a subculture in their own right or whether they are simply consumers displaying certain actions and behaviors. On the one hand, fan studies scholars identify fans as a particular group of people; on the other, they create a spectrum of behavior in which fans are merely on an extreme end of a fandom continuum. Fans thus are either described as simply a more extreme version of viewers (thus being able to create fans) or regarded as engaging media with different intensity and investment that resembles particular forms of identity politics.

Sandvoss's *Fans*, for example, puts forth singular and personalized understanding of fans, where being a fan is primarily constituted by the individual's emotional relationship to a particular text, group, or idea. In fact, his study can easily encompass sports as well as media fans since he is most interested in the affective investment of the individual rather than the communities they create. Meanwhile, other scholars want to focus more on the real communities that get created around fannish objects, many of whom are more invested in one another and the friendships and things they have created than the affect in the fannish object. Members of fan-fiction communities, for example, often identify as media fans rather than as fans of a particular show, thus showing their higher identification with the community of other readers and writers than with other fans of a show.

Such an emphasis on community also challenges another aspect of convergence culture, namely the complicated role of fan as consumer. Traditionally, one of the central tenets of fandom has been its anticapitalist character: Often termed a gift culture of paying it forward, large sections of fandom rely on volunteer labor and a proud amateurism. As media industry begins to realize the potential of free producers, they have begun exploiting fans who happily provide free content to commercial Web sites without any reimbursement. Current debates among fans and fan academics revolve around fannish attempts to create completely alternate fannish infrastructures that honor the fannish gift economy as well as efforts to adequately reward fannish labor. In all cases, however, fans have to contend with a media industry that celebrates user-generated content as free and viral marketing yet retains the right to sue

unauthorized fan productions for copyright or trademark infringements.

Other areas of debate include the question of range, both in terms of object and range of subjects. Often models developed by looking at Western fans and behaviors do not easily apply to non-Western fandoms and fans. Other current directions in research include antifans, which describes viewers who show similarly intensely negative investments in a text. Finally, the focus on popular culture has limited fan studies to look at particular fans only, often ignoring fans of high-brow subjects, such as opera, literature, or philosophy. Looking at behavior rather than objects of interest offers insight into the way fan studies has focused too narrowly on television and other popular media. Instead it might be more fruitful to look at similarities: fannish modes of behavior occur in many different venues, from history buffs and philatelists to bird watchers and knitters.

Fans have been a central force of popular culture for more than a century, often mocked or derided in turn, but more recently viewed by the industry as loyal consumers and by academia as exemplars of media engagement. The Internet has brought more and more viewers to engage with programs across multiple platforms and to become emotionally invested in different forms of entertainment. That investment and engagement results in water-cooler conversations and visits to shows' Web sites; it propels viewers to write up their thoughts in blogs and discuss their ideas on bulletin boards; it inspires people to create fiction and art and videos; it moves them to play the characters in role-playing games and to make costumes and dress up as their favorite one. And while much of this user-generated creative content is encouraged and supported by the industry, fans often move beyond expected responses, both in form and content. Fans themselves may like the validation of what they call the powers that be, but many like their independence even more. Fannish creations may not all be subversive or transformative by nature. However, fandom's affective engagement with the media text, the fan communities constituted in the process, and the very acts of creation and sharing, may together constitute a creative culture that resists media convergence models, one fan work at a time.

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See also Audience Theories; Cultural Studies; Gender and Media; Media and Mass Communication Theories; New Media Theory

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FEEDBACK

See Cybernetics

FEMINIST COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Feminist communication theories place women and their experiences at the center of the study of

communication and production of theory. Feminist communication theories offer explanations and speculations about the communicative strategies used to oppress women as well as those used by women to overcome that oppression. The range of feminist theories that address communication is broad, and this body of scholarship could be organized in many different ways. Covered below are the theories related to language and gender, access to the public sphere and voice within that sphere, the ways feminist communication theorists theorize about feminism and theory, and theories of masculinity and identity.

Language and Gender

Early feminist communication theories attempted to address the connections between gender, sex, and styles of communication. Such scholars as Dale Spender, Julia Penelope Wolf, Cheris Kramarae (formerly Kramer), Robin Lakoff, Hélène Cixous, and Luce Irigaray, among others, began to theorize about the ways gender constrained and influenced women's and men's communication styles and practices. These theorists argued that language is man-made—that it has been controlled by men for centuries and reflects a bias toward masculine styles of communication as well as masculine ideologies. Feminist theorists suggested that societal expectations of how women and men should behave have a powerful impact on the ways a person communicates. According to these scholars, women are prone, for example, to use more tentative language and to ask more questions in a conversation while men are prone to use more forceful language and to interrupt more. Women, too, according to Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and Irigaray, must rewrite and reclaim language so that it reflects a woman-centered ideology rather than one grounded in male perspectives and politics.

Marsha Houston and Kramarae followed these earlier theories with work that suggested that not only did a person's sex or gender influence their communication styles, but also did a person's ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Most recently, scholars such as Amy Richards and Jennifer Bumgardner suggest that feminist theorizing works to explore and explain the reasons that specific labels, such as *feminist* or *bitch*, are interpreted differently by different genders and age groups.

Feminist theorizing in this area also suggests that when individuals violate gendered expectations for communication, they exist in a double-bind state. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, for example, suggests that women in a variety of workplaces face opposing and contradictory expectations regarding communication: Women are supposed to communicate in a more masculine style, but when they do, they are deemed unfeminine and penalized. The result is a double bind for women, with penalties for choosing either option. Similarly, feminist theorists such as Elizabeth Bell and Kim Golombisky are currently exploring the gendered, raced, and classed nature of the classroom and theorizing the gendered and raced double binds in which students, as well as instructors, find themselves as they attempt to communicate with one another. Judith Butler moves theory regarding gendered expectations even further, suggesting that gender itself is a performance and that individuals both do and undo gender as they perform personhood. For Butler, theories of communication must explain the ways individuals negotiate, resist, and transcend their identities in a highly gendered society.

Feminist communication theorists also consider the impact of a person's sex or gender on their language in the realm of political oratory. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and others address the question of whether or not women orators possess a feminine style of public speaking. This feminine style reflects the use of concrete rather than abstract reasoning, a personal and self-disclosive tone, and audience participation. Scholars theorizing about this feminine style offer explanations and theories for what may be the unique communicative choices women orators make as they communicate in the political and public realm.

Access to the Public Sphere and Voice Within That Sphere

Feminist communication theories also address the questions of who actually has access to the public sphere, has a voice in that sphere, and ways the communication discipline has constrained what is considered important public discourse. Scholarship in this area includes the identification of a rich history of women orators who have been ignored and neglected by the discipline—in effect denied access to the rhetorical tradition's view of the public

sphere. This aspect of feminist communication theory is sometimes labeled *revalorist* theory and considered to be a recovery project, as it identifies and honors women's actual presence in history and celebrates the communication of these important historical figures. Feminist communication theory in this vein identifies and describes women orators who have been neglected historically and is exemplified in several anthologies of key women speakers, most notably those compiled by Patricia Scileppi Kennedy and Gloria Hartmann O'Shields and by Campbell.

This recovery project also includes the identification of women who likely influenced the rhetorical tradition centuries ago. This effort, begun by Andrea Lundsford and taken up by many other feminist communication theorists, calls attention to such women as Aspasia, Diotoma, and Christine de Pisan, who likely had a strong voice in classical and medieval times, but who have been erased and ignored as significant contributors to the communication or rhetorical tradition. Feminist communication theorists who take up this recovery effort also are exploring ways that women such as Maria Miller Stewart, Sarah Grimke, and Angelina Grimke, and more recently, Ella Baker and Anita Hill, have been driven from the public sphere. This communication theory attempts to explain the strategies used by those with power to prevent these women, and others like them, from gaining a voice in political discussions. It also seeks to understand the unique and important approaches to communication taken by these women and the ways they overcame some of the oppression they faced.

When considering access to the public sphere from a feminist organizational communication perspective, scholars such as Patrice Buzzanell and Karen Ashcraft, as well as others, work to theorize the presence of, as well as roles and constraints faced by, women in their workplaces. Feminist communication theory in this arena is focused on understanding how organizations construct particular identities for women and men, how feminist and women's organizations struggle to maintain their place in a hegemonic structure that privileges profit and power over social justice and sustainability, and how the discourses in the popular culture constrain and construct assumptions about best practices in an organization. Feminist theory in this arena also seeks to redefine what is viewed as an

organization and what counts as “good work,” calling attention to patriarchal definitions and practices that are antithetical to feminist principles.

Media scholars also have focused their theorizing on access. In doing so, they began to develop theories of spectatorship. In her foundational work in feminist film theory, for example, Laura Mulvey argues that Hollywood film casts all members of an audience in a particular subject position—that of the male or masculine identity. Thus, all viewers of a film, whether male or female, must adopt a male—and sexist—gaze when viewing films. Spectatorship, Mulvey theorizes, requires that women see themselves through the eyes of a sexist male person and as objects to be watched rather than as active agents in the narrative. Scholars after Mulvey suggested that the gaze may not be as disempowering to female viewers as Mulvey originally claimed and added that that view was also racist, homophobic, and classed.

In attempting to explain the lack of presence and voice in the public sphere for extremely marginalized women, many scholars began to articulate and develop a feminist postcolonial theoretical approach. Cindy Griffin suggested that the public sphere is built on essentialist principles that prevent women from being seen as legitimate communicators in that sphere. Scholars such as Gayatri Spivak, Radha Hegde, and Raka Shome, among others, explored theories of subalternity to explain women’s complete lack of voice in the public sphere. These theorists suggest that under extreme conditions of oppression, the social definitions, views, and expectations of women and their voices prevent those in positions of power from even hearing their communicative attempts. As this feminist postcolonial theorizing moved into the realms of media studies, scholars explained the ways that the narratives told in popular film and television erased completely the voices of minority individuals, female and male, and replaced them with White, hegemonic, and masculine voices. As Shome suggests, minority voices are erased as White masculinity talks for all about that which is good and heroic as well as representing all that is positive in a foreign culture—doing so far better than those native to that culture.

Feminist communication theory also has attempted to understand women’s lack of presence in the public sphere by studying what might

be labeled nontraditional communication modes and practices. Karen Foss and Sonja Foss, for example, suggest that in order to understand women’s communication and their eloquence, scholars must acknowledge women’s letter writing, baking, gardening, graffiti, fashion design, and even motherhood, among other forms of expression, as rich sources and important examples of women’s efforts to communicate. Mary Rose Williams suggests that women’s quilting has been an avenue of political expression and resistance for women for centuries. Similarly, Williams argues that Francis Willard’s refusal to abide by the social norms of her era and her insistence on riding a bicycle is a powerful example of nontraditional, yet effective, modes of communication. Additionally, theorists are exploring such venues as abortion clinics, guerilla theatre and street performances, and discourses around eating disorders and depression as ways of theorizing feminist communication outside the traditional boundaries of what important communication can be.

Finally, theory in the area of who can and is speaking addresses the question of how the communication discipline constrains and silences certain voices. In one of the first theoretical essays to take up this issue, Carole Spitzack (now Durna) and Kathryn Carter identified several ways the discipline allowed women’s communication to be included as data for study and later published a comprehensive anthology exploring ways that the masculine bias in the discipline systematically prevented women’s communication from gaining legitimacy. Campbell and Kristin Vonnegut added to this conversation, theorizing specifically about the exclusion of women from public address studies, as did Sheryl Perlmutter Bowen and Nancy Wyatt, who theorized about the ways this exclusion occurred in the various branches of the discipline (organizational communication, performance studies, intercultural communication, and the like). In an essay awarded the National Communication Association’s Golden Monograph award, Carol Blair, Julie Brown, and Leslie Baxter expose the constraining nature of the blind-review process for journal publication, the hostility feminist scholarship often faces in the review process, and the ways feminist voices are “disciplined.” As these scholars theorize the ways that the discipline has constrained women’s voices and research, they call

attention to long-held beliefs and biases regarding scholarship. They expose the ways those beliefs and biases silence feminist scholarship and theory and constrain their understanding of the diversity of communication styles and practices.

Theorizing About Theory and Feminism

As feminist communication scholars began to theorize from a feminist perspective, they also sought to define theory, feminist theory, and feminism for themselves. Guided by the question, "What makes scholarship feminist?" answers and explanations addressed the nature of theorizing and scholarship, as well as the inclusive or exclusive nature of definitions of feminism. In 1985, Kramarae, Paula Treichler, and Beth Stafford published their anthology, *For Alma Mater: Feminist Scholarship in Theory and Practice*, and in 1988, the editors of the journal *Women's Studies in Communication* asked a variety of feminist scholars to offer their versions of feminism and feminist scholarship. These efforts suggest that two of the foundational pieces of feminist scholarship are a commitment to explorations of the many ways gender is constructed and communicated as well as a desire for self-reflexivity.

Early theories about what scholars mean by theory also suggest that the traditional definition of theory as an objective body of facts, which must be tested again and again over time in order to be credible, is a sexist and patriarchal notion of theory. Feminist theorists began to challenge this definition and to suggest that theory, from a feminist perspective, required neither testable fact nor objectivity, but was instead a subjective compilation of explanations that were highly contextual, bound by the ideologies of the researcher, and deeply influenced by the social milieu from which they emerged. Nancy Harding explained that each individual theorized from a particular standpoint, rather than any objective view, and called for an acknowledgment of this standpoint not only in feminist research but in all research. S. Foss and K. Foss, and Kramarae and Spender, among others, rejected the traditional view of theory as produced by an objective researcher who stood outside of and apart from the researched. They also rejected the view of theory as a linear explanation that breaks a communication event into its parts, or as a singular, finished truth. Instead, they

suggested that theory, defined from a feminist perspective, relies on researcher subjectivity, collaboration between the researcher and those who participate in the study, and seeing and honoring interconnections, process, and multiple truths.

Feminist theorists also took up the complicated task of defining feminism and how those definitions influenced communication theories and scholarship. Bonnie Dow, as well as Helene Shugart, Catherine Waggoner, and Lynn O'Brien Hallstien, for example, offered theories to explain second- and third-wave feminism and the communication practices that could be linked to or shared across each wave. Other scholars considered how a definition of feminism might influence the type of communication a scholar studied and the ways that communication might be studied. Sally Gearhart, Griffin, S. Foss, and K. Foss, for example, suggested that a patriarchal bias exists in the foundations and traditions of communication scholarship. Feminism, these scholars argue, challenges those foundations and traditions and, among other things, asks that we expand our most venerated terms, practices, and assumptions. Houston, defining feminism as necessarily including a recognition of racial and ethnic differences, also argues that a bias exists in our foundational assumptions and practices, a bias that disregards the communication styles and practices of Black women and men.

Other feminist theorists, however, challenged this call for a reconceptualization of foundational principles and practices. Celeste Condit, for example, rejects the call for reconceptualization, suggesting instead that feminism is inherently aware of gender diversity and that this awareness, rather than the revision of foundational assumptions, is enough to remedy discrimination and oppression. For Condit, feminist theory must embrace a post-modern view of gender and open itself to shifting, fragmented, context-bound identities and theories rather than challenge venerated theories and assumptions. As feminist scholars continue to explore the feminist nature of their theorizing and the unique components of that theorizing, they call attention to the underlying assumptions embedded in any body of theory. These conversations and even disagreements suggest that feminist communication theories are anything but a unified and homogenous collection of perspectives, political views, and explanations for communication.

Masculinity and Identity

Although important to feminist communication theory, explanations of the construction and deconstruction of masculinities and identities (as raced and sexualized) are just beginning to receive extensive and systematic attention from feminist communication scholars. The work of Nick Trujillo, who studied baseball player Nolan Ryan, is an early example of feminist communication theory and attention to questions of masculinity. Similarly, the more recent theories of Thomas Nakayama and Robert Kriesek and Michelle Holling and Bernadette Calafell, among others, take up questions of masculinity, sexuality, ethnicity, and cultural identities. These scholars offer theories that assist in understanding how communication norms, expectations, and practices constrain individuals, locking them into prescribed subject positions and communication practices. Feminist scholars also are turning attention to and theorizing resistance and heteronormative femininity as theoretical tools that help understand lesbian identities, disabled identities, eating disorders, and sexual assault in constructive and productive ways. The goal of this body of theorizing is to call attention to unexamined assumptions and ideologies and to enrich communication theory so that it can account for a wider range of important, but previously ignored or denigrated communication phenomenon.

As each of these areas of theory suggest, feminist communication theories represent an interdisciplinary, political, and activist approach to research. Guided by a desire to understand communication as it relates to gender and sex, feminist communication theorists take up a wide range of topics and activities as they approach the study of communication. The complexity and diversity of ideas within feminist communication theory, as well as the complexity and diversity of communication phenomenon itself, suggest that this body of theory will continue to grow and add unusual and important new information to the study of communication. Similarly, as identities and constructions of femininity and masculinity respond to changing cultural and social expectations, so too will feminist communication theory.

Cindy L. Griffin

See also Chicana Feminism; Feminist Standpoint Theory; French Feminism; Genderlect Theory; Gender Schema Theory; Muted Group Theory; Postcolonial Feminism; Womanism

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FEMINIST RHETORICAL CRITICISM

Feminist rhetorical criticism recognizes that the symbolic construction of women and gender is central to the study of communication. When critics select a feminist critical approach, their goal is to explore and explain that construction. Feminist rhetorical criticism is grounded in the assumption that, historically and currently, women and men often have different access to channels and positions of power. Because this differential access can affect the communication styles and strategies used by women, feminist criticism is used to understand, validate, and theorize about those communicative differences. As a critical tool or approach, feminist rhetorical criticism helps scholars explain how communication is used to constrain and/or enable women, how communication is used to resist those constraints and facilitate empowerment, and how communication is used to create nonoppressive identities and ways of being. Because feminist rhetorical criticism is an approach to the study of communication that informs every aspect of a scholar's critical process, this entry will describe the political nature of feminist rhetorical criticism and explain the methodologies, texts, and stances taken by feminist critics.

Feminist rhetorical criticism has an explicitly political agenda: The critic's goal is to advance and improve the symbolic and material positions of women. When scholars engage in feminist rhetorical criticism, they seek to understand that oppression as well as the communication used by and about women to overcome that oppression. Additionally, although feminist rhetorical criticism always begins with an explicit exploration of the position or positions of women in societies because of its overtly political goals, it also takes into account the myriad and complex identities women hold. These identities are linked to the historical, cultural, ethnic and racial, sexual, and socio-economic realities of women's lived experiences. As such, feminist rhetorical criticism is grounded in the acknowledgment of two things related to the study of communication: Gender matters and gender does not exist in isolation; it is always present in a state of interconnection with other subject and identity positions.

Feminist rhetorical criticism can be a perspective, approach, or method that stands on its own, or it can be linked to other critical and theoretical perspectives, approaches, and methods. When used alone, the critic uses an inductive approach, asking, "How is gender symbolically constructed in this text?" or "What is the construction of gender in this text?" The critic then identifies and explains the various examples of its construction. In this inductive approach, the critic is searching for examples of how women as well as men are constructed in a text, or series of texts, and what that construction tells scholars about symbol use and women's oppression. With this inductive approach, the critic also always identifies the interconnections of race and ethnicity, economic status, and other identities and subject positions as they are linked to and influence communication. When used in combination with other critical methodologies, the critic might ask a more focused question or set of questions, such as "How does a woman's subaltern status affect her ability to communicate in this text, or texts?" or "How does a woman's token status facilitate or constrain her communicative options?" and "How does the communication strategy of appropriation function in this text?" This is the approach taken by Dana Cloud on Oprah Winfrey's biography. These more focused questions allow a critic to concentrate on a particular aspect of communication and function as guides or links to particular bodies of theory the critic finds relevant to the text under study. In this more focused approach, the critic also identifies the intersections and influences of race and ethnicity, economic status, sexuality, and the like.

Feminist rhetorical criticism also acknowledges that a wide range of texts is important to the study of women's communication. Feminist criticism in communication might be said to have begun with the work of Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, who analyzed the rhetorical practices of women speakers, thus introducing issues of gender into criticism. But because women's voices have been constrained historically, legally, socially, and economically, feminist critics came to realize that women often use unconventional and highly creative outlets for their voices. As such, a feminist rhetorical critic holds a wide definition of text and will attempt to explore the symbolic aspects of art, crafts, quilts, letter writing, testimonials, etiquette manuals,

cookbooks, street or guerilla performances and protests, and other unconventional symbolic expressions.

Traditional texts, however, such as the speech, media production, interpersonal relationship, or corporate or organizational structure, also provide the critic with important examples of the use of communication to identify and resist oppression. Texts are chosen not for their familiarity, but instead for their ability to shed light on the approaches and styles of communication used by and about women. Similarly, feminist rhetorical criticism may also consider a text or texts from a single woman, a particular set or group of women, a mixture of sets or groups of women in combination with other sets or groups of women, as well as women in combination with men. With this range of options, the feminist rhetorical critic is resisting definitions of text that limit the understanding of the communication strategies and approaches used by women. Feminist rhetorical criticism allows critics to acknowledge and explore a wider range of legitimate forms of communication.

Feminist rhetorical criticism, in keeping with its political agenda, asks that the scholar or researcher identify her or his own status and subject position as researcher—that is, critics name and acknowledge the influences of their own identities on the research or study. This self-identified, self-reflexive position is important for several reasons. It assists the critic in identifying her or his own limitations and biases. It also acknowledges points of connection or difference between the critic and the individual, individuals, and political or social positions under exploration. Finally, it makes explicit the intrinsic subjectivity of all communication criticism and calls attention to the powerful influences of a critic's own experiences, worldviews, and scholarly background on the study of communication.

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See also Chicana Feminism; Cultural Studies; Feminist Communication Theories; Feminist Standpoint Theory; Intersectionality

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FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY

Feminist standpoint theory is a specific formulation of the broader standpoint theory. All formulations of standpoint theory contend that a standpoint arises when an individual recognizes and challenges cultural values and power relations that contribute to subordination or oppression of particular groups. For instance, a person could understand and reject racist values and power discrepancies between races, knowing that those undergird the subordination of minorities. The specific foci of feminist standpoint theory are (a) identifying cultural values and power dynamics that account for the subordination of girls and women and (b) highlighting the distinct knowledge cultivated by activities that are typically assigned to females.

Feminist standpoint theory calls attention to the knowledge that arises from conditions and experiences that are common to girls and women. This focus on experiences draws on Marxist theory's claim that the work we do—the concrete activity in which we engage—shapes what we know and how we behave. Thus, feminist standpoint theory is interested in skills and knowledge that are cultivated by typically female activities such as domestic work and caregiving. For example, feminist standpoint theorists claim that caring for others

allows girls and women to develop knowledge of what others need and how to meet those needs.

Feminist standpoint theory rejects the notion that knowledge is a straightforward outcome of essential characteristics of group members (for instance, an XX chromosomal structure or having ovaries). Instead, feminist standpoint theory emphasizes social ideologies (e.g., sexism and the gender roles it authorizes) that explain why girls and women are assigned to certain activities and why those activities are less valued than activities typically assigned to boys and men. Feminist standpoint hinges on realizing that the conditions and experiences common to girls and women are not natural, but are a result from social and political forces.

For this reason, although girls' and women's circumstances and activities may shape their perspectives, they do not automatically confer a feminist standpoint. To develop a feminist standpoint, individuals must engage in an intellectual struggle to recognize, analyze, and contest broad power relations that account for the subordinate status of girls and women and the activities they are expected to pursue. For instance, many girls and women understand that assertive females are sometimes labeled *bitches*. That understanding is shaped by seeing girls and women who act assertively called bitches, but this understanding itself is not a feminist standpoint. A person who holds a feminist standpoint realizes that social expectations for females to be nice, defer to others, and not be pushy underlie derogatory treatment of assertive girls and women, including calling them bitches, whereas assertive men are admired for their confidence and leadership.

A feminist standpoint disputes privileging of men and men's interests while devaluing, marginalizing, and otherwise harming girls and women and their interests. In short, a standpoint is an intellectual achievement that reflects—and necessarily entails—political consciousness. This means, as Donna Haraway has noted, that standpoints are never innocent.

Key Claims of Feminist Standpoint Theory

Like all standpoint theories, feminist standpoint theory begins with the assumption that society is structured by power relations that generate unequal

social locations; one location is occupied by members of the dominant group, and other locations are inhabited by members of subordinate groups. According to feminist standpoint theory, women's lives, in general, differ systematically and structurally from men's lives. Women and men are expected to engage in distinct activities, and the two groups are accorded different rights and opportunities. For instance, females are expected to take primary responsibility for homemaking, parenting, and kin keeping, and females are expected to defer to and please others.

Extending the foregoing premise is the second claim: The different social locations that women and men occupy cultivate distinct kinds of knowledge. Sara Ruddick, for instance, asserts that nurturing skill results not from a maternal instinct, but from the fact that girls and women, far more often than boys and men, are assigned caregiving roles and, thus, they develop competence in providing care. It is performing the role of caregiver—rather than being female—that cultivates knowledge of how to care. Also, being involved in caregiving promotes awareness of the importance and value of this activity; those who do not engage in caring for others are unlikely to develop nurturing skills or an appreciation of what is required to care well for others.

Some feminist standpoint theorists assert that knowledge from subordinated social locations is more complete than knowledge from dominant social locations. They believe that members of subordinated groups are likely to understand both their own group's perspective and the perspective of members of the dominant group, but that members of the dominant group are not as likely to understand—or have a motive to understand—the perspective of members of subordinate groups. This reasoning leads to the conclusion that members of dominant groups have less complete knowledge of the social world than members of subordinate groups. However, not all feminist standpoint theorists accept this claim. Patricia Hill Collins, for instance, expresses skepticism that some knowledge is more complete or accurate than others.

Studying subordinated locations and the knowledge they foster not only provides insight into the lives of members of subordinated groups, but also casts light on dominant group practices, especially

those that create and reproduce inequality. This explains why feminist standpoint theorists claim that, while it is easier for women than men to achieve a feminist standpoint, it is possible for men to do so if they engage in the intellectual struggle to recognize and reject established power relations, including male privilege.

In sum, individuals hold a standpoint when they (a) grasp the arbitrary and unfair nature of power relations that structure social life and (b) are critical of the uneven consequences of those power relations for members of different groups. A feminist standpoint grows out of encountering oppositional knowledge—through readings, attending talks and workshops, reflection, and/or participating in groups such as the consciousness-raising groups that were instrumental to the second wave of feminism in the United States. Feminist standpoint theory is inherently and unapologetically political because it aims to identify and challenge established social hierarchies and their consequences.

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See also Critical Theory; Feminist Communication Theories; Feminist Rhetorical Criticism; Marxist Theory; Power and Power Relations

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FIELD THEORY OF CONFLICT

Field theory of conflict is a social psychological theory of human behavior. Kurt Lewin formulated field theory to explicate the balance between nature and nurture in understanding human behavior. These ideas had enormous influence on the field of communication. Briefly, human behavior is seen as the product of interaction between internal and external states, mediated by the individual’s perceptions of these states. These states consist of a matrix of forces that explain stability and change in human social systems. This entry provides a brief history of the theory’s origin, explains the concepts of Lewin’s field theory, examines its applications, and distinguishes it from other theories with similar names.

Lewin, associated with but not a member of the early Frankfurt School, is widely acknowledged as the father of social psychology. Most psychologists in the early 20th century ascribed either to the psychoanalytic approach led by the ideas of Sigmund Freud or to the behaviorist approach, such as John B. Watson’s classical behaviorism and B. F. Skinner’s radical behaviorism. Psychoanalysts explained human behavior according to internal factors, including the unconscious.

Behaviorists eschewed internal explanations for human behavior in favor of predicting behavior according to observable changes in the individual’s environment. Although these two schools of thought overlapped in some ways, the commonly known nature versus nurture debate sprung from this division in the field of psychology. Lewin’s field theory

bridged the debate, positing that behavior is a function of both the person and his or her environment: $B = f(PE)$.

Lewin used the term *life space* to represent environment. A person's life space is the psychological field within which he or she acts; it is influenced by and influences the person's psychological state. Each individual is seen as acting in several fields (home, school, work, church, etc.). Lewin conceptualized behavior as purposeful and goal directed and fields as consisting of various forces, understandable only in terms of the individual's perception of them. Behavior is predicted by the interaction of the individual's motivations (internal forces) and his or her perceptions of interdependent external forces in the life space, or field. *Attractive forces* pull a person toward a behavior. *Goals* exert attractive force, creating *disequilibrium* in the life space force field. By enacting behaviors that achieve the goal, the individual restores equilibrium.

For example, a student who desires good grades (goal) enacts such behavior as going to class, studying, and writing papers to restore equilibrium (achieve the goal). *Obstacles*, or threats, exert repulsive force, creating disequilibrium. By enacting behaviors that reduce the threat, the individual restores equilibrium. A student, for instance, who fears failing (threat) enacts such behavior as going to class, studying, and writing papers to restore equilibrium (eliminate the threat). Thus, the same behaviors may stem from quite different perceptions of the field.

Barriers are boundaries with variable permeability around a region in a field. Our student exerts little effort when enacting equilibrium-restoring behaviors in the geometry region of his or her life space, but works harder in the chemistry region. Obstacles can function as barriers. A simple barrier is inexplicable ("I will never understand chemistry no matter how hard I work"); an obstacle boundary is not ("I don't understand chemistry because I don't have the proper background for the course").

Intrapersonal conflict results from contradictory forces. Lewin identified three basic intrapersonal conflicts:

Approach-avoidance conflict occurs when an individual experiences forces that propel him or her toward and repel him or her from a particular behavior. For example, our student may want to pass chemistry, but is sickened by the smell of the

lab or classroom. So enacting a going-to-class behavior is conflicted.

Approach-approach conflict occurs when an individual experiences two opposite, equally attractive forces. For example, our student must choose between two lab partners who are equally appealing.

Avoidance-avoidance conflict occurs when an individual experiences two opposite equally repellent forces. For example, our student must choose between taking a final examination or completing extra lab assignments, both of which he or she equally wishes to avoid.

Some scholars have added *double approach-avoidance* for situations in which oppositional goals each have their own aversive aspects. For example, our student is invited to go out for dinner with someone he or she wants to date, but does not like the chosen restaurant. On the same evening, he or she has also been invited to join a study group to help improve his or her grades, but does not get along with the others in the group.

Lewin applied field theory in the areas of social conflict, organizational change, and group dynamics. The Palo Alto group was also influenced by Lewin's ideas in their development of pragmatics. Examples of communication theory explicitly based on Lewin's field theory include Dale Hamble's application of field theory to interpersonal conflict and Janet Bavelas's theory of equivocal communication. In the communication discipline, the Lewinian approach has been enormously influential. Approach-avoidance behavioral explanations, with no acknowledgement of field theory, are common in communication theory. Approach-avoidance explanations have been posited by communication scholars for such things as communicative aggression, communication apprehension, stuttering, speaker credibility, media use, media and gender, marketing, health behaviors, conflict management, and parental attachment.

Lewin's field theory should not be confused with Stephen Toulmin's field theory of argument, widely used in argumentation theory, or with Pierre Bourdieu's sociological field theory, applied in media and journalism studies. Both of these theories use similar concepts of a social field, but are not related to Lewin's theory.

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See also Argumentation Theories; Argumentativeness, Assertiveness, and Verbal Aggressiveness Theory; Conflict Communication Theories; Family Communication Theories; Frankfurt School; Gender and Media; Health Communication Theories; Palo Alto Group; Pragmatics

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FILM THEORIES

Film theory refers to the significant philosophical thought concerning film as an art form, an experience, and an ideological construct. As such, it can be distinguished from *film criticism*, which encompasses the analysis of a film or body of films, usually from an evaluative or hermeneutical (i.e., interpretative) perspective. However, the concepts of film theory often provide the premises upon which the analyses of film criticism are based. Although *aesthetics* (the branch of philosophy devoted to art) form a part of film theory, its concerns are primarily ontological and to an extent, epistemological. To put it more simply, the goal of film criticism is to determine meaning in or assign value to a specific film or cinematic corpus (e.g., the films of John Ford, musical comedies, the French New Wave); the objective of film theory is to answer the question (which serves as the title of one of the most influential works of theory), what is cinema (Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?). Not surprisingly, the proposed answers to this question have changed over time. The following will provide a

historical overview of the developments in film theory from the early 20th century to the present.

Formative Theories

Contributions to the body of thought that comprises film theory predate the term itself. Practically as soon as the moving picture appeared (c. 1895), there began a discourse on its nature and purpose. The first phase of theoretical thought concerning cinema came as a response to many in the intelligentsia of the day who dismissed the moving picture (the term used in the early days of cinema to designate what we now call movie or film) as a mere recording, with no intrinsic value of its own. Any significance, they claimed, was to be found only in the subject recorded. The earliest theorists of film argued to the contrary that cinema constituted a new art form—the *Sixth Art* as it was referred to by French writers at the beginning of the 20th century. They drew analogies between film and the traditional arts, noting their shared characteristics. (The exception to this process of positive comparison was in regard to theatre: Reacting to the charge that cinema was, at best, canned theatre, the commentators were at pains to catalogue the differences between theatre and film.) Moreover, some theorists posited the idea of cinema as a synthesis of attributes found in the older art forms. For example, a painting is a visual composition, and one of the primary aspects of music is rhythm, but a film, due to movement within the frame as well as the beat of cutting from shot to shot, provides a rhythmic flow of visual images, thus synthesizing attributes of music and painting into a new aesthetic experience.

Furthermore, the early theorists disputed the notion that a movie was a mere recording, a mechanical reproduction of actuality, first of all by cataloguing all the ways a cinematic image (at that time) differed from its subject—for example, an actual event that was in color, three dimensional, and included sound was, in cinema, rendered in black and white, two dimensions, and silent. Rather than being a simple mechanical reproduction of whatever happened or was staged before the camera, the formative theorists demonstrated that the raw material was altered, manipulated, and shaped by the cinematic processes. Rudolph Arnheim, for example, pointed to the

transformative potentialities of the filmmaker's choices in areas such as framing, camera angle, and lighting. But while many theorists made reference to various aspects of *mise en scène* (the overall creation of the visual image within the frame) and cinematography under the control of the filmmaker, the processes of editing came to predominate early theoretical thought.

Since this was the period of the silent film—before the introduction of sound technology—editing meant the juxtaposition of shots only. For many theorists at the time, editing was the *sine qua non* of cinema because on the one hand, it was specific to the new art form, having no analogue in the traditional arts and because editing, more than any other aspect of the filmmaker's panoply of techniques, produced signification. Although previously the French proponents of the concept of *cinégraphie* had adopted this position and in the United States Vachel Lindsay had predicted that cinema would become a new hieroglyphics, that is, a true picture language, it was the theorist filmmakers of the early Soviet Union in the 1920s who presented the most highly developed theory of film as founded on montage (the French word for editing that was adopted by the Russians).

Lev Kuleshov had conducted experiments, editing together footage in different ways, seeking to determine the effects on the spectator. His student, V. I. Pudovkin, proposed a theory of linkage, suggesting that meaning in a film is created cumulatively as the spectator determines the relation from shot to shot. But Sergei Eisenstein countered that the highest potential of editing lay in the collision of disparate images to generate new ideas. He noted that this approach was dialectical—the opposition of thesis and antithesis engendering synthesis—and therefore a perfect expression in cinematic form of the Marxist theoretical underpinnings of the young Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) dialectical materialism. (But elsewhere he related his concept of editing to the pictograms of the Japanese language, where, e.g., an abstract concept such as sorrow is rendered by combining the Japanese characters for heart and knife.)

Although the theorists of cinema from the period of the turn of the century through the 1930s differed in their foci, they all emphasized the transformative capabilities of the filmmaker wielding

the cinematic apparatus (e.g., cameras and their lenses, editing equipment, printers) and can, therefore, be termed *formative*.

Realist Theories

In the period following World War II, theoretical concepts of cinema shifted to the opposite direction. Under the influence of the philosophical schools of phenomenology and existentialism then current, the postwar theorists asserted that cinema's definitive quality lay precisely in its unique ability to capture, by mechanical (and therefore objective) means, an image of whatever was placed before the camera's lens, or reality. (For this reason, this phase of film theory is termed *realist*.) However, this did not mean the realist theorists agreed with the notion that a movie was a mere recording; the ontological connection between a thing and its cinematic image was, they asserted, the basis of cinema's function, which they described as revelatory. In other words, as the primary realist theorists André Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer asserted, cinema did not reproduce the known world for the spectator; it revealed the unknown—or at least, the unapprehended. Although such a position has an obvious application to the documentary film, the realist theorists believed it equally relevant to narrative cinema. Realist theories of cinema, it should be noted, were congruent with a strong trend toward social realism (e.g., Italian Neorealism) in postwar cinema; realist theorists often claimed that such realist films were essentially cinematic, while, for example, German Expressionist films of the 1920s, with their stylized and frankly artificial settings and frequently fantastic subject matter, were not.

Bazin also differed with the formative theorists' position on the primacy of editing. Although he recognized that it was an undeniably important aspect of cinema, Bazin believed that films that depended on editing as their primary system of signification (as in the case of the Soviet filmmaker theorists) actually contradicted cinema's essential revelatory function. He argued that a film based on the techniques of continuity editing, in which an action is broken into its constituent parts (shots) and then reassembled, imposes meaning on that action a priori rather than allowing it to be discerned by the spectator a posteriori. Bazin favored

a cinematic approach based on the long take or sequence shot (i.e., shooting an entire action or scene in one continuous shot, or take, of the camera), especially when combined with deep focus (i.e., a technique of cinematography that renders the planes of the visual field from the camera's lens to the horizon in perceptibly equal focus) since such an approach preserves the time and space of an action, rather than atomizing it. Bazin, however, never advocated that the long take approach should replace editing; he argued that filmmakers should be free to employ a range of cinematic approaches to film structure rather than being constrained to overemphasize editing.

Materialist Theories

The theories propounded in the formative and realist periods were fairly homogeneous. In contrast in the 1960s and 1970s, a plethora of theoretical approaches to cinema emerged. Despite the diversity, the various theories of this period can be seen as comprising a network or web of interconnecting and overlapping concepts based on a materialist perspective—that is, the assumption that the actions and consciousness of the human being are in great measure shaped by material (as opposed to metaphysical) forces fundamentally beyond the control of the individual. (Examples of such material forces include heredity, economics, and ideological systems.) The film theories of this period are derived from developments in the social sciences, foremost of which were the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and the neo-Freudian theory of psychoanalysis propounded by Jacques Lacan. In most cases, these concepts from the social sciences were applied to cinema after first being applied to literature. Staunchly antiphenomenological, the theories put forward by the materialist theorists were a reaction against what was perceived as the subjectivity and impressionism of the realist theories. As a corrective, the materialist theorists sought to bring intellectual rigor and scientific systematization to the study of cinema. These theories must also be understood in their historical context: They were produced at a time of great social change (e.g., the civil rights, women's rights, and antiwar movements) as the disenfranchised and oppressed throughout the world were demanding

equality and justice, as traditional ideas concerning such matters as gender and sexuality were being challenged.

Structuralism and Semiology

The first of the materialist theories to be applied to cinema, and the one that served as the methodological foundation for the others, was structuralism. Put most simply, structuralism is based on the notion that the meaning of any phenomenon lies below its surface in its underlying (or deep) structures. Structural anthropologists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss, for example, studied a given culture to ascertain the patterns and repetitions in its myths and rituals. Lévi-Strauss believed such recurrent elements form a structure of antinomies, or oppositions (e.g., life vs. death, male vs. female, the raw vs. the cooked) that are key to understanding the deep-seated values of that culture. Film theorists applied this methodology to bodies of films (genres, in particular) in order to discover what that segment of cinema reveals about the culture that produced it. For example, films of the Western genre include oppositions such as wilderness versus civilization, the East versus the West, and the individual versus society. By analyzing the deployment of such antinomies throughout the genre, structuralists sought to locate the characteristics that underlie American society.

Closely aligned to structuralism is semiology. The basic premise of semiology is that all aspects of social intercourse (e.g., manners, fashion) are articulated as signs that are read or understood in terms of shared codes. Derived from linguistics, semiology describes these sign systems in linguistic terms. The cine-semiologists, such as Christian Metz, viewed cinema as a complex of multiple codes and attempted to describe the rules (analogous to syntax or grammar in language) that govern these systems in order for any one text—film—to be understood by the spectators. The techniques of film editing, for example, form one of cinema's codes; Metz postulated the function of each of editing's signs (e.g., the cut, the dissolve, the fade) in the code of editing. If structuralism is concerned with locating the meanings below the surface of a text (or, the what), semiology is concerned with the system(s) that allow the apprehension of those meanings (or, the how).

Marxist and Feminist Theories of Film

Although Marxist and feminist film theories existed independent of one another, they were often intertwined due to certain parallels between them. Marxism challenges capitalism, and feminism challenges patriarchy, both of which were dominant ideologies in culture at the time. Marxism advocates for the end of oppression of the poor and the working class, while feminism advocates for the end of oppression of women. Either or both perspectives can and have been used as the basis for film criticism, but Marxist and feminist theories went beyond individual texts (films) to critique cinema itself. Marxist theorists note that although early cinema was artisanal in nature (i.e., crafted by individuals or small independent collectives), its development soon shifted to the industrial mode. The means of production, in other words, came under the control of capitalists. Film studios, set up in a hierarchical fashion and based on a marked division of labor, were factories for the production of movies, which were manufactured and marketed for consumption like all other commodities of a capitalist society. Not only did such a system mitigate against any personal, artistic expression, but also films made in such a fashion, Marxist theorists argued, bore the imprint of the capitalist ideology in their structure. Employing structuralist and semiological methods, Marxist theorists demonstrated that the standardized form of film that developed in the capitalist film industry—termed classical Hollywood cinema—naturalized the status quo.

Feminist theorists likewise demonstrated that the standardized construction of industrially produced films was inherently sexist. Conventional camerawork and editing construct male and female characters differently: Women are eroticized, objectified, and presented as passive, while men are active, the agents of action. Moreover, the experience of a film can be perceived in sexual terms. As a primarily visual form, a film is constituted in terms of seeing. But the act of seeing is unidirectional: The camera (standing in for an imaginary viewer), and by extension the spectator in the audience, sees without being seen. The spectator of the conventional film, through the surrogacy of the camera lens, can go anywhere, see anything, but remain invisible. This confers a

sense of omnipotence on the spectator, of dominance and control over the fictional events. Thus movie viewing, in conventional (industrial) cinema, is structured to naturalize the dynamic of dominance and submission upon which patriarchy is founded. Film goers may be male or female, but the gaze of conventional cinema is masculine (in the traditional sense). Because Marxist and feminist theorists viewed dominant cinema as fostering the continuation of oppressive ideologies in the deep structures of its form, they espoused alternative modes of production and alternative forms of filmic construction as the only corrective.

Current Film Theory

By the 1980s, film theory once again had begun to change direction. Although the new theories were rooted in a phenomenological perspective on cinema, they did not constitute a simple return to the realist theories of the postwar period. The new theorists rejected the basic assumptions of the materialist theorists, but implicitly acknowledged the systematic rigor that they had brought to the study of cinema. This most recent current in film theory is epitomized in the work of Gilles Deleuze. Rather than conceiving of cinema as a language system, or codes that have to be cracked in order to find its meanings hidden below its surface, Deleuze contends that film, as a complex of images and sounds, functions on a preverbal level and therefore is apprehended immediately and directly. Then, however, Deleuze set about to identify the different kinds of images that comprise cinema (e.g., the perception image, the action image, the time image), thus adopting a taxonomic approach as comprehensive in its scope as Metz's semiological project had been. Through his examination of cinematic images, Deleuze concluded that movement was the aspect central to cinema before World War II, but time is the dominant aspect of modern cinema.

Non-Western Theories

Important to recognize is that the film theories described here are the products of the West. Since Western culture in general and Western cinema (especially that of Hollywood) in particular are

and have been dominant globally during the period covered, it can be assumed that these theories have been influential throughout the world. However, there are decidedly non-Western currents in the theories of cinema. For example, Chinese film theory draws upon concepts of classical Chinese aesthetics as well as the theoretical concepts imported from the West. The theories of third cinema, as another example, attempt to adapt many of the concepts of Western film theory to the revolutionary goals of emerging cinemas of the third world.

Joelle Collier

See also Asian Communication Theory; Documentary Film Theories; Feminist Communication Theories; Genre Theory; Marxist Theory; Ontology; Phenomenology; Semiotics and Semiology

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FLOW AND CONTRA-FLOW

The concepts of flow and contra-flow have their origins in discourses about the free expression and flow of ideas. These were prevalent in the era after World War II, when U.S. foreign policy goals incorporated the concept of free flow of information. There was growing suspicion in developing world countries from the 1960s and 1970s that the concept so eagerly promoted by the United States, Britain, and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was a form of cultural imperialism supporting the expansion of Western media and benefiting Western advertisers through the export of a Western way of life. Some critics preferred the term *free flow doctrine*, highlighting the ideological function of free flow discourse. Criticism grew less sharp in the 1990s and 2000s with the end of the Cold War, rapid development of larger developing countries such as China and India, and evidence of media vitality within many developing countries. Media export activity from developing countries to regional and global markets has been an especially noteworthy factor in mitigating criticism; Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Daya Thussu coined the term contra-flow to apply to this phenomenon (specifically, in relation to news agencies that gathered news from, about, or for the developing world). Many scholars continued using the metaphor of flow, while that of network also became popular. Attracting broader attention than flow and contra-flow, by the 1990s, were phenomena of globalization; the relationship of media to global, regional, and local identity formation; and implications for the modes and quality of expression everywhere. The discourse of globalization inspired a variety of terms to capture the complexity of transcultural media influences, such as glocalization and hybridity.

The 1950s through 1970s was a peak period for flow studies, and their predominant message was that of one-way flow from more to less powerful nations. As early as 1953, a study by the International Press Institute (*The Flow of News*) demonstrated the great influence over global news flow of the major Western countries, including heavy dependence by developed and developing world media on news supplied by Agence France

Presse (Paris), Associated Press (New York), Reuters (London), and United Press International (New York). Studies by Oliver Boyd-Barrett from 1980 through to 2008 demonstrate the continuing importance of such sources. In one of the first examples in scholarly literature of glocalization, Boyd-Barrett, in his 1980 book *The International News Agencies*, chronicled how the major agencies regionalized their news services to make them more relevant to local geopolitical regions and to head off New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) criticism of them as agents of cultural imperialism. Jeremy Tunstall's 1977 book *The Media Are American* chronicled the global influence of U.S. media. Tunstall's main argument was that the global success of U.S. media industries was related to the size and wealth of the domestic U.S. market. U.S. media entrepreneurs were able to recoup most of their costs on their domestic market, so they enjoyed great flexibility in pricing for international markets. In a study of the flow of international television programming, Tapio Varis demonstrated strong one-way flows of popular television program exports from major Western producers to countries around the world, many of these depending on imports for high percentages of their prime-time entertainment. Many scholars, including Tunstall, examined the history of Hollywood and its unrivalled financial success as an exporter of movies and increasingly, of television series.

Flow studies were closely related to theories of dependency and of cultural and media imperialism. Dependency theories argued that hegemonic relations between imperial and colonial nations persisted beyond the achievement of formal political independence. Postcolonial countries continued to experience economic dependency on the postimperial countries for markets, investment, know-how, and advanced technology. Theories of cultural and media imperialism argued that economic dependency was rendered natural by the penetration of postcolonial societies by the cultures, languages, ways of doing business, lifestyles, and media hardware and software imported from the postimperial countries. Boyd-Barrett defined media imperialism in 1977 essentially in flow terms, specifically in terms of degrees of reciprocity of influence between the media systems of different nations, noting that this should be measured not

just between developed and developing countries, but also among the developed countries themselves. This was a more restricted approach than that of Herbert Schiller who, in 1969, argued that media infrastructures and exports were essential components of postwar U.S. imperialistic hegemony, a position that characterizes some of the later work of Boyd-Barrett.

Many such concerns diminished in the 1980s to 1990s. Applications to the media of neoliberal principles, together with processes of media deregulation, privatization, commercialization, and the Internet induced exponential growth in the number of media outlets worldwide. With support from a triumphalist streak of cultural studies, sometimes associated with the work of David Morely, that celebrates the infinity of textual meanings, there appeared to be endless possibility of expression. Optimism was fueled by expansion in the number and wealth of new outlets in young democracies of the developing world. Some media began to acquire a global presence, such as CNN or BBC World Television, to be followed in 1996 by a global station of the south, Al Jazeera. Meanwhile, policy changes in India that rationalized the financing of Bollywood movies provided these with added impetus on global markets. The production and global distribution of telenovelas, many of them made in Mexico, Argentina, and Venezuela, further contributed to the sense of a great flourishing of media product on both domestic and international markets. Some excitement survived into the 2000s, but was suppressed both by processes of industrial concentration and conglomeration and in the wake of the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003, respectively. These eventually prompted growing public realization that apparent diversity of outlets notwithstanding, the mainstream media in almost all countries, including the United States and Britain, were timid and often complicit in the face of serious government wrongdoing of the worst imaginable kinds (e.g., false pretexts for engagement in war; vast war profiteering; mass murder; destruction of basic infrastructure necessary to sustain civilian life; looting of national assets, such as oil reserves, at the gunpoint of an occupying army and puppet government; torture and abuse of both genuine suspects and innocents; suspension of habeas corpus).

Critical scholarship likewise survived the triumphalism of media diversity. In the United States, political economists like Robert McChesney, Herbert Schiller, and Dan Schiller kept their focus on the growing divorce between media industries and the practice and spirit of democracy. In several papers, Boyd-Barrett argued that evidence of media imperialism persisted into the new communication and information technology industries and that the world had returned to a symbiosis between imperialism and mainstream media, lambasted so forcefully by Herbert Schiller some 40 years earlier. A string of scholarly books in the 2000s by James Curran, Joseph Straubhaar, Jeremy Tunstall, and others argued in a different direction—namely that media systems tend to look very different when seen from within particular regions, nations, and even subnational territories across the world, each formed by complex, distinctive histories. Missing from some of these accounts was a systematic comparative framework. They mostly presumed that the main variable of interest is content and were uncritical of neoliberalism as a global ideology that emerged from the United States and has underpinned a global financial hegemony with U.S. interests and other strategic partners at the apex. This disseminated since the early 1980s with astonishing single-mindedness through a mixture of outright military force, manipulation of governments, guile, and propaganda. Further, many such authors are incurious about the pervasive timidity of mainstream media in the face of the increasingly desperate aggressiveness of U.S. administrations following 2001, closely tied to oil and defense interests and the relatively poor coverage everywhere of the reality of a globalized economy, even as this showed signs of implosion by 2008.

Critiquing Tunstall's 2007 work *The Media Were American*, Boyd-Barrett noted that the theory of the strongest domestic market, which Tunstall had developed in his earlier book *The Media Are American* to account for U.S. dominance, had modulated to a more dynamic account, tracing how economies of scale accrue to early market leaders and to large population countries, thus helping explain variations between nations in their respective degrees of media autonomy. Tunstall, in 2007, argued that for 200 years, media development was bound up with, directed by, and contributed to the

development of the nation-state. The consequence that media were therefore deeply implicated in propagandizing the foreign policy objectives of nation-states—of particular importance in the context of all forms of imperialism—is acknowledged more boldly for the late 19th than for the early 21st century. Application by Tunstall of older theories of media imperialism, which he eschews, would have necessitated equal and systematic attention to hardware as to software, distribution as to reception, advertising as to programming, ownership as to production, technology as to patent, content as to copyright, format as to substance and—within substance—framing and argument as to mere authorship.

In a work that theorizes the range of cultural-media relationships between societies, extending beyond the flow and contra-flow dichotomy, Joseph Straubhaar's *World Television* argues that national cultures, markets, governments, and television networks still dominate the experience of television viewing worldwide. Most African and European countries continue to import principally from the United States and relatively little from each other. Latin American countries are more likely to import U.S. production ideas and genres in prime time and to import a lot of direct U.S. programming for non-prime time. Globalization, he found, was limited by the fact that relatively few people have a primarily global identity. Many people have multiple levels of identity, but most are still local, metropolitan, subnational-provincial, or national. The formation of transnational cultural-linguistic markets was as crucial as the trend toward globalization. Straubhaar acknowledged several possible modes of structural interaction between societies, including colonialism, imperialism, and dependency and argued that relations of asymmetrical interdependence were of growing importance. He identified different modes of cultural interaction between and within cultures, including penetration, one-way flows of products and influences, homogenization, interpenetration or two-way flows, hybridization, and the formation of multiple layers of culture.

The concept of globalization (denoting a process of growing integration and independency of finance and cultures among the majority of countries around the world), applied to media from the early 1990s, frequently highlights processes of cultural homogenization or McDonaldization. Others note,

on the contrary, that in specific localities, globalization stimulates growing diversity, even though familiar clusters of these newly diverse cultural products and financial transactions are replicated all over the planet. Cultures are sometimes described as increasingly *glocal* or *hybrid*. The term *glocal* denotes either that locally originating enterprises or products take on some of the iconic characteristics of a global culture to make them more attractive in both domestic and transnational markets, or that multinational enterprises and their products deliberately acquire selected iconic properties of local cultures so as to seem more familiar to local consumers. The term *hybridity* has similar resonances. Although initially used in celebration of increasing diversity and flexibility of culture, darker undertones are found in succeeding literatures. These identify many ways in which products are hybridized within a continuing context of hegemony. The 2000 movie *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* was itself iconic of hybridity. A coproduction involving Chinese (mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwan) and Western capital (Columbia Pictures and Sony), dependent on Western distribution, arguably distorts Chinese culture for the benefit of Western audiences, exploiting the previously Westernized Chinese culture of kung-fu and acquiring greater popularity in the West than in China.

Oliver Boyd-Barrett

See also Americanization of Media; Free Flow Doctrine; Hybridity; International Communication Theories; Media Sovereignty; New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO); Postcolonial Theory; Transculturation

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FRAMING THEORY

Framing theory aims to identify schemes in which individuals perceive the world. The roots of framing theory are often attributed to the sociologist Erving Goffman who argued that interpretive designs constitute central elements of cultural belief systems. Goffman called these interpretive designs frames that we use in our day-to-day experience to make sense of the world. Frames help to reduce the complexity of information, but serve as a two-way process: Frames help interpret and reconstruct reality. Goffman's concept of frames has its conceptual roots in phenomenology, a philosophical approach that argues that the meaning of the world is perceived by individuals based on their lifeworld beliefs, experiences, and knowledge. Whereas traditionally, world meanings were conveyed through socialization

processes, creating a collective reality within a culture or society, today so-called mediated communication delivers powerful frames of world perception that challenges and renegotiates these lifeworld experiences.

Not surprising, then, is that framing theory has become important for a variety of sectors within today's transnational media society. Knowledge about framing theory is crucial for the planning of media campaigns in advertising, public relations, and political sectors. Framing theory is, for example, utilized by spin doctors for the tailoring of a political issue in election campaigns for a specific audience. However, one of the important areas of framing theory is media research in journalism and political communication. As media maintain a fourth estate role in democratic societies, media researchers find framing theory helpful to analyze the imbalances and underlying power structures that mediate political issues. For example, the frame of a story about the environment can be quite different in conservative or liberal media outlets. However, the use of framing theory not only identifies the difference framings of one story across a number of news outlets, but allows us to detect journalistic bias. The use of stereotypical framing, frames along gender lines, or imbalances of the representation of relevant societal communities, such as ethnic minorities within a national or transnational public, are examples of different frames that might be used.

Framing theory emerged in the mass media age of the 1970s. In the United States, this was a time when media research moved away from a unidimensional media-effects model and began to address quite specific forms of media influence on audiences. Among other issues, media research began to address the powerful role of national mass media in shaping political issues within the national public. As audiences were exposed to continuous information streams, it became obvious that media not only influence audiences during election campaigns, but powerfully create world perceptions and political discourse. As Benjamin Cohen argued, although media are not especially effective at telling us what to think, they do tell us what to think about.

During the 1970s, a variety of studies began to further investigate this important distinction. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw developed the agenda-setting approach that claims that there

is a relation between the amount of coverage of a certain political issue and the perceived relevance of this issue among the audience's political agenda. An example for this phenomenon is the coverage of humanitarian crises in national media in the United States and the subsequent relevance of this issue among audiences (which has then, in consequence, formed foreign policy initiatives in the United States).

In addition to such an agenda-setting process, framing theory studies the different schemes in which these issues are told. Early studies in framing research identified key frames in television news: an episodic frame—definition of a particular event frame—and a thematic frame, which positions an issue in a wider context of public discourse. Others have addressed frames being used in election campaigns.

More recently, framing theory has been conceptually refined. More recent research addresses specific sets of frames, such as those around elite discourses because many news stories favor the perspective of the powerful societal stakeholders. Others have focused on slant or content frames that identify ways in which framing favors one side over the other in a dispute. Another type of framing research addresses the underlying social processes of frame building. Some theorists have repositioned framing within the terrain of other research methodologies in political communication and argue that framing consists of a macro-level and microlevel component. Whereas the macrolevel relates to modes of presentation and overlaps with agenda setting, the microlevel relates to the way the audience uses this information as they develop attitudes toward certain issues that overlap with priming processes. Priming refers to the way media offer a prior context by which an audience will interpret subsequent information, thus creating frames of reference for audiences.

In the early 20th century, Walter Lippman, a journalist and writer, noted in his book *Public Opinion* that the world is perceived through stereotypes that serve as pictures in our heads. As the mass media age, as news stories delivered through a small number of national television channels influenced national audiences and as media transformed into a networked media world where individuals actively select information, framing theory needs to be repositioned. Lippman's notion of individual worldviews

seem to determine more than ever which information channels are being used. In this sense, framing theory needs to include the individual as an actor within the framing process. More recent approaches to framing theory highlight these social constructions of frames. In these debates, frames are viewed as organizing principles that structure the social world. However, much more needs to be done to reposition this important concept of public discourse in today's networked information culture.

Ingrid Volkmer

See also Agenda-Setting Theory; Audience Theories; Broadcasting Theories; Journalism and Theories of the Press; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Media Effects Theories; Political Communication Theories; Public Opinion Theories; Social Interaction Theories; Spiral Models of Media Effects

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(Institute of Social Research) of the University of Frankfurt am Main (Germany) from 1923 to 1933. Felix Weil, an orthodox Marxist, founded the Institute in 1923 with the aim of planning, organizing, conducting, and evaluating social, historical, and cross-disciplinary research. For political reasons, the institute was relocated in Geneva, Switzerland, from 1933 to 1935, then in New York (1935–1949), and finally back in Frankfurt (from 1949 to present).

In the 1920s and 1930s the Frankfurt School theorists dealt with Marxist analyses of social and economic processes and examined the role of the individual and the group in relation to these processes. Many of the thinkers associated with the Frankfurt School directed their studies toward particular aspects of communication, seeing various links between the historical, social, and economic processes they investigated and communication—among them Max Horkheimer, Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, Leo Löwenthal, and Jürgen Habermas. The most important concepts for the field of communication theory are Horkheimer and Adorno's ideas on the culture industry and mass media and Habermas's notions of the public sphere and communicative action.

The Culture Industry and Mass Media

In *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* of 1947, Horkheimer and Adorno developed their theory on the culture industry. They coined this term to refer to the rise of mass media and other forms of communication whose production is industrialized. As a general rule, they argued, increase in technology led to an increase in the production of commodities, and this in turn enhanced the consumption of goods. As industrialization processes created leisure for millions of people, a large demand for cultural products emerged, such as film, radio, popular music, and the press. Assuming that this great number of diverse consumers has identical needs, the culture industry aims to fulfill those needs with identical goods. Therefore, through technical means of production and reproduction, organization and management, a small number of companies produce under monopoly a large number of products that seem different, but are standardized, making wide use of formulas,

FRANKFURT SCHOOL

The Frankfurt School is a group of critical theorists who joined the Institut für Sozialforschung

types, and clichés. In this way, media production can be controlled by large corporations whose targets are economical and political at the same time: earning profits by maintaining subservience to the system of consumer capitalism.

Before the advent of the culture industry, culture had a critical function in showing original alternatives to existing society. As culture became a business, cultural products such as films, broadcasts, records, or newspapers turned into stereotyped reproductions with minimal changes, having no autonomy. Occupying all their audiences' spare time and leaving little room for imagination or reflection, they foster conformity in language, gesture, and thought. Therefore, their political role has changed: They reproduce and support the existing society, providing ideological legitimation of capitalism. In this way, the culture industry manipulates consciousness, integrating individuals into the capitalist way of life. Its products become forms of social organization and control, criticism disappears, and opposition becomes ineffectual due to the elasticity and pervasiveness of the system.

Taking issue with Horkheimer and Adorno's opinion, Benjamin examined the progressive aspects of the new forms of culture. In *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Benjamin asserted that all new media made art products more approachable, shattering the elitist aura that had characterized works of art in an earlier era. Moreover, Benjamin claimed, film changed the perception of receivers, enabling them to process the rushing of images. So receivers can become better able to analyze and comprehend the often chaotic experience in contemporary industrialized societies, developing into more critical individuals. Benjamin, then, discerning the revolutionary potential of new mass media, proposed their refunctionalization in order to democratize and revolutionize society. He suggested that radio can produce alternative information, broadcasting democratic discussions and interventions by critical-oppositional intellectuals. In this way, Benjamin claimed, radio can be refunctionalized as a progressive medium.

The theory about the culture industry was pivotal in the 1940s because it called attention to the links between mass communication, ideology, and economic and political power. Later, it came under heavy criticism. Fredric Jameson evaluated this theory as historically limited and only effective

when referring to societies between 1920 and 1970. After the 1940s, he claimed, societies changed extensively, and new media developed, with important repercussions for economics and politics. For instance, in the World Wide Web, a system of documents accessible via the Internet, there are Web sites where political movements and economic concerns can bring their ideas and products to a general public and forums where registered members can hold discussions.

Deborah Cook offers an additional critique of the culture industry. She asserted that Adorno neglected to analyze the interdependence between the culture industry and other business sectors. In what concerns the specific field of film theory, Diane Waldman stated that Adorno considered films as deeply conservative in their own nature, attributing to them the aim to duplicate and reinforce reality. In her opinion, Adorno failed to recognize that films can be characterized by various styles and aesthetic conceptions, which allow films to fulfill a multiplicity of functions. This variety of characteristics not only denies the films' conservative nature as hypothesized by Adorno, but enables them to promote autonomy of thought in the audience.

The Theory of the Public Sphere

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (published in 1989, but written in 1961), Habermas provided historical background to Horkheimer and Adorno's analysis of the culture industry. His research began with an analysis of bourgeois society, which grew up in the late 18th century. This society, Habermas claimed, was characterized by the growth of a public sphere, where individuals and groups could express their needs and interests. In this space, whose function was similar to that of the Greek agorà, they could discuss and evaluate important contemporary issues, opposing the power of the state and of other powerful groups and helping to shape public opinion.

Since then, however, according to Habermas, the function of the public sphere in capitalism, mass democracy, and the welfare state changed: Discussions occur only between media experts, and the receivers become passive consumers of entertainment and information. He called this development refeudalization of the media, likening it to processes that are characteristic of feudal systems.

Some critics noted that Habermas idealized the bourgeois public sphere, neglecting other public spheres: Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge pointed out the existence of a proletarian public sphere; Mary Ryan discussed a women's public sphere. More recently, Douglas Kellner claimed that Habermas neither theorized the functions of communication media within the contemporary public sphere nor recognized their use by social movements in order to educate and organize oppositional groups.

Universal Pragmatics and the Theory of Communicative Action

In his article "What Is Universal Pragmatics?" and in his two-volume work *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas gave a linguistic turn to his social theory, theorizing about language and communication. Shifting from the issue of publicness to concerns of communication, he left behind historical analysis and used a more analytical approach to examine issues about communication in contemporary social life.

Building on John L. Austin's speech act theory, Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of language games, and George H. Mead's thoughts on symbolic interaction, Habermas stated that language contains in itself norms that permit criticism of domination and promotion of democratization.

He distinguished four types of action. The first type is teleological-strategic action, which concentrates on achieving success and can be directed toward subjects-objects; it has been highly developed under capitalism. The second type is normatively regulated action; in the third type—dramaturgical action—agents constitute a public for one another before whom they can present their selves. These first three types are already existing types; the fourth one, communicative action, seems more like a suggestion to be fulfilled.

In communicative action, people exchange verbal messages with the aim of understanding each other; Habermas ignores nonverbal languages and excludes from his model other types of social actions, such as conflict or competition. Indeed, in order to perform an effective communicative action, the communication partners must be sincere, accurate, and correct and have the authority to say what they are saying. A subject who becomes

an active participant in a communication must put forward four basic validity claims: uttering something understandably, giving the hearer something to understand, making himself or herself thereby understandable, and coming to an understanding with another subject.

Therefore, communicative competence is based on the ability to apply language rules in order to emit and understand utterances. Indeed, Habermas stated, there is a difference between sentences and utterances: The former are judged from a grammatical point of view; the latter are judged from a communicative point of view.

In his article "What Is Universal Pragmatics?" Habermas focused on the necessary conditions for reaching an understanding through communication. He asserted, following Noam Chomsky, that every human being has the ability to construct grammatically correct sentences and meaningful utterances. Consequently, it is the system of grammar, on the basis of which subjects think and speak, that makes communication possible. In this way, sentences become intelligible for a speech community of speakers, hearers, and bystanders.

Yet utterances are multilevel: Through them, subjects create an atmosphere of trust, establish interpersonal relations, and express intentions in addition to transmitting content. For this reason, communicative actions can realize shared understanding; therefore, the locus of rationality is no longer the single individual (as it was in the Cartesian and in the Kantian perspectives), but is the interaction between individuals. Thus, rationality takes on a communicative trait. When shared understanding is achieved, coordinated actions can be undertaken. In this way, Habermas connected his two main theories: Effective communicative actions create the premises for a rebuilding of the public sphere.

Alessandra Padula

See also Communicative Action Theory; Critical Theory; Language and Communication; Marxist Theory; Pragmatics; Public Sphere; Speech Act Theory

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FREE FLOW DOCTRINE

The free flow doctrine is associated with 1940s U.S. policies of international communication as promoted by William Benton, Assistant Secretary of State from 1945 to 1947. Benton was responsible for U.S. policy in the creation of United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and was on the Executive Board later. He lauded UNESCO's promotion of the free flow of information across national boundaries that, he claimed, would improve the plight of poorer countries. At the heart of the controversy about the free flow doctrine is the question, whose freedom to do what? Benton's proponents hailed free flow as a repudiation of the system of state-regulated media that they associated with the Soviet Union, then the world's

second major superpower and Cold War nemesis of the United States. In contrast, critics called it a doctrine, a disparaging suggestion that for U.S. policy makers, it was an unquestioned article of faith that masked self-interest.

Kaarle Nordenstreng, a prominent critic, acknowledges that UNESCO's constitution does indeed promote the free flow of ideas by word and image, but that it does so in the service of mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples for the overriding purpose of contributing to peace and security. Within this framework, therefore, free flow is not an absolute good whose integrity requires that it be protected from all regulation. Nor is it merely a negative freedom, as in freedom from censorship. There are times when the conditions that underlie the possibility of expression must be regulated—in an act of positive freedom—to ensure that individuals may hold and express opinions and to receive those of others, without discrimination.

The notion of free flow resonated, for many, with purported traditions of free speech and free press in Western democracies that distinguished these from fascist and communist regimes. It extended the metaphor of flow beyond circulation of ideas within nations to traffic between nations. The idea of free expression was originally established in argument against prior state censorship, but took little account of the political economy of mass communication. The notion of a free press, for example, refers specifically to the editorial rights of newspapers and broadcast organizations. Mostly profit-driven corporations, their freedoms of expression fall far short of fulfilling Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declares that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression and that this right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

The presumption that news media shoulder this broader responsibility to the rights of everyone to freedom of expression would seem naïve in the light of sociological studies of the selectivity of media content and practices such as the framing of stories to highlight certain angles and obscure others. Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky identified a propaganda model in which mainstream

press coverage is governed by (a) the power relations between media owners and the interests of political, business, and military elites; (b) the strategic orientation of media content to the goal of maximizing advertising revenue; (c) journalistic privileging of authoritative or official sources; (d) journalists' fear of retribution from powerful news sources; and (e) ideological convergence between media owners, practitioners, and powerful news sources.

UNESCO's original commitment to free flow came under increasing attack during the 1970s from the Soviet bloc, the Non-Aligned Movement, and critical scholars, in a multifaceted campaign known as the New World Information and Communication Order or (NWICO), whose principles were outlined in UNESCO's 1980 *MacBride Report*. For many proponents of NWICO, the free flow doctrine provided ideological cover for Western media to penetrate the markets of the developing world without the likelihood—given imbalances of productive capacity between developed and developing worlds and cultural resistance of Western markets to non-Western media products—of reciprocal influence from developing to developed worlds. In this sense, free flow may be seen as an ideological enabler of neoliberalism and globalization. Western media acquired further market advantage from their early adoption of cutting-edge communication technologies such as satellite and computing. Nor was it just a matter of imbalance in media flows. There were concerns about the quality and fairness of the representations of the world provided by Western media. Western media were increasingly subject to industrial concentration and conglomeration, which undermined their credibility as agents of democracy even at home, let alone on the global stage.

Criticisms of free flow focused on inequalities of strength between different national media industries, one-way flows from more powerful to less powerful nations, and unequal accumulations of market advantages. Herbert Schiller, in his 1969 book, *Mass Communications and American Empire*, advanced a yet more critical perspective, arguing that the internationalization of Western communications was an essential component of postwar U.S. imperialistic hegemony, not dissimilar to an earlier British free trade imperialism.

Ubiquitous U.S. military presence around the non-communist world was rendered palatable by its association with deceptive freedoms of speech, trade, and enterprise. Free speech amounted to penetration of global markets by U.S. communications industries, free trade opened up developing world markets to Western goods amid continued Western protection of key economic sectors such as agriculture, and free enterprise was distorted by global dominance of U.S. education, innovation, and business. Schiller argued in his 1973 book, *The Mind Managers*, that U.S. media serve the goals of empire by promoting the myth of individualism and personal choice, the myth of an unchanging human behavior, the myth of the absence of social conflict (serving to deny the origins of conflict in social structure), and the myth of media pluralism, which equates diversity of product with diversity of expression. The news business aids the deception through fragmentation of news content, which obscures the underlying interconnections between and the obsession for immediacy, which distracts attention from the underlying causes of events.

The free flow doctrine survived the NWICO attack and remained in evidence in various inter-governmental, UN and UNESCO programs, including the International Telecommunication Union. It resurfaced at the UN's World Summit of the Information Society in 2002 and 2005, where the focus was on inequalities of access to the Internet. Stronger media production in erstwhile developing countries, the economic rise of China and India, and contra-flows in the form of telenovelas, "Bollywood" exports, Al Jazeera, and the Korean Wave, for example, have reduced concern about dependency on first world media imports. The implication that an ideal state of free flow has been attained, however, is unconvincing to those who argue that more than mere content is at stake. Other factors, such as hardware and software patenting and copyright, program formatting, copying of business models, sources of advertising, and so on, may be equally or more important, as is the consideration that in every part of the world only a miniscule elite enjoys the opportunity of free expression, without editorial intervention, directed to large media audiences.

Oliver Boyd-Barrett

See also Americanization of Media; Flow and Contra-Flow; International Communication Theories; New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO); Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency

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FRENCH FEMINISM

French feminism is the name for a body of philosophical, psychoanalytic, and linguistic theory that cuts across a broad array of related disciplinary interests, including rhetorical and cultural studies, queer theory, poststructuralism, and semiotics. It migrated from France to the United States in the mid-1970s and is relevant to communication studies because it provides a critical framework and set of concepts by which to understand how discourse is sexed. This entry focuses on its background, major concerns, and key critical terms.

Background

Neither distinctively French nor precisely feminist, French feminism is a neologism resulting from the reception, by U.S. American scholars, of Luce Irigaray's, Julia Kristeva's, and Hélène Cixous' work. Although identified with French feminism, none of the three are themselves French nationals: the psychoanalyst, linguistic theorist, and continental philosopher, Irigaray, is Belgian, with a name of Basque origin; the Marxist linguist, novelist, literary critic, and psychoanalyst, Kristeva, is

Bulgarian; and the novelist, dramatist, and English literature theorist, Cixous, is a German-speaking Algerian. In addition, none of them self-identify as feminist with respect to French politics.

However, as some of the most formidable contemporary intellectuals (such as Gayatri Spivak, Judith Butler, Kelly Oliver, and Elizabeth Grosz) have engaged Irigaray, Kristeva, and Cixous, moving beyond their initial insights and limits to develop new understandings of the feminine, French feminism has come to refer less to them and more to a kind of theory that most often takes the intersection between language, psychoanalysis, and philosophy as its point of departure. Although its scope has since expanded to include other French intellectuals (such as Simon de Beauvoir, Michèle Le Doeuff, Catherine Clément, Monique Wittig, and Sarah Kofman), this entry will focus only on the work of Irigaray, Kristeva, and Cixous, underscoring a few of the important similarities and differences between them.

Major Concerns

The Feminine and Subjectivity

French feminism's preoccupation has been the question of the feminine and subjectivity—that is, how can the feminine occupy a public space in which she may act beyond the prescriptions and prohibitions of masculine interests and desires? Indeed, how can the feminine know what her own interests and desires are in a culture that has systematically excluded her from the human? How can the feminine even be thought within language structures that do not recognize her?

The Discourse of Western Philosophy

Because Western philosophical discourse shapes all of Western thought, Irigaray's and Cixous' (and Le Doeuff's as well) aim has been to expose a history of the systematic exclusion of the feminine: how philosophical discourse has relegated the feminine to nature and woman to the status of mother and daughter (always as a support for the masculine) while simultaneously allying the masculine to culture and how its use of man, ostensibly standing in for both men and women, actually excludes woman from the human. Much of Irigaray's work

demonstrates this ongoing exclusion and rewrites the philosophers in order to open the possibility of the feminine entering into Western thought and coming into her own subjectivity. For example, she critically revisits Plato's account of Diotima's speech and Nietzsche's reliance on the metaphor of solids that is historically allied to the masculine.

Irigaray and Cixous have found in deconstruction, or analyses that challenge and break apart traditional categories, resources for developing their notions of sexual difference. For Irigaray, sexual difference is not a biological difference between men and women, but a discursively constituted difference that organizes the symbolic order and thus, women's access to culture. Both the masculine and the feminine must be permitted their own respective symbolic orders if the feminine is to challenge the masculine's erasure of her. Irigaray's elaborate critique finds its most succinct expression in the question, "If we are to be as one, isn't it necessary for us to first be two?" For her part, Cixous turns to the experience of the overflowing feminine body as a poetic resource for the invention of a language and a discourse appropriate to the feminine. Against both Irigaray and Cixous, however, Kristeva dismisses the notion of sexual difference as something that structures the identities and relations between men and women, concerning herself instead with sexual differentiation, that is, the processes within individuals that result in sexed subjects.

The Return of Psychoanalysis

Jacque Lacan's reworking of Freud has provoked passionate debate about the general value of psychoanalysis for feminist theory. Irigaray, Kristeva, and Cixous have complicated Lacanian psychoanalysis even further by criticizing its particular exclusions of the feminine. Although Irigaray and Cixous often find themselves in theoretical agreement, they often reach profoundly different conclusions than does Kristeva. For example, whereas Irigaray and Cixous reject the very notion of the Oedipus complex (which Lacan preserves from Freud), Kristeva does not. Crucially, Kristeva has continued to insist on the value—even the necessity—of patriarchy arguing, for instance, for occidental culture as an example of one of its great accomplishments.

One of the most complex of contemporary psychoanalysis' concepts, desire is the desire of the other: simply, one desires what the other desires. The phallus signifies desire, and woman, as the phallus for the masculine, can never have the phallus: She can be the object of desire, but she can never be the desiring subject. Fundamentally, then, woman is understood by Lacan and Freud as lacking. Both Irigaray and Cixous have emphatically rejected this understanding, instead retheorizing her as a multiplicity or an excess that is figured by Irigaray as the two lips touching (the labia) and by Cixous as the body's multiple pleasures.

Within both the philosophical and psychoanalytic traditions, the mind is assigned to the masculine and the natural, procreative body to the feminine. Hence, French feminism seeks to return the feminine body to thought or, to put it differently, to find in women's embodied experience the resources for radical theoretical, political, social, and cultural change. Their emphasis on the body has had an extraordinary effect on U.S. feminist theory since the 1980s, animating a trajectory of scholarship that explores in new ways the materiality of the body.

French feminism has also, however, been the source of extended, and unsettled, controversy. Perhaps the most serious and persistent criticism leveled against French feminism is that it essentializes women, reducing them to their biology, thereby consigning them to permanent inferiority. This seems to be a consequence not only of its emphasis on the body, but especially its insistence on the maternal body, which many feminists believe plays into the hands of patriarchy by keeping its historical gendering of the sexes in place. Not intellectually committed to the Continental philosophical tradition within which French feminism has evolved, it has been generally difficult for many U.S. feminists to take seriously its claims that the body it theorizes is not the natural body, but a site of contest and social inscription.

Language, Linguistics, and Rhetoric

Traditionally, U.S. feminists have assumed that there is something like gender, a base concept for their political and theoretical work. The French language, however, has no translation for that word, and instead, French feminists have been

concerned with the *féminin*, a word for which there is no translation in English. So while their most indispensable terms do not precisely correspond with each other, U.S. feminism's foremost concern has been with the historical analysis of patriarchy and a pragmatic material politics, while French feminism's has been the analysis of culture and language and the way in which discourse constitutes the conditions of human existence.

Both Cixous and Irigaray contend that language is sexed. They have made the strong case that Western discourse is structured by binary oppositions: man-woman, masculine-feminine, culture-nature, active-passive, reason-emotion, mind-body, light-dark, where the first term is privileged over the second. They contend that the privileged terms align with each other, producing a culture that operates to the benefit of man. From her earliest empirical research on language, Irigaray sought to demonstrate the regularity with which valued terms, such as God, are gendered masculine. For her part, with *écriture féminine*, Cixous introduced a writing from the body, an insurrectionary writing, that might enable women to break the grip of the resulting cultural traditions that effectively deprive women of their history and experience. (Although the phrase is often applied to the French feminists collectively, Irigaray herself does not use the term.) Hence, their concern is to make visible this binary operation and to theorize feminine resistance to it. Notably, Kristeva parts company with Cixous and Irigaray and their claim that language is masculine sexed. She believes language per se is neutral, and therefore, she has focused largely on language choices in particular situations.

Because of its specialized language and sometimes bewildering prose, some feminist critics charge French feminism with an elitist inaccessibility that makes it unusable for political action and therefore, little more than intellectual grandstanding. This criticism, however, overlooks both the intellectual traditions to which the French feminists are responding and the deliberateness of their rhetoric. They are quite aware that to interrupt a conversation elaborated over 2,500 years requires that they first gain entrance to that conversation, which can only be done through mastery of its concepts and its language, however arcane they may be. And to actually displace that conversation in such a way that something new can take place,

to make a space in which the feminine might emerge from the wreckage, requires a language so disruptive that it may initially make no sense. Without such innovation, there will be nothing to prevent men from going on speaking in the same old way. In a very real sense, then, such criticism actually makes the case for the French feminists: Western discourse has so successfully excluded women from its conversation that even many feminist scholars do not recognize its concepts, and French feminism's prose apparently succeeds in some measure in making nonsense of that discourse.

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See also Cultural Studies; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Feminist Communication Theories; Feminist Rhetorical Criticism; Postcolonial Theory; Poststructuralism; Queer Theory; Rhetorical Theory

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FUNCTIONAL GROUP COMMUNICATION THEORY

The functional group communication theory is a unified and coherent set of propositions, assumptions, and claims that attempt to explain how and why communication is related to the quality of the decisions groups make. The theory has been very influential in guiding researchers' and practitioners' views about how communication affects group decision making and how communication might be structured to increase the likelihood that groups will arrive at high-quality decisions.

Origins and Influences

Dennis Gouran and Randy Hirokawa are the researchers most closely associated with the functional theory of effective group decision making. They state that the origins of the theory lie in three influences: the work of John Dewey and his work on reflective thinking, Robert Bales and his work on interaction process analysis, and Irving Janis and his work on vigilant decision making.

During the early part of the 20th century, John Dewey developed a method to describe the process that individuals should go through as they work on problem solving. In his 1910 book, *How We Think*, Dewey suggested that the process of reflective thinking involves five steps: (1) a felt difficulty, (2) its location and definition, (3) suggestion of possible solution, (4) development by reasoning of the implications and consequences of the solution, and (5) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection.

The second influence on the development of the functional theory of effective group decision making is the work of Robert Bales. Bales and his colleagues had been working on group members' ability to deal with four functional problems: adaptation, instrumental control, expression, and integration. These are problems with which groups must deal in order to perform effectively. Adaptation and instrumental control relate to the management of task concerns (i.e., making a decision); expression and integration relate to the management of socioemotional concerns (i.e., managing relationships). Groups strive to maintain equilibrium with regard to these two concerns, and group communication is a major means of maintaining that equilibrium. For Bales, work on the task serves to disturb a group's balance in the socioemotional dimension, and group members must work to restore this balance. Group communication, then, is both a means by which deviations from equilibrium can be identified and a means by which equilibrium can be accomplished or restored. Bales developed interaction process analysis (IPA) in an effort to capture how communication functions in both the task and socioemotional domains. IPA consists of 12 categories—six related to task and six to socioemotional—into which communicative acts (utterances) may be classified.

The third influence on the development of the functional theory of effective decision making is the work of Irving Janis on vigilant decision making. Janis theorized that highly cohesive groups sometimes suffer from poor decision making because of the pressures placed on their members to reach consensus. Janis labeled this condition *groupthink*. Vigilant groups (a) survey the possible alternatives-solutions available, (b) survey the objectives to be accomplished, (c) examine the risks and benefits associated with the alternatives, (d) perform an information search, (e) process the information in an unbiased manner, (f) reappraise the alternatives in light of risks and benefits before making a final choice, and (g) work out a plan for implementing the desired choice along with contingency plans should additional risks associated with that choice become known.

In all three influences, the functional nature of communication is the focus; in other words, communication is goal oriented and serves to accomplish some purpose. In Dewey's reflective thinking method, communication is functional because when applied to group discussion, it is the means through which each of the steps of the method are accomplished, thus enabling the group to reach effective resolution of a problem. Bales's IPA denotes communication categories that function to enable a group to deal with equilibrium in task and socioemotional domains. In Janis's vigilant decision making, communication is functional because it is the means through which group members fulfill each of the characteristics of vigilance.

The Theory

The functional theory of effective group decision making rests on the assumption that decision-making effectiveness is not affected by the production of certain communicative behaviors per se, but by the extent to which these fulfill the requirements for successful task completion. These requirements, termed *functional requisites*, were spelled out by Gouran and Hirokawa in 1983. In order to make an effective decision, a group should adequately do the following:

- Understand the type of answer for which the issue under consideration calls. These answers are in response to the type of question the group

is attempting to answer—fact, conjecture, value, or policy.

- Determine the characteristics of an acceptable answer. Group members develop criteria that the desired choice should satisfy.
- Marshal a realistic range of alternatives among which an acceptable answer is presumed to exist. Group members generate a broad range of possible answers/alternatives/solutions to the issue under consideration.
- Critically examine every alternative in relation to each criterion used to define an acceptable answer. This requisite assumes skill, knowledge, and a sense of objectivity on the part of group members.
- Select the alternative that best conforms to the characteristics of an acceptable answer. Group members should also compare the alternatives against each other to determine which appear to be the most desirable and appropriate.

As a group progresses on its path toward a given goal, communication may influence decision making in three ways: When communication plays a *promotive* role, it allows the group to successfully accomplish the functional requisites. When communication plays a *disruptive* role, it functions to create obstacles that hinder or prevent the group from satisfying any of the requisites for successful decision making. Finally, when communication plays a *counteractive* role, it functions to negate or neutralize a communicative act that functioned as disruptive influence. Thus, communication enables a group to resume movement along the goal path defined by the requisites of effective decision making. The theory predicts that groups that better fulfill the requisites of effective decision making will make more effective decisions.

Generally, what has been found is that groups that make better decisions also produce (a) more communicative acts fulfilling the functional requisites, (b) acts that better fulfill the functional requisites, and (c) acts that rate higher on global assessments of the extent to which they accomplished the requisites. The research, however, has been inconsistent with regard to the importance of particular requisite functions—that is, while high- and low-quality groups do differ on the requisite functions identified in the theory, the particular functions that differentiate these groups are not

consistent across studies. Further, it does not appear to matter in what order the functional requisites are accomplished. Although most of these studies have been conducted in the laboratory with groups having little or no history, other investigations have used a case study approach or been conducted in the field, in a more naturalistic setting.

A Critique

The theory has been criticized on various fronts with each contributing to its evolution and present-day form. Primarily, these criticisms may be organized around three themes: assessments of group decision effectiveness, lack of attention to the broader context in which groups operate, and the static set of functional requisites specified by the theory.

The first of these criticisms—measurement and conceptualization of group effectiveness—concerns how the chief outcome variable of decision quality has been assessed in studies guided by the theory. The main method of determining decision quality has been to compare the group's decision to some preexisting standard (as in the case of intellectual tasks that have a demonstrably correct answer), or to have qualified judges rate the group's decision along preestablished criteria, such as feasibility, cost, and workability. These criteria may become problematic when one considers that (a) a group(s) may be working under a different set of criteria for determining effectiveness—criteria that may have grown out of the group discussion itself, and (b) groups may, during the course of their discussion, redefine the task in a manner such that the preestablished criteria for determining a decision's quality no longer apply.

The second criticism concerns the broader context in which group members conduct their work. The functional theory of effective decision making places an emphasis on the accomplishment of the requisite functions through members' interaction in the group setting. However, in the social context in which decisions are made, group members often communicate outside of the group setting. Members take breaks and text each other, they communicate in the hallway, over the phone, at the water cooler, on the golf course, or at the organizational picnic. Some of these functions may be accomplished in group members' interactions with one another in

these settings, outside of the group meeting. Yet such communication is not adequately accounted for by the functional theory, which has led to an extension of functional group theory by Cynthia Stohl and Michael Holmes, outlined in the following section.

A third criticism concerns the functional requisites themselves. Scholars have questioned whether there are some as-of-yet undiscovered requisites that may better account for decision-making effectiveness. The first argument here is that the importance of functional requisites may not be consistent across dimensions that differentiate task types. Some tasks, for example, may be more complex than others, or have more than one correct or best solution. There may be particular functional requisites that apply to particular types of tasks. The second argument is that there may be some requisite functions that are related to effective group performance that are not inherently tied to the task itself, but to establishing and maintaining the socioemotional atmosphere of the group—that is, a precondition to effectively dealing with task-related functional requisites is dealing with socioemotional requisites related to establishing well-functioning relationships among group members. Failure to identify these socioemotional functions, then, is a weakness of the theory as originally formulated.

Evolution and Current Status

Stohl and Holmes, primarily in response to the first two criticisms identified above, have proposed an extension of the functional theory that encompasses bona fide groups—groups that are naturally occurring, interact with the broader social environment in which they are embedded, and whose members have a degree of history. They claim that most of the assumptions and methods inherent in the early conceptualizations of the functional theory have necessitated a focus on zero-history laboratory groups. To extend the reach of the theory, they suggest examining historical (understanding the past, present, and future) and institutional (understanding the group's connections to its environment) functions. Additionally, they suggest supplementary methodologies for examining the functional theory of effective decision making such as consideration of the time-ordering of messages

and obtaining information from group participants in interpreting the task and outcomes.

In response to the various criticisms of the theory and the research that has been conducted under its auspices, Gouran and Hirokawa put forth a revision in the book, *Communication and Group Decision Making*. That revision includes clarifications that explicitly spell out the propositions and assumptions that guide functional theory. The authors also include a discussion that identifies some of the factors that can interfere with successful accomplishment of the functional requisites. In this identification is an acknowledgement of the importance of the relational dimension of groups in making an effective decision. Among these factors are *affiliative* (group members are overly concerned with relationships), *cognitive* (information processing is impeded), and *egocentric* (personal motivations dominate) constraints. The scholars expand the theory by focusing on the ways in which these constraints may be managed in group discussion.

A new set of requisites, or what the authors now term the theory's propositions, are advanced. In addition to the original five requisites, which focus on the task, group members should also strive to do the following:

- Make clear their interest in arriving at the best possible decision.
- Identify the resources necessary for making such a decision.
- Recognize possible obstacles to be confronted.
- Specify the procedure to be followed in working on the task.
- Establish ground rules for interaction.
- Employ appropriate interventions for overcoming affiliative, cognitive, and egocentric constraints that interfere with successful accomplishment of fundamental task requirements.
- Review the process by which the group comes to a decision and, if indicated, reconsider judgments reached.

The functional theory has guided a great deal of research in the years since it was first introduced. Whether the theory continues to be as influential in the coming decades will depend on its utility in explaining a wide range of decision making in an

increasingly diverse and technologically oriented world.

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See also Bona Fide Group Theory; Creativity in Groups; Group Communication Theories; Groupthink; Interaction Process Analysis; Pragmatics; System Theory

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GAME THEORY

See Conflict Communication Theories;
Negotiation Theory

GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER THEORIES

Although they are typically grouped together, these are actually three (and some might argue four) distinct sets of theories—gay and lesbian, bisexual, and transgender—with different theoretical scope, research foci, commitments to social change, and historical legacies. Within each grouping, there are diverse theories that are influenced by the historical and geopolitical circumstances leading to their development. Gay and lesbian theories, for example, meant different things to people in the 1970s than they do at the current historical moment as the focus has shifted from removing vicious stigma and mental-illness status to the battle for equal rights by lesbians and gay men in various societies in the West. Gay and lesbian theories also mean different things to people in different cultures. Theorizing same-sex relations in some Muslim societies, such as Indonesia, tends to focus on how these relations are structured by social class, age, and gender. Theorizing gay male relations in some Latin American countries, such as Mexico and Peru, tends to examine

roles partners play—active and passive—in their relationship. Theorizing lesbian relations in some Asian countries, such as China and Taiwan, tends to focus on *nü tongzhi*, a discourse that indigenizes sexual politics and reclaims cultural identity as distinct from the homosexual–heterosexual binary prevalent in the West.

Given this considerable diversity in their focus across time and space, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) theories entered the academy through different departments and programs. In the United States and western Europe, for example, lesbian theories were mostly featured in women’s studies and gender studies programs. On the other hand, gay and bisexual theories were most notably examined in sociology and human sexuality studies while transgender theories were originally featured in sociology and medicine. In recent years, some GLBT theories have made their way into the curriculum of a number of programs and departments in the social sciences and humanities, including communication, in some parts of Asia, Australia and New Zealand, Europe, Latin America, and the United States. As a result, these theories are increasingly interdisciplinary and transnational. This entry provides an overview of GLBT theories by examining their conceptual foundations and common concepts.

Conceptual Foundations

One of the most important foundations of GLBT theories is the assumption that sexuality and gender are socially constructed. This suggests that

concepts like homosexual and heterosexual, male, female, “third gender,” “two-spirit,” and transgender are historical inventions. In other words, these ideas about sexuality and gender are cultural creations that reflect the perspective of a specific culture and its history. As such, they show enormous variations. How we understand sexuality and gender differs from one culture to another (e.g., Kenyan conceptions of sexuality and gender are different from those of India, Argentina, or Australia) and from one historical period to another (e.g., the idea of sexuality in ancient Greece is considerably different from that in medieval or contemporary Greece). To say that social constructions are fluid and changing does not imply that they are trivial or inconsequential. For example, to be perceived or labeled as a transgendered person carries tremendous physical and psychological risks and dangers in many contemporary cultures in the world. Finally, *social constructionism* is generally viewed as the opposite of *essentialism*. This is because essentialism asserts that sexuality and gender are experienced as the inner core of individuals, which remains constant across cultures, geographical regions, and periods in history. Essentialists would argue that homosexuality, for example, is an essential core identity of a person regardless of whether she or he lived in ancient Japan, medieval Rome, or contemporary Canada.

Perhaps a more useful way to look at the social constructionism versus essentialism debate is to recognize that while conceptions of sexuality and gender change, these constructions exist in a cultural landscape that continues to cling to and affirm ideas of core and unchanging selves for various social and political purposes. Take, for example, the myth “homosexuals are child molesters” that extreme religious groups in the United States and England promulgate to incite moral panic in the general population so that discriminatory legislation against gays and lesbians can be passed. To claim that homosexuals are child molesters is an essentialist argument: Homosexuals are, by nature, predatory and dangerous to children, and they cannot change. On the other hand, these same religious groups also declare that homosexuals “choose” their lifestyle, and thus, legislation to protect gay and lesbian rights is unnecessary. In this instance, they are using a constructionist argument to advance the same discriminatory agenda.

As we can see in this rhetorical war, constructionism and essentialism might be more realistically understood as coexisting in ongoing and constant tension rather than completed deliberations.

Another primary conceptual foundation of GLBT theories is their general adherence to and endorsement of the “minoritizing” view. Originally coined to demonstrate the minority status of homosexuals in society, this view suggests that the homosexual–heterosexual binary, which is the foundation of Western discourses of sexuality, is of enormous importance to only a relatively small, discrete, and fairly fixed group of people (e.g., lesbians and gay men). GLBT theories extend the minoritizing view to include other sexual (e.g., bisexual women and men) and gender minorities (e.g., transgender individuals). Such a perspective is in sharp contrast with the *universalizing* view. The latter suggests that the homosexual–heterosexual binary is of tremendous importance to anyone—and everyone—in society because it exposes how sexuality is organized in a social system by showing the privileged status of heterosexuality and its ongoing dependence on homosexuality to maintain its superior status.

The minoritizing view of GLBT theories is intended to provide a positive and affirming approach to understanding the lives, experiences, and subjectivities of gay men, lesbians, bisexual people, and transgender individuals in society. Through a more complete and accurate understanding of these groups, GLBT theories strive for social change by providing ideas, arguments, information, and strategies to create a more equitable, just, and inclusive society. One of the ways in which this agenda is advanced is by naming, identifying, and exposing the oppressions that GLBT people experience daily through their interactions with others (e.g., family, friends, coworkers, acquaintances) and with social institutions (e.g., mass media, education, religion, the legal system).

To understand how GLBT people are oppressed on a daily basis, GLBT theories focus on homophobia, heterosexism, biphobia, and transphobia as the four primary sources. Homophobia generally refers to feelings of fear, dislike, distrust, disgust, hatred, and/or avoidance of individuals who are perceived to be lesbian or gay. Although various forms of panic are generally considered neither adequate nor sufficient for committing murder, *gay panic*—an

individual's irrational response to an alleged homosexual advance—has been used, in the United States, as a defense strategy for gay bashers in the court of law. The degree to which this strategy has been exploited, with enormous success in some cases, indicates the strong covert and overt homophobia present in the U.S. psyche and social institutions.

More recently, *heterosexism* was introduced to refer to individual, institutional, and cultural expectations that everyone is or ought to be heterosexual. It is an ideological system that denies, disparages, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual experience, behavior, identity, relationship, or community. Restricting health and retirement benefits to heterosexual marriages is an example of legally sanctioned and culturally accepted heterosexism in many countries, including the United States.

Gay and lesbian theories have used homophobia and heterosexism as the context through which to understand the lives of gay men and lesbians across the globe. This has also led to the political strategy of “coming out”—the process of disclosing one's sexual orientation to others. The assumption is that disclosure leads to greater lesbian and gay visibility, which, in turn, will increase public acceptance. However, such a strategy has not been universally accepted. Some argue that the process of coming out is based on assumptions of Whiteness and other markers of privilege (e.g., social class) by pointing out that many gay people of color in the United States do not have the same advantages and resources as their White, middle-class counterparts to risk rejection and alienation from their own communities and the larger White, heterosexist society. The adoption of the “coming out of the closet” dictum in U.S. gay and lesbian liberation rhetoric has produced mixed results, pointing to the need to understand and incorporate the cultural context into such liberation movements.

Biphobia refers to feelings of fear, dislike, distrust, disgust, hatred, and/or avoidance of individuals who are perceived to be bisexual. Many contemporary cultures are *monosexual*, that is, societies that adhere to the belief that individuals can direct their sexual desire or behavior only toward members of one gender. Cultures that focus on the gender of the individual's sexual object choice (i.e., same-sex, different-sex

attraction) uphold the homosexual–heterosexual binary and promote and maintain biphobia. In this scheme, individuals who identify as bisexual are treated with suspicion and mistrust. They get disciplined by being forced to conform to either homosexual or heterosexual orientations. On the other hand, in cultures such as ancient Greece, which subscribe to attraction and desire based on beauty rather than on gender of the person's sexual object choice, the concepts of bisexuality and biphobia hold very little meaning.

Given that most contemporary cultures in the West adhere to binary models of sexuality and gender (i.e., gay–straight, woman–man), bisexual theories vigorously interrogate them and attempt to propose alternate ways of thinking about sexuality. Paula Rust, for example, introduced a trinary model with three discrete categories—heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual—to increase bisexual intelligibility, identity formation, community organizing, and political engagement. Although the model continues to be based on categorical thinking and gender of the individual's sexual object choice, it offers bisexual people social and cultural legitimacy.

Transphobia generally refers to feelings of fear, dislike, distrust, disgust, hatred, and/or avoidance of individuals who are perceived to be transgendered. Heteropatriarchal cultures—societies that uphold and sustain the dominance of men over women through institutionalized heterosexuality—are firmly rooted in the *gender binary system* (i.e., male–female). As a result, transgender individuals become unintelligible and unwanted “others,” those who do not fall neatly into the rigid categories of man and woman. In these cultures, transphobia is pervasive, powerful, and violent. Social institutions in these cultures, such as the legal system, law enforcement, medicine, and the workplace, are often part of the problem, leaving transgendered people with little social and material support. This is in stark contrast with some cultures, such as some Native American groups, in which persons with gender-mixing or gender-crossing roles—the *berdache*—are treated with great respect. Indeed, many are celebrated and occupy a high status in their social hierarchy. Because the gender binary system does not seem to operate in these cultures, gender-nonconforming individuals are not denigrated or stigmatized.

Transgender theories have undergone tremendous change over the years. Early work, written by medical and sociological researchers who had a limited understanding of transgender subjectivity and experience, centered around pathologizing transsexualism and exploring treatment and gender reassignment issues. Current transgender theories, influenced by Judith Butler and Michel Foucault, have a much broader focus, ranging from the documentation and depiction of accurate and nuanced knowledge of transgender lives to the deconstruction of the category of gender and the interrogation of current gender systems. Some have examined the meanings of transgender as an umbrella category to reveal a wide range of gender presentations, performances, and expressions that intersect with race, class, sexuality, and culture. Don Kulick's work on Brazilian *travestis* is one example. These are male prostitutes who live as women—but do not identify as such—after undergoing drastic body modification procedures, including massive silicone injections to create female breasts, wider hips, and larger thighs and buttocks. The study demonstrates the complexities of gender identity as a complex mix of biological definition, social categorization, and personal identification as they interact with poverty, geography, and culture. Others, such as John Sloop's research on public representations of Brandon Teena, the John/Joan case, and Calpernia Addams, have deconstructed gender as a social category and examined how U.S. culture repeatedly attempts to reinscribe the gender binary system.

Common Concepts

As the preceding sections indicate, GLBT theories share some conceptual foundations but also diverge in their areas of interest. To pursue the work in these areas of interest—whether the focus is on how individuals experience the sexual system in their culture or how they resist gender hierarchies—GLBT theories make use of some common concepts: identity, community, identity politics, and liberation.

Although identity is used in everyday talk, it is a relatively new concept. It refers to conceptions of personhood; it is a response to the question, Who am I? Identity can be avowed (how we see ourselves) and ascribed (how others see us). GLBT

theories are predicated on specific identities, or standpoints, such as marginal sexual and gender positions in society, from which their work is done. These marginal identities—gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender—were originally used by society and its various institutions, including medicine, psychiatry, religion, and the law, to label, denigrate, and stigmatize individuals who deviate from conventional sexual and gender norms. However, the process of classifying and pathologizing these sexual and gender deviants had an important unintended consequence. These deviants adopted such identities to question sexual and gender orthodoxies and to demand equality and social justice. In this sense, GLBT theories are “talking back” at their oppressors. But they do so from different identity positions. Using their sexual minority status, gay and lesbian theories name heterosexual privileges and question compulsory heterosexuality while bisexual theories interrogate the monosexual system based on the homosexual–heterosexual binary that writes bisexuals out of existence. Similarly, transgender theories question the “naturalness” of gender and the stability and coherence of the gender binary system. Identity is also invoked in questions of who has the right to produce knowledge about sexual and gender minorities and what forms that knowledge should take. For example, old forms of knowledge produced by nongay researchers with limited understanding of gay and lesbian experience were questioned and supplanted with “insider knowledge” produced by gay researchers themselves.

As these marginal identities were claimed by more and more sexual and gender minorities, they became the primary mechanism through which to organize and coordinate efforts to fight against oppressions based on homophobia, heterosexism, biphobia, and transphobia. To put it differently, identity has turned into the vital and powerful force that created and sustained community. Since the Stonewall riots in 1969, considered by many to be the beginning of the gay political movement in the United States, many gay and lesbian communities were formed in large metropolitan centers, such as New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. These communities were organized around sexual identity and envisioned by many to be safe havens from the violence and oppressions of a homophobic and heterosexist society. While such communities

became a place of refuge for some (most notably, gay, middle class, White men), they also divided gay men and lesbians, Whites and people of color, middle- and upper-class individuals and working-class persons. In short, a community organized around one central identity—in this case, sexuality—cannot be sustained unless its members also learn to live with differences based on race, class, gender, and sexual practices, among others.

While gay and lesbian communities proliferated in many major cities around the world, bisexual and transgender communities encountered more challenges, and they remain fairly small. One of the challenges for bisexual communities is their lack of political visibility. Although transgenders have been fairly visible in some cities in the United States and abroad, their diversity seems to hinder community formation. For example, trans-identified women, male-to-female transsexuals, and drag queens do not necessarily have much in common with trans-identified men, female-to-male transsexuals, and drag kings. Similarly, transgender individuals whose gender presentation and politics directly challenge the gender binary system may not share affinities with transgender individuals who wish to quietly pass as members of another gender.

When sexual and gender minorities are threatened by the larger heteropatriarchal society, a powerful organizing tool to build cohesive and vocal political communities is through *identity politics*. The term refers to the practice of basing one's politics and ideologies (e.g., challenge of sexual orthodoxy, battle for gender and sexual equality, quest for social justice) on a sense of personal identity (e.g., being a lesbian, gay man, bisexual individual, or transgender person). Identity politics has been a dominant form of political organizing for sexual minorities in many countries. However, it is misleading to conceive of a global gay and lesbian community struggling for the same political goals. Indeed, gays and lesbians around the world not only assign different meanings to these labels but are also fighting for different causes, depending on the local cultural conditions and their location in the society. "Gay" and "lesbian," as sexual identities, are not comparable across cultures. In fact, the idea of a personal sexual identity is not meaningful to many. Because different cultures have their own unique

sexual and gender systems, even if they subscribe to a Western gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender identity, they are likely going to carry a wide-ranging set of meanings. For example, in India, the term *bisexual* is often used for individuals who are heterosexually married but either desire or actually engage in same-sex relations. To call them *closeted* gays and lesbians would be not only culturally inaccurate but also conceptually coercive, because such a move would make one set of cultural concepts, such as Western meanings of sexual identity, universal and further their use to interpret and evaluate other cultures. Identity politics also makes political mobilization across groups more difficult. If sexual identity is deployed by gays and lesbians, for example, to fight for sexual freedom, it tends to exclude others, such as labor groups and feminist organizations, from joining in and creating a stronger and more powerful coalitional presence to combat social injustices.

Finally, one of the fundamental concepts underlying the work of GLBT theories is liberation. As stated earlier, these theories take a broad political and cultural stance to claim sexual justice. Liberation, in this sense, is freedom from the social and cultural constraints that oppress and limit the life chances of sexual and gender minorities in a culture. However, there is no singular vision of a global GLBT liberation and what specific form that should take. Instead, diverse positions exist based on cultural particularities, political circumstances, historical specificities, and social exigencies. For example, in Spain, the focus of the sexual liberation movement in recent years has been to open up spaces for the diversity and plurality of gay men and lesbians to be expressed, seen, and recognized in their culture. In the United States, the most important goals of the gay and lesbian liberation movement in recent years have been same-sex marriage and the right to serve in the military. In Japan, two sets of political goals seem to exist among activists, one stressing the "normality" of gays and lesbians and the need for equal treatment under the law and another focusing on freedom of expression (including sexual) in a variety of contexts. Liberation is not only about challenging dominant forms of heterosexuality but also about reconstructing and creating new knowledge. For example, in an attempt to create

more inclusiveness in a language that excludes transgender experience, Leslie Feinberg has popularized, in a limited way, non-gender-specific pronouns such as “s/he” and “hir” in English.

Gust A. Yep

See also Archeology and Genealogy; Critical Theory; Feminist Communication Theories; Identity Theories; Ideology; Queer Theory; Power and Power Relations; Privilege; Social Justice; Vernacular Discourse

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GENDER AND BIOLOGY

Although often conflated, sex and gender are separate and distinct concepts. *Sex* refers to physiological and biological differences between men and women (e.g., male or female). *Gender* refers to one's social and psychological sex role orientation (e.g., masculine, feminine, and androgynous). Although there are several differences between men and women biologically, not all biological differences manifest themselves in communication differences. Research into differences in hormones and brain lateralization routinely explores intersections of sex, biology, and communication.

Source of Biological Differences

Scholars who have examined biology and communication have often done so from an *evolutionary perspective*. The basic idea of evolution is that species evolve and adapt in response to their environmental circumstances. For most of human history, people lived in small hunter-gatherer societies. These societies also experienced high rates of both mortality and fertility. Thus, women spent much of their lives pregnant, nursing, and caring for small children. Women were also the primary village leaders. Men, on the other hand, were primarily responsible for exploring, hunting, and gathering. Due to women's role as leaders of the group and their primary role in the development of family, communication abilities were a central issue for women, whereas they were less important for men.

Because women's success in survival and reproduction relied heavily on their ability to communicate with others in the village and care for young children, it is argued that as *natural selection* occurred, women attained greater social skills, especially nonverbal skills. Similarly, it is argued that men's survival and reproduction relied heavily on their ability to hunt, gather, and compete with

other males for mating opportunities. Thus, through the process of natural selection, men attained greater strength, speed, and spatial skills. Two of the areas where biological differences could have been shaped through evolutionary processes to produce differences in communication are hormones and brain lateralization.

Hormones

One important biological difference between men and women that appears to be related to communication behavior is the type and amount of particular hormones. Sex hormones, which include androgens (male sex hormones) and estrogens (female sex hormones), are one well-known biological difference between men and women. Although both sexes produce androgens and estrogens, men produce greater amounts of androgens and women produce greater amounts of estrogens.

In women, estrogen (which includes estrone, estradiol, and other hormones) is the primary sex hormone. Estrogens play an important role in preparing the body for pregnancy and lactation. Further, low levels of estrogen and estrogen fluctuation have both been related to low mood in women. Unfortunately, there is still much that is unknown about how estrogen is related to communication behavior.

In men, testosterone is the most important sex hormone. Testosterone is essential for the continuous production of sperm. The strongest link between testosterone and communication is the link with aggressive, competitive, and dominant behavior. Interestingly, several studies have linked men's testosterone levels with both marital and parental status. Specifically, testosterone levels drop when men marry, and they drop again when men become fathers. Researchers have speculated that these decreases in testosterone lead to decreases in aggressive behavior and thus facilitate more nurturing behaviors, helpful in both marriage and parenthood.

Oxytocin is another hormone that appears to have links to communication. Oxytocin appears to have pain- and stress-reducing effects, along with several other important functions. In women who are pregnant, oxytocin initiates the delivery process by stimulating uterine contractions. It also is released when women breast-feed. Both men and

women release oxytocin during sexual climax. Researchers have argued that because the body produces oxytocin at relationally significant moments and because of its positive physiological benefits, oxytocin plays a critical role in the bonding and attachment process in both romantic and parent-child relationships.

Brain Lateralization

A considerable amount of research has shown that there are differences in male and female brain specialization. When it comes to communication behavior, most individuals have a left-brain-hemisphere specialization for language and a right-brain-hemisphere specialization for nonverbal communication. In general, men have more specialized or lateralized brain functions, whereas women have more symmetrical and integrated brain functions. It has been suggested that the more integrated functioning of women's brains results in a greater coordination between verbal and nonverbal information, allowing women to be more emotionally sensitive than men are. Thus, it is argued, the fact that women are more nonverbally sensitive and adaptive than men is due in part to differences in brain lateralization.

However, differences in brain specialization are more complicated than differences between men and women, as there also appears to be variation within men and women. A large majority of the population exhibits standard dominance (SD), or a left-brain-hemisphere specialization for language and a right-brain-hemisphere specialization for nonverbal communication. Anomalous dominant (AD) individuals demonstrate reversed processing patterns (left for nonverbal, right for verbal) or a more symmetrical processing, in which neither hemisphere truly specializes in particular tasks.

Several studies found unique outcomes when brain dominance and biological sex were examined together. One study examined brain dominance as it related to communicator style. With respect to the majority of the population (SD individuals), SD women were more friendly, animated, and open than SD men were. Yet another interesting finding occurred with AD individuals. AD men reported being more friendly, animated, and open than SD men and had scores similar to those of SD women. Further, AD women reported being less friendly,

animated, and open than SD women and had scores similar to SD men. In short, individuals with AD reported style preferences contrary to traditional sex roles and more in line with preferences of the opposite sex. The connections between gender and biology and communication are clearly complicated by a wide range of human differences.

Alan C. Mikkelson

See also Communibiology; Gender Role Theory; Gender Schema Theory; Identity Theories; Trait Theory

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GENDER AND MEDIA

French author and philosopher Simone de Beauvoir's 1949 assertion that one is not born but rather becomes a woman marks a key moment in

the development of feminist theory. It signals the introduction of a crucial distinction between sex (the biological differences between men and women) and gender (the socially constructed differences resulting from this biology)—a distinction that remains to this day a central tenet of feminist thought. Indeed, the notion that, rather than being biologically based, differences between the sexes are, by and large, culturally and socially constructed is a useful starting point to understanding feminist theory. It also starts shedding light on the role the mass media—news, magazines, movies, books, music, advertising, television programs (to name a few), and the powerful institutions that produce them—might play in the process of gender definition, as they constitute much of the fabric of the popular culture de Beauvoir is critiquing.

Feminist scholars argue that gender is predicated on a strict binary opposition between male/female that is only tenuously related to the actual biological functions or abilities of male and female physical bodies. This strict dichotomy is perpetuated through sociocultural practices. One needs only to take a stroll down the baby aisle or the toy section of a major department store to start understanding how this might work: Products targeted at children—individuals who are yet to develop clear external markers of sex (at least not ones typically exposed in public)—are unequivocally marked as intended for boys or girls. Biology does not offer any logical explanation as to why baby girls must wear pink pajamas or bows on their heads while their baby brothers typically won't. This color coding of infants is, in fact, an early manifestation of a process of *gendering* that individuals will experience throughout their life and that feminist scholars see as a building block of patriarchy. While what is considered appropriate clothing, attitude, or behavior within each category of gender might evolve over time, the fact that the genders remain strictly *differentiated* remains a constant. Feminist scholars argue that historically, this process of differentiation has had more dire consequences for women—kept in subordinated roles through exclusion from activities deemed appropriate only for men and that garner significant sociocultural power—than for their male counterparts.

In order to justify such exclusion, however, men and women must be constructed as *naturally* very

different from each other—that is, men and women must be perceived as *biologically destined* or *naturally inclined* to perform very different roles. In other words, this process of naturalization is a hegemonic process as defined by Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci theorized that dominant social groups can most effectively remain in a position of power if they can convince dominated groups that this position is justified and gain their support for an economic and sociocultural system that essentially maintains the power structure. The most effective way to gain this consent is by constructing the position of elites as natural, normal, or common sense. Scholars have pointed to the role of language, culture, and social institutions in this process of naturalization, which must be constantly renegotiated to account for contestation and protest. In the case of gender, this naturalization takes the form of two clearly separate and unequal gender categories that support a patriarchal system. The schools, the courts, the family, the church, the arts, the universities, the economic and medical systems all contribute to this construction. Louis Althusser calls these institutions “ideological state apparatus.” The mass media are one of them.

It is thus no coincidence that some of the most prominent figures of the second wave of the feminist movement in the United States, sparked by the 1963 publication of Betty Friedan’s book *The Feminine Mystique*, were quite familiar with—and critical of—the media. Friedan herself was a freelance journalist, as was Gloria Steinem. Both vehemently criticized the media, particularly women’s magazines and advertising, for their limited representations of women’s roles as homemakers, mothers, or sexual objects for male enjoyment, which they felt limited women’s horizons and accorded them little social status. Ever since, feminist media scholars have continued to scrutinize media representations and endeavored to better understand the role played by the media in the continued naturalization of highly dichotomized gender roles.

Early studies analyzed the content of the media to assess what kinds of images of women were created in the pages of magazines, on the television screen, or in the movie theater. In the 1970s, they found that women were virtually excluded from media representations. Overall, many more male than female characters appeared in television entertainment, and most sources, experts, and journalists

in the news media were men. In 1978, Gaye Tuchman and George Gerbner called this exclusion “symbolic annihilation” and argued that it led to a trivialization of women’s lives and issues. Tuchman also found that when women were represented, they appeared in a narrow range of roles limiting them to the domestic sphere and according them little social power, or they were portrayed negatively, as highly emotional, weak, or manipulative.

Research on media targeted at either a male or a female audience also clearly demonstrated how the hegemonic notion of two “naturally” very distinct gender categories was held up by the media. For instance, researchers found that cartoons designed for little boys (which, incidentally, initially constituted the vast majority of programming targeted at children) greatly differed from those intended for their female counterparts. The former were fed a diet of superheroes and quasi-military figures, while the latter were given princesses and motherly figures with which to identify. While this market has certainly evolved in recent years, with the emergence of female action heroes (Kim Possible, the Powerpuff Girls) and cartoons intended to have greater cross-gender appeal (*Dora the Explorer*, *Maya & Miguel*), most children’s media are still quite clearly gender segregated (Disney Princess vs. Batman). Similarly, texts targeted at an adult female audience—soap operas, tabloid newspapers, talk shows—were shown to perpetuate gender stereotypes both through their portrayal of female characters and through their conception of the female audience as interested only in stereotypically “feminine” topics. Feminist media scholars argued that such stereotyping was damaging to female consumers as it perpetuated the notion that women’s roles were limited to a narrow range of activities and kept the male and female spheres carefully separated.

A number of feminist scholars, however, began to further complicate the landscape of feminist academic studies of the media, often until then dominated by White middle-class scholars coming from a mostly liberal feminist orientation. Feminists of color argued, for instance, that representations of gender in the media could not be adequately addressed without simultaneously taking race and class into account. They challenged the concept of a homogeneous female audience affected by representations of women separated from the broader

context of race relations and other significant elements of women's identities. Others pointed to the role of the media in perpetuating conceptualizations of sexuality based on the assumption of heterosexuality, or to the need to pay attention to the historical conditions under which portrayals of femininity and masculinity developed in various (sub)cultural environments. In other words, these scholars brought into focus the need to pay closer attention to how different sets of oppression might intersect to influence women's experiences of various media texts. This led to a more complex understanding of mediated representations of gender more carefully located within specific contexts and to the deconstruction of the category "women" as a homogeneous group to be studied as a whole. In other words, scholars questioned the traditional and singular assumptions, meanings, and representations of women as a category.

In the 1980s, a number of scholars also started to consider representations of masculinity as equally problematic to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes, further broadening the scope of analysis. They found that male characters and media texts targeted at male consumers often perpetuated gender stereotypes in ways that were potentially damaging to both women and men, particularly in their characterizations of the latter as violent, tough, and out of touch with their emotions.

Also significant to the development of this added complexity was the work of scholars who moved away from media texts to focus on the process of media consumption and audience interpretation. In her 1984 ethnographic study of female romance novel readers, Janice Radway found that the women she interviewed did not passively accept the "patriarchal" elements of the books' narratives. Instead, they actively negotiated the often stereotypical messages about gender perpetuated in the books to draw their own interpretations and conclusions. Radway also found that the act of reading in itself was a significant element of women's engagement with media. Her informants used the act of reading as a tool to carve a space for themselves separated from their families and the daily responsibilities they engendered. Reading recommendations and discussions of various plots with other female readers also added to the pleasure of reading the books by creating a sense of community among readers. Radway concluded that while

her informants were not completely immune to patriarchal gender constructions—both in their reading of the books and in their daily lives—they were not "cultural dopes" passively consuming texts that were "bad" for them. While Radway's study focused on middle-class White women, a number of other studies similarly set out to understand how lower-class, homosexual, and/or minority women negotiated media representations.

These studies helped scholars understand the significance of examining media in relationship to women's lived experience and gave credence to the argument developed by cultural studies scholars that texts are polysemous—that audiences can create multiple meanings out of media messages, some of which were not necessarily intended by their producers. Studies of media specifically targeted at women also helped raise the status of genres previously deemed unworthy of serious academic study to that of a valuable and necessary area of inquiry.

Today, feminist media scholars are attempting to take all these factors into account in their examinations of media production, media texts, and media reception while searching for new ways to create coalitions and cooperation among various groups whose experience of gender might differ due to their diverse ethnic, racial, or sociocultural situation. Ironically, the media themselves are a crucial instrument of this feminist agenda. Ever since the days of the suffrage movement, feminists have challenged the patriarchal system in their own publications. Publications such as the suffragist newspapers *The Revolution* (1868–1869) or the *Woman's Journal* (1870–1931), as well as *Ms.* magazine, which started at the height of the second wave of the feminist movement and still is published today (the only magazine published without advertising dollars), have significantly contributed to the renegotiation of oppressive gender roles in American society.

More generally, the mainstream media have played an important, if somewhat paradoxical, role in promoting women's voices at the same time as they curtailed their representation in the broader public sphere. For instance, while early newspapers' women's pages naturalized gender dichotomies by promoting the idea that men and women have clearly distinct interests—and while their assumption that women's interests revolved around domesticity,

fashion, or social gossip rather than politics or crime was far from progressive—they also provided opportunities for women to enter the journalism profession, albeit in a position that typically did not garner much respect. Similarly, women's magazines may have contributed to constructions of femininity based on a combination of domesticity and impossible-to-achieve physical attractiveness, but they have also historically provided a forum for women's artistic expression. Early women's magazines helped promote the careers of female literary talents or illustrators by showcasing their works. The *Woman's Home Companion* (1873–1957), for instance, published the works of Sarah Orne Jewett and Edna Ferber. From 1911 to 1941, its editor-in-chief was a woman, Gertrude Battles Lane. Today, women's magazines routinely employ women in their top editorial positions.

Thus, because of the media's significance as a potential tool for the promotion of oppressive gender roles predicated on a strict duality only loosely connected to the actual biological attributes of male and female bodies, the media have been the target of much feminist analysis and criticism. Feminist communication scholars also understand, however, that because of their broad sociocultural influence, the media provide a unique tool for the *deconstruction* of this dichotomy on a large scale. Cyberfeminists, for instance, have argued that the gender anonymity of the Internet and its relative disconnection from actual physical bodies provides a unique terrain on which new, more fluid definitions of gender may be constructed in the future. Ultimately, their work will contribute not only to our understanding of gender roles but also to that of American culture in general.

Fabienne Darling-Wolf

See also Critical Ethnography; Ethnography of Communication; Feminist Communication Theories; Feminist Standpoint Theory; Gender and Biology; Gender Role Theory; Gender Schema Theory; Ideology; Media and Mass Communication Theories

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GENDERLECT THEORY

Genderlect theory proposes that there are separate languages based on gender. The core of this theory explains how different sets of linguistic features used by males and females develop through the gender acculturation process and how these gender-linked language features function as identity markers for women (or men) in their social contexts. Genderlect theory (and the term *genderlect*) first appeared in the 1970s. Its development since then—although not always tied to the term itself—has been associated with a range of scholars who study how gender ideology shapes patterns in women's and men's language usage. Scholars associated with the theory include Cheri

Kramarae, Robin Lakoff, Marsha Houston, and Deborah Tannen.

Most communication scholars date genderlect theory to a 1974 article written by Cheri Kramer (later known as Kramarae) and published in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. In this article, Kramer considered evidence for the existence of sex-linked systems of language use. Kramer's analysis highlighted grammatical, phonological, and semantic aspects of language but also considered more general differences in the ways in which women and men use language. Her use of the term *genderlect* was intended to add to the field of sociolinguistics, which focuses on how social variables are related to language use. Sociolinguists study what are called *lects*, a term referring to social or regional varieties of speech. Within sociolinguistics, the conceptual connection is clear between the central term *dialect* and the related term *genderlect*. A *genderlect* is a set of linguistic features that characterizes the language production of a socially defined gender category (typically "woman/girl" and "man/boy"). Genderlect theory has led scholars to search for systematic linguistic correlates of women's and men's language use—mainly phonology, syntax, morphology, semantics, and suprasegmental phonemes (features related to the sound of speech, such as pitch, stress patterns, intonation).

The women's movement of the 1970s (now referred to as *second wave feminism*) shaped the emerging field of *language and sex*. A major proposition in this field was that women and men, even when they speak what is considered the same language (such as American English), actually use language in systematically different ways. Early work in genderlect theory explored how gender patterns in language use often diminish, marginalize, weaken, or even silence women's position compared to men's.

Writing at the same time as Kramer, linguist Robin Lakoff emerged as a major figure in genderlect theory. Her 1975 landmark book, *Language and Woman's Place*, which was preceded by a journal article with the same title, asserted that women experience linguistic discrimination both through the language they are taught to use and the language used to refer to them. Lakoff's central idea was that women are taught as girls to use language that is weak and characterized by triviality, compared to men, who learn throughout their

lives to use more forceful and confident language. Lakoff further argued that women lack the linguistic means to convey certainty and forcefully express themselves. She outlined a set of linguistic features that comprise women's language, which sparked a spate of studies on language variants such as rising intonation at the end of sentences ("I think we should have dinner now[↑]" vs. "I think we should have dinner now[↓]"), linguistic hedging devices (*kinda*, *sort of*, *perhaps*), and syntactic tag-question forms that weaken declarative statements ("This is the best one, isn't it?" vs. "This is the best one"). By implication, the *genderlect hypothesis* (also referred to as the *sex-dialect hypothesis*) proposed that judgments about the inadequacies of women's language are triggered by the linguistic features typical of women's language-in-use. The explanation here is that certain language features lead hearers to draw conclusions about the weakness of the speaker and, thereby, diminish the speaker's value.

By the early 1980s, enough research had been conducted to warrant caution in accepting the genderlect theory as a universal, or even American-based, explanation for differences in women's and men's language production. Scholars like Kramarae moved to the concept of *style* as a more fruitful avenue for insight into the influences of gender on language and communication; style takes on dimensions of language use more in the realm of *pragmatics*, such as *interruption behaviors*, *top control*, *talk time*, and *turn taking*.

Also during the 1980s, feminist theory in general was broadening to recognize the diversity of women's experiences and behaviors. Lakoff became the flashpoint for critiques that questioned the validity of evidence supporting genderlect theory. Her evidence about women's language was faulted for its restrictedness to a homogeneous swath of middle-class, White women. Marsha (Houston) Stanback argued forcefully, not only that the features of Black women's language bore little resemblance to those Lakoff described, but also that Black women had been ignored in the study of Black English, which focused on male language. Houston's research led to more projects that explored African American women's discourse both as distinct from White women's discourse and in relation to African American male discourse. Lakoff's work has, however, been rehabilitated

with emphasis on the significance of her political analysis of gendered language. Lakoff herself has written about the significance of the historical context in which she was writing her early analyses of women's language.

Another strand of genderlect theory has been developed and popularized by linguist Deborah Tannen. In 1990, she proposed in her book, *You Just Don't Understand*, that women and men fail to understand each other because they speak in different language codes and listen with different priorities. Whereas Lakoff's analysis was political in nature and stressed how women's language needs to change and become stronger in order to disrupt inequalities between the sexes, Tannen's explanation stressed that the differences needed to be revealed and understood so that communication between the sexes could be improved. Tannen engages the concept of culture to bolster her central proposition. She has likened the impact of male–female differences in language codes to the challenges of intercultural communication by introducing opposing key concepts that guide women's and men's production and interpretation of language. Women, Tannen asserts, stress *connection* and *intimacy*, and men stress *status* and *independence*. This “two languages/two cultures” approach stressed female and male differences, in contrast to Lakoff's socialization approach, which stressed male dominance.

The notion of *genderlects*, whether or not that term is used, continues to provide an illuminating spotlight on certain types of language phenomena that are marked for gender. The concept remains articulated in sociolinguistics texts, which often include summaries of research studies confirming patterns such as women's greater use of higher-status variants (for example, /-ing/ rather than /-in'/ endings, as in “going” vs. “goin'”) compared to men. The kernel ideas from genderlect theory have also been applied to patterns of language use by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender groups. In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to different locales and languages as these distinctively reflect and shape gender ideology.

The theory of genderlects in its pure form is rarely fully supported, but the core idea of distinction between male and female language use that emerges in many contexts provides heuristic value and helps explain some aspects of the gender

ideologies that are in play across many different social situations and cultural contexts.

Fern L. Johnson

See also Gender Role Theory; Gender Schema Theory; Identity Theories; Ideology; Language and Communication

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GENDER ROLE THEORY

Gender role theory is grounded in the supposition that individuals socially identified as males and females tend to occupy different ascribed roles within social structures and tend to be judged against divergent expectations for how they ought to behave. As a consequence, the theory predicts males and females will develop different skills and attitudes and that they will behave differently. Communication researchers have used gender role theory to explain and predict (a) the communication behaviors of females and males and (b) the evaluation of the same communication behavior, when males and females perform it. This research has led to considerable debate about whether the focus should be on gendered differences or similarities.

Margaret Mead's Early Research

Margaret Mead's 1935 book, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, was particularly instrumental in challenging biological explanations for gendered differences. She identified dramatically different gender roles in the three cultures she investigated: The Arapesh required both males and females to be nurturing, cooperative, and peaceful; the Mundugumor demanded that both females and males be aggressive and violent; and the Tchambuli expected females to be dominant and impersonal, but males to be emotionally dependent and concerned with personal adornment. Mead argued that the patterns she observed clearly demonstrated that many gendered differences are not biologically determined but are socially constructed by societal preferences—preferences that could and did vary and that represented only a small fraction of the wide range of human temperaments and skills. Since Mead's investigations, many scholars have used gender roles to predict and explain the behavior of males and females.

Alice Eagly's Gender Role Theory

Alice Eagly is arguably one of the most prolific scholars using gender role theory to explicate the behavior of males and females. Among Eagly's extensive publications, her 1987 book, *Sex-Differences in Social Behaviors: A Social-Role Interpretation*, is probably cited the most often as the fullest treatment of her theoretical perspective. Eagly maintained that a community's gender roles are known to its members and that members agree and comply with and reinforce these standards. Various strategies can be used to identify gender roles in a given society, including gendered stereotypes and descriptions of the "ideal" male or female. Certain types of slang also signal such roles and associated judgments about appropriateness (e.g., *Don Juan, slut, bachelor, spinster, sissy, tomboy, stallion, chick*). Community standards for ideal behaviors for males and females are likely to be reinforced by members of the community in both subtle and not-so-subtle ways (e.g., smile/frown, conversational extensions/topic shifts, agreements/disagreements, inclusion/exclusion, praise/criticism, support/harassment,

advancement/stagnation). Gendered expectations can lead to *self-fulfilling prophecies*, with people enacting what others expect of them.

In taking a structural approach to gender differences, Eagly reasoned that because males and females are expected to fulfill divergent roles within social structures, they behave differently and are evaluated differently. More specifically, she noted that women are expected to fulfill communal roles that require one to be selfless, caring, and nurturing, while men are expected to enact agentic roles entailing independence, task orientation, and dominance. According to Eagly, these expectations lead to divisions of labor related to these roles in the workplace—with males occupying more of the high-status positions—and in the home, where women assume more of the domestic responsibilities. Further, occupying distinctive roles is likely to influence the acquisition and reinforcement of different skills and attitudes (e.g., opinions about force and compassion). Gender role theory predicts that the greater the difference in social roles performed by males and females, the greater the difference in behaviors and attitudes; conversely, the more they perform the same social roles, the more similar their behavior and attitudes. The theory predicts that gendered behavior will change when gender roles change.

Eagly observed that gender roles are more likely to influence behavior under the following conditions: (a) when other social roles do not override the salience of gender roles; (b) when situations call for behavior associated with gender role stereotypes (e.g., helping repair a car or care for children); (c) when strangers interact, since what they know about each other is limited; and (d) when an audience is present to observe and reinforce gendered expectations.

In 1987, Eagly argued that gender role theory is a better predictor of gendered patterns than are biological theories or those based on childhood socialization. She maintained that the latter theories predict consistent gender differences across situations, while research shows considerable variability among women and men, and gender role theory accounts for this variability. Later, Wendy Wood, along with Alice Eagly, embraced a *biosocial* analysis of gender differences in which they acknowledged the potential impact of physiology (e.g., body size, muscle strength, pregnancy, and

lactation) on the gendering of some social roles (e.g., hunting large animals, warfare, tasks requiring strength, caring for infants). They argued that gendered differences in these social roles can contribute to patriarchal societies, leading males to reinforce gendered roles that maintain their greater power and prestige. However, Wood and Eagly also noted that social and environmental factors can and do alter who fulfills these roles and the very presence or strength of patriarchy. Eagly and her associates, as well as others, have used gendered expectations to predict differences in the communication of males and females. They have rarely linked communication to physiological differences, but they have made connections to patriarchy and to agentic and communal roles.

Gender Role Theory and Communication

Gender role theory has been used to guide research on many topics related to communication in the United States: aggression, conformity, gender stereotypes, helping, influenceability, leadership, mate selection, nonverbal communication, occupations, persuasion, social sensitivity, sociopolitical attitudes, and task and social-emotional discourse in small groups. Eagly concluded that the findings from these studies provide support for the tenets of gender role theory. Like Eagly, Deborah Tannen argued that females take a more communal perspective and males a more autonomous, independent orientation in their communication practices. Tannen considered the differences in the communication practices of males and females to be so large that she described females and males as being from different cultures, and she maintained that these differences led to misunderstandings. John Gray represented what he considered to be the vast differences with the metaphor that men are from Mars, women are from Venus.

On the other hand, Janet Hyde and many other scholars have maintained that there are far more similarities than differences between men and women. Daena Goldsmith and Patricia Fulfs analyzed the data on which Tannen's claims were made and argued that the evidence did not warrant Tannen's conclusions. Kathryn Dindia's review of research on gender and communication led her to conclude that instead of John Gray's interplanetary metaphor of difference, we should acknowledge the

vast similarities with the metaphor, men are from North Dakota, women are from South Dakota.

Researchers who emphasize similarities between men and women note that even when there have been statistical differences in the mean scores of females and males studied in the United States, the vast majority of them communicate in similar ways, with only about 15% of males and females differing from one another. In addition, some scholars point to other factors (e.g., country of origin, culture, disability, ethnicity, race, sexuality, social class, status) that can interact with or that are even more influential than gender in communication. These other factors tend to be overlooked in monolithic proclamations about females and males.

An individual's identity is composed of multiple elements, so for a given individual or situation, the gendered portion of one's identity may not be the primary factor influencing one's communication. On the other hand, cultural markers make gender "visible" even when little else is known; therefore the gender identity assigned by others, especially by strangers, may play a more significant role in judgments of others than in shaping one's own behavior. When cultures, communities, or groups embrace prescriptive expectations based on gender (e.g., males should be stoic, males should lead, females should not be autocratic, females should comfort others), gender role theory predicts that these expectations will yield gendered evaluations, and some studies have provided support for such predictions.

For example, Eagly and associates found that when forced to choose a leader, groups that knew little about members other than what they could infer from what they could see (e.g., gender) were much more likely to pick men over women. But when they chose a leader after meeting more than one time, that is, after they acquired additional information, the effect size for gendered selection was significantly reduced. This finding suggests that other types of information can weaken initial gender biases in leader selection processes. However, groups may continue to demonstrate other types of gender biases. For instance, when females enacted the same autocratic style of leadership performed by males, females were evaluated more negatively. While leadership is stereotypically associated more with males, providing comfort is

stereotypically associated with females, and Amanda Holmstrom and associates found that females judged other females delivering emotionally insensitive messages as less likable than males delivering the same message.

Some gender role theorists have argued that even small statistical differences in evaluations can be of practical significance. For example, Richard Martell and associates used a computer simulation to show how relatively small differences (e.g., a negative bias toward women of only 1%–5%) could have large cumulative effects on promotions. In the simulations, men and women started out in equal numbers, but after eight opportunities for promotions, only 29%–35% of the women were in the highest positions, compared with 65%–71% of the men. The cumulative outcome of this simulation mirrored the kind and size of gender discrimination that has been reported in the workplace.

Summary

Gender role theory predicts differences or similarities between males and females based on the degree of variations in ascribed roles and related evaluations. Gender role theory has generated substantial research, academic debate, and questions—processes that seem likely to continue. Since humans create, reinforce, and change social roles, including gendered ones, perhaps we should consider what is in our collective best interests as we engage in these processes.

Susan B. Shimanoff

See also Feminist Communication Theories; Feminist Standpoint Theory; Gender and Biology; Gender and Media; Genderlect Theory; Gender Schema Theory; Muted Group Theory; Rules Theories

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GENDER SCHEMA THEORY

Gender schema theory (GST) is a cognitive theory developed to explain the role of gender in organizing meaning, both for self and for others. GST was first proposed by psychologist Sandra Lipsitz Bem in 1981. Bem’s formulations built on the more general developmental process through which children learn to incorporate content-specific information into more abstract cognitive structures that are used to process and organize what the person perceives. Observing that all societies make distinctions between male and female, Bem was interested in how children learn to use the content around them related to gender both to evaluate people and situations and to assimilate new information.

Key terms for this theory are *schema* and *schema theory*. A *schema* is a network of cognitive

organizations that guides how an individual perceives self, others, and situations. As such, a schema is a systematic framework for interpretive activity. In short, it is a mental representation of a broad range of attributes, traits, and behaviors that are associated with women or men in a particular culture. Once a schema is established, only minimal cues are necessary to elicit the more elaborate set of meanings associated with the schema. *Schema theory* proposes that perception and the assignment of meaning by people result from the interaction of incoming information and perceptual cues with the perceiving person's existing schema.

Several propositions guide GST, and many communication scholars have found this theory from cognitive psychology to be useful in understanding the assignment of meaning in communication transactions. The main propositions forming the core of GST revolve around the degree to which an individual has developed highly defined gender schemas. These propositions have been amply tested through research. Five propositions from Bem's work are central to GST:

1. The child learns to link certain content items to broader attributes that he or she links to "sex" and "gender" (male and female), and these linkages form the basis for "sex-typing" and cultural myths about female and male characteristics (for example, associating certain colors, postural cues, clothing, activities, etc., with female or male).
2. The child learns to use a complex network of sex-linked associations to process new information and to make sense of cues that she or he perceives, thus making perception a constructive process (for example, a preschool-aged child who has learned to identify "boys" and "girls" will have difficulty with stabilizing gender for a person with a girl's name who looks sex-indeterminate because she has short hair, a lower pitched voice than is typical for females, and does not have a visibly accentuated female body type).
3. The self-concept is made meaningful through the gender schema that a child develops such that self-monitoring and evaluation occur through application of the gender schema

(there are many daily life examples of making decisions guided by a gender schema about what to say, what to wear, how to present oneself to another person or persons in a specific situation).

4. Once formed, a gender schema is "an anticipatory structure" that works like a shorthand to assign gender meanings to self and others when relevant events or cues activate the schema (for example, seeing a woman wearing a flowered print skirt might activate a meaning structure related to her being a highly feminine woman).
5. Gender schemas are regulative for judgments of what is natural or unnatural, right or wrong, valued or nonvalued (for example, a man who stays at home to care for the children might lead to the judgment that he is weak relative to his wife).

Gender schemas function to fill out a profile of gender identity once a cue or set of cues is available from an event or person. Because cultural practices change over time, gender schemas also change. For example, the vast majority of today's children in the United States are less likely than children of the past to believe that certain occupations are restricted to men or to women. Yet, gender schemas can persist even when change has occurred. For example, even today, many people continue to fill out a male gender schema when they hear *dentist* or *airplane pilot* and a female schema when they hear *secretary* or *third-grade teacher*.

Much of the research designed to test GST has made use of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI), which contains 60 questions used to determine the degree to which an individual's self-identity assessment is gender schematic of the broader culture in which the individual lives. Based on completing this inventory of items (words such as *assertive* and *tender*), each of which the participant rates on a 7-point scale of applicability to the self, the individual's degree of gender schematicity is calculated. Using subscales for femininity and masculinity, an individual is considered *gender schematic* if that person's profile corresponds to either the masculinity or the femininity profile. If the person's biological sex corresponds to cultural sex-typing (that is, a "male" scores clearly in the masculine area),

that person is considered *sex-typed*. If biological sex and the masculinity and femininity scales are reversed, that person is considered *cross sex-typed*. An individual is *a-schematic* if her or his self-assessment is neither masculine nor feminine. Such individuals could be *androgynous* (having a balanced profile of masculine and feminine characteristics) or *undifferentiated*. Bem also argued that in U.S. culture and in many other societies, heterosexuality is a subschema of central importance to gender schema. GST predicts that sex-typed individuals have a greater likelihood of making use of the heterosexuality subschema in their interactions with others than do either androgynous or undifferentiated gender individuals.

Scores of studies have been conducted using the BSRI inventory. Based on this research, it is clear that gender schematic individuals, especially those who are sex-typed, make much greater use of gender schema and are faster in making gender-related interpretations than are gender a-schematic individuals. Past research has also found that cross sex-typed individuals are the most gender schematic of all categories—a finding of interest related to current cultural practices that demonstrate greater fluidity in the concept of gender than in the past.

GST has been useful to communication scholars because of its helpfulness in understanding differences in the ways in which boys/girls and men/women communicate and in understanding differences in responses to and evaluations of the communication of girls/boys and women/men. Some of the topics that research has probed include how gender schemas affect student evaluations of teachers, the language used in letters of recommendation, perceptions and evaluations of political candidates, and microlinguistic features such as backchannels (minimal responses to others who are talking, such as “uh-huh” and “yeah”) in discourse. GST thus helps create an explanation for how gender as a mental construct shapes communication in different ways. GST can also be uncoupled from the BSRI as an assessment instrument to probe other avenues of assessment. Bem, in *The Lenses of Gender*, has herself gone beyond the thinking behind the BSRI to suggest a more culturally oriented approach to understanding the development of gender identities.

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See also Genderlect Theory; Gender Role Theory; Identity Theories

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GENERAL SEMANTICS

General semantics states that the transfer of culture across generations is the distinguishing feature between humans and other life forms, with symbolic communication serving as the transfer system. Intended to improve understanding among people and cultures, this tradition attempts to guide humanity toward more ethical human behavior. This entry discusses the formative history of general semantics and its relationship to communication theory.

Alfred Korzybski

General semantics is Alfred Vladislavovich Habdank Skarbek Korzybski's attempt to redirect the manner of thought individuals employ in approaching the world. Korzybski was born of Polish nobility, continuing the family occupational tradition in philosophy, engineering, and mathematics. His thinking was influenced by Georg Hegel and Immanuel Kant; by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' discussions of the struggle of the working class; by Charles Darwin's conclusions; by the new era of electricity led by Michael

Faraday, James Maxwell, and Nikola Tesla; and later by others, including Alfred North Whitehead, Bertrand Russell, and Albert Einstein. Initially assigned to the Second Russian Army during the World War I, Korzybski worked in intelligence and was severely injured, later serving on the Polish Commission to the League of Nations. Traveling in America for the U.S. government, he lectured on the importance of Liberty Bonds and of increased production.

Particularly influenced by World War I, Korzybski sought to end the suffering brought about by humans' inhumanity, which contrasted greatly with recent rapid advances in science. He questioned how humans could cooperate so well in the advancement of science, yet fail so badly in international politics and culture. While culture could be transmitted through symbolic communication, animal territoriality remained, and for much of humanity, the advances of science were lost in the insanity of wars. Rejecting religious and philosophical approaches to the problem as metaphysical speculation, Korzybski sought to apply the methods of physics and mathematics to the problems of human interaction for the benefit of humanity. Based on his attempts to apply mathematical methods in psychoanalysis, he studied psychiatry for 2 years at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington under William Alanson White. This work included reading case histories, interviewing patients, attending meetings of the staff and Washington meetings of professional psychiatric societies, and holding occasional discussions of his work with Harry Stack Sullivan.

Following this work and except for his own Institute of General Semantics and the International Society for General Semantics, which merged with the Institute in 2003, Korzybski had no official connection with a formal organization. This may have affected the credibility accorded to his work. Bronislaw Malinowski and Roscoe Pound, among others, were honorary trustees of the Institute. The writings of Samuel Ichiye Hayakawa helped to popularize general semantics. Korzybski taught many seminars and lectured at universities, several offering courses in the subject. He usually incorporated diagrams into his lectures and was visual in his own thinking. Korzybski became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1940. Richard Bandler and John Grinder's *Frogs Into Princes*:

Neuro Linguistic Programming, Albert Ellis's *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy*, and Aaron Beck's *Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders* were each directly influenced by Korzybski's work.

Origins

Searching for the characteristic qualities that make people human, Korzybski considered the qualities of plants and animals. Plants appear dependent on chemical interactions with the soil and light. Animals' major advance was in their ability to move. He recognized the human advance over animals in the transmission of culture between generations so that the same lessons did not need continual relearning for survival. Similar ideas are found in the later analyses of Carl Sagan, progressing from evolutionary information stored in DNA, through brain and cognitive storage, and culminating in the storage of cultural survival information in libraries and hard drives. Korzybski labeled the characteristic qualities of plants *chemistry binding* and used *space binding* for animals. He labeled the characteristic quality distinguishing humans *time binding*.

Observations of human behavior suggested to Korzybski that people did not evaluate clearly the events of the world and their causes. Most thought occurs through the words of a language, and Korzybski reasoned that inaccuracies in language should then affect accuracy of thought. The solution to humanity's problems might then lie in the study of how people assign meaning to words. People conceived of these words as having fixed meanings. This resulted, he believed, from the common interpretation of Aristotle's concept of definition as the search for the *essence* of a concept, a predetermined meaning. Korzybski defined humans in terms of their actions rather than in terms of what they *are*, as the latter would presume a preexisting essence.

The realities of life are distinct and constantly changing. They are separate from the meanings assigned to words. When people hear a word, their own beliefs about its essence may not correspond to its intended usage. Rather than seeking the thrust and nuances of the intended meaning, people tend to assign meaning to an utterance based on fixed essences without evaluating background,

situation, and intended meaning. People confuse the steps of the processes in converting from observation to thought to speech and back, speaking before observing and treating speech as though it were fact. Thus, the power of words in communication is reduced and the accuracy of expressions suffers, forming the basis for much of the miscommunication in the world. This is similar to Edwin Howard Armstrong's bitter comment after the U.S. Supreme Court initially nullified his patents on the regenerative circuit: Lawyers substitute words for reality and then argue about the words.

Korzybski also rejected the use of syllogisms and syllogistic logic due to their two-valued nature, believing them incapable of capturing the complexity of life. In an unfortunate selection of terms, Korzybski referred to the search for essence and use of syllogistic logic as *Aristotelian*, which it was, but then labeled his own conception as *non-Aristotelian*: His system was an alternative to Aristotle. To some, this implied that he saw his own status as equal to that of Aristotle. While Korzybski believed Aristotle would oppose the use of *essence* as it is commonly applied, attributing the error to Aristotle's interpreters, the implication was still there.

Korzybski believed his system of analysis was applicable to all people, people whose faulty thinking was a major source of the world's problems. Rather than curing pathology, as in psychotherapy, he focused on increasing each individual's ability to evaluate the world clearly as it affected the person. He called this *general semantics*, a form of mental discipline enabling its users to circumvent traps in the use of language and in common sense, and thus to think clearly.

Central Purpose

The central purpose of general semantics is often stated as making people consciously aware of the evaluation process they use when *abstracting* from words or other information. Abstracting is the general semantics term for meaning assignment—selecting some aspects of the information and ignoring others. This is similar to distinguishing between the map, or words, and the territory, the reality behind the words. Perfunctory understanding of the map–territory distinction was not deemed sufficient. Full human sanity was seen as

possible only if deliberate conscious abstracting became a natural reflex, delaying reactions until thought was more complete rather than engaging in immediate, unthinking, knee-jerk reactions. General semantics techniques would thus serve as a defense against the manipulative propaganda of advertising, politics, and religion and against the self-deception that routinely creates semantic distortions during evaluation that lead to the world's problems.

Fundamental Concepts of General Semantics

General semantics proposes many concepts required for evaluation. A few of those Korzybski thought most important for human survival are outlined below.

Time Binding

Time binding is the human ability to communicate symbolically, thus passing on culture to the next generation. Furthermore, this cultural transfer occurs at a rate that accelerates exponentially with the passage of time. While animals teach some behaviors to their young, there is no acceleration in the transfer rate. Each generation of animals is similar in its behavior. Yet human societies have evolved rapidly from hunter–gatherer status. Time binding provides the basis for an ethical standard for evaluating human behavior: Does a given behavior advance human progress as we know it at the time? Understanding that human culture is time bound serves to counter notions of eugenics that successful people are *self-made*, emphasizing the debt we owe to others and creating a clearer understanding of our own limitations.

Extension, Not Intension

This concept refers to seeking relations between observations in the search for knowledge, rather than searching for presumed set properties of the observed.

Scientific Approach

This concept involves continued testing of all assumptions and beliefs, gathering as much data as possible, revising assumptions and beliefs as

needed, and holding conclusions and judgments only tentatively until more data become available.

Process-Oriented Universe

The universe is a process with everything in constant flux and change, sometimes microscopic in nature and sometimes involving macro change. People need to be aware of constant change, especially when it appears none has occurred.

Conditionality and Delayed Reaction

These concepts involve replacing an automatic conditioned response with a delayed, controlled, deliberate response.

Identification

Identification involves awareness of the abstracting process. Individuals tend to confuse orders of abstraction, conflating reactions about an event such as descriptions and judgments with the event itself. This conflation ignores the role of neurons in the construction of experience. Grass is not green. Rather, our neurons interpret a particular frequency of electromagnetic radiation as green. "Grass appears green to me" may be more accurate.

Dating and Indexing

Categories are dangerous. Assigning dates to each observation reminds people that nothing is ever the same, change is continual, and no word, person, place, event, or thing has exactly the same meaning a second time or in another place.

Criticisms

Korzybski substantially overclaims the potential influence of general semantics as a possible cure-all for the ills of humanity, especially with respect to its neurological basis. While many tenets of the theory now form the basis of major approaches to the study of communication and other social sciences, his excessive claims and the label choice of *non-Aristotelian* were improvident and unnecessary. The most influential though relatively brief critique of general semantics was first published in 1952 by Martin Gardner, ridiculing Korzybski in referring to him as the Count. Stating that general semantics may or may not have scientific merit,

Gardner makes many points on neurology; on clear overstatement; on the verbose, obtuse writing style; on Korzybski as incorporating the views of others; and on the hodgepodge feeling of the academic areas pieced together in his book *Science and Sanity* that are on target. Yet syntheses of others' work are the basis for most new ventures, and the ability to write clearly has seldom been the hallmark of philosophers. Some critical comments by Gardner, such as those on Korzybski's limited formal education and his late decision to adopt the term *semantics*, are irrelevant to his point.

Gardner argues, correctly, that the two-valued logic of Aristotle can account for even the most complex systems. This is clearly true since computers and computer languages depend on the two-valued property of magnets, north and south, to store the most complex thoughts and data sets. Yet the ability to reduce the representation of thoughts to a two-valued system is quite different from creating those thoughts within a two-valued system. Korzybski is not discussing computer storage or modeling but human reactions to language and perceptions of reality, a context in which two-valued logic has not distinguished itself as a heuristic system. Gardner overclaims the impact of his arguments on the utility of general semantics and ignores the similarities of Korzybski's arguments to the basis of his own. Particularly, Gardner's work, but not his critique, implies the acceptance of Korzybski's *scientific approach* and *delayed reaction* and Korzybski's rejection of *essence*, since the latter implies the existence of a predeterminer. Gardner's points on Korzybski's overstatement, verbosity, incorporation of others' work, and assessment of neurology, while credible, do not deal with arguments that diminish the importance of the fundamental issues concerning perceptions of the world articulated by general semantics.

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See also Argumentation Theories; Cognitive Theories; Language and Communication; Rhetorical Theory; Semiotics and Semiology

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GENRE THEORY

Genre theory refers to a diverse set of approaches or methods for identifying patterns in, and expectations for, a variety of communicative phenomena. In the broadest sense, a *genre* refers to a recurrent language-based category that guides or constrains communication. In contemporary culture, the concept of genre is most often used to describe types of film (e.g., action, drama, romantic comedy), literature and poetry (e.g., gothic, epic, mask lyric), and music (e.g., dance, hip-hop, alternative rock). In scholarship, genre theory originates in ancient Greek advice about public speaking. Today, however, genre is studied in three broader contexts: rhetoric and oratory, literature and poetry, and media studies.

Ancient Origins of Genre Theory

Genre theory is derived from ancient Greek advice on public speaking in the 4th and 5th centuries BCE. Aristotle is often credited with standardizing and organizing the study of genre. He held that there are three basic speech genres: *deliberative*, or political speaking; *forensic*, or legal speaking; and *epideictic*, or speaking at celebrations, funerals, and other meetings in which a community is honored. Aristotle observed that over time, each genre of speaking developed a series of expectations that constrained what a given speaker could say. For example, at a funeral, audiences expect to hear a speaker praise the life of the deceased. If a speaker

insulted the deceased at a funeral, the speaker would violate a generic norm and risk upsetting those in attendance. Aristotle argued that good speakers may creatively challenge expectations but ultimately must work within them to satisfy audiences.

Genre in Rhetoric and Oratory

In the contemporary world, genre is of special interest to scholars who study public speaking and writing, especially that of politicians and public officials. For example, rhetorical scholars in the United States have been interested in studying the generic norms of presidential inaugural addresses. Campbell and Jamieson have argued that when a new president takes office, he or she delivers an inaugural speech that is constrained by five expectations: (1) an attempt to unify the audience as a people; (2) a restatement of commonly shared values; (3) a list of the principles that will guide the new administration; (4) a recognition of the powers and limits of the office of the presidency; and (5) a recognition of the present moment in a mood of contemplation, not immediate action. A presidential speaker may meet these expectations in novel and creative ways; however, all five must be addressed, or the president will likely be criticized.

In addition to political speeches, communication scholars study genres in written forms of communication in a variety of contexts. For example, in the context of business communication, scholars have studied how genre enables and constrains a variety of writing strategies in the workplace. Public relations briefs, memos, and news releases intended for the mass media tend to follow predictable, generic patterns.

Although genres tend to be associated with forms of discourse (speech or writing), generic patterns are not limited to discourse. Scholars studying interpersonal communication have noted behavioral patterns that function generically; for example, some scholars have argued groups working on a common goal sometimes develop a story or *fantasy theme* about their relationship to each other and the goal. Other scholars have found that individuals develop certain *attachment styles* in their interpersonal relationships. Yet other scholars study the nondiscursive features of artifacts—buildings, memorials, photographs, game shows—to

understand how the generic characteristics function to meet certain rhetorical objectives.

Genre in Literature and Poetry

In the area of literary studies, genre theory has stayed within traditional boundaries, unlike what has happened in communication studies, in which generic investigations are diverse. Literary scholars tend to associate genre with five categories of composition: comedy, epic, novel, short story, and tragedy. Poetry scholars have an ever-expanding list of genres and generic conventions that extend categorization far beyond the three Aristotle identified in his theory of poetics: the lyric, the narrative, and the dramatic.

Genre in Media

Perhaps the most widely recognized and understood form of genre today is associated with music and film, and this is because genre has become an important component of marketing. Prior to the 20th century, only music was categorized by genre (e.g., baroque, romantic, folk); however, with the advent of technological reproduction, music and film have become commodities. Consequently, film and music genres have evolved to help audiences identify artists and filmmakers that appeal to their tastes. Media companies use generic labels to help promote and sell film and music to particular niche markets. For example, hip-hop, a music genre that tends to feature a vocalist rapping over a series of sampled beats, is primarily marketed to White male teenagers, while the romantic comedy genre of film is primarily marketed to young women. Each niche audience knows what to expect when watching or listening to a film or song associated with a generic category.

Controversies

In all contexts of study, genre theory has been criticized as too rigid and formulaic to be useful. In rhetorical studies, genre theory has been criticized for creating taxonomies (classification systems) that overlook the peculiar and distinctive features of a speech or text. In literary studies it has been argued that, if examined closely enough, any composition will defy its generic categorization.

Filmmakers and musicians have criticized genres for creating false expectations and encouraging thoughtless judgments about their work. Defenders of genre theory have responded that such criticisms misunderstand genres as inherent to the speech, text, composition, film, or music. Genres, they argue, are actually psychological or mental in character and are found in the imaginations and expectations of audiences.

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See also Discourse Theory and Analysis; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Political Communication Theories; Popular Culture Theories; Rhetorical Theory; Symbolic Convergence Theory

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GLOBALIZATION THEORIES

Globalization is often associated with either neoliberalism or a new political world order. These processes, which reveal a new connectedness of worldwide conflicts and crises, including concerns for a sustainable environment, for human rights, and the protection of cultural traditions, have led to new research fields on one hand and academic debates about theories of globalization on the other. These theories are important as they help to reposition conventional concepts of political and social organizations, such as nations and communities, within a globalized sphere.

Media and communication technologies play an important role in the “mediation” of these

processes and are sometimes even viewed as key drivers of globalization. Since the mid-1990s, media and communication studies have increasingly addressed the phenomenon of globalization; theories of globalization, however, originated in other disciplines, such as sociology.

Globalization as a Sociological Construction

Two globalization concepts—or what we might call *paradigms*—had already been established in sociology by the late 1990s, when communication studies had just begun to debate these new, complex phenomena. The first approach represents the critical paradigm of the skeptics, who question the concept of globalization itself and consider globalization as an outcome of neoliberalism. Skeptics consider globalization primarily as a “Western project.” These approaches strongly believe in the centrality of the modern nation-state and primarily address the implications of globalization for the nation-state. Ulrich Beck is one of the key proponents of this paradigm and was the first theorist who identified the implication of globalized “risks” for nation-states in the late 1980s. Beck argued that these new forms of globalized risks transform the nation-state because they can be solved only through new forms of international cooperation, that is, cooperation between nations, decreasing the political power of the nation per se. Other globalization skeptics, such as Anthony Giddens, argue that globalization is characterized by new forms of distancing of time and place, a complex but powerful process that intensifies “world relations” as local happenings are influenced by things that occur in some other place, or vice versa. This new notion of “place” of a nation, along with the availability of an enlarged communication space, challenges, according to Giddens, traditional social and political structures of nations. These in turn lead to complex forms of national *disembedding* of individuals from cultural traditions and the “lifting out” of social structures. Another famous skeptic is Jürgen Habermas; his most recent primary work addresses the processes of denationalization and normative public reasoning through the emergence of new spheres of supranational legitimacy.

The second group of globalization theories, following David Held and Anthony McGrew’s model,

can be described as a “globalist” or “transformationalist” paradigm that claims a somewhat pragmatic view. Proponents of this paradigm analyze the transformation of modern social, economic, political, and cultural structures from globalization through new forms of globalized “difference.” A major theorist of this transformational paradigm is Roland Robertson, whose work has greatly influenced today’s conceptualization of globalization. Robertson was the first sociologist who identified globalization as a differentiated transnational process with more than national implications. His work is less concerned with globalization as an influential factor on Western nations or modernity than with the profound transformation of local cultures worldwide. It is this interesting dialectic between the global and the local for which Robertson coined the term *glocal*, highlighting globalizations—the differentiated local perceptions of globalizing processes. Robertson’s notion of globalization as “globalization of difference” relates not only to the identification of diverse globalizing implications on local cultures but also to a variety of globalizing “spheres,” including individuals, societies, and worldwide systems of societies. This differentiated notion of globalization has influenced discussions of a new relationship of not only global and local cultures but also new forms of globalized local phenomena, such as diasporic cultures—those spread out across various parts of the globe.

One of the most important theoretical frameworks in this area, which can also be considered a transformationalist paradigm, is *cultural hybridity*, a process of reconceptualizing the “location of culture” within a globalized framework. This theory has led to new differentiated approaches to world terminologies such as *North*, *South*, *developing*, and *developed* within a new complex set of supranational and subnational cultures. It should also be noted that most recent globalization debates in sociology address new forms of global consciousness such as that of a *cosmopolitan vision*, a term coined by Beck to describe a contemporary sense of *boundarylessness* combined with a sense of reflexivity and ambivalence about the various cultural differentiations and contradictions, as well as their possibilities.

Paradigms of globalization, even in sociology, assume that media are drivers of globalization

processes. Theorists of globalization in sociology, however, do not specifically study the role of media within a transnational communication culture.

Constructions of Mediated Globalization

These highly specified debates have only recently begun to influence the theoretical discussion of globalization in media and communication studies, which is surprising given the long history of transborder communication. Transborder communication has existed since ancient times, when trade routes in various parts of the world served also as “communication” routes for the delivery of oral “news” for centuries. Examples are the Silk Road, stretching from China to Egypt, and the Hanseatic League in Europe, an alliance of cities in northern Europe that formed a trade monopoly during the period of the late Middle Ages. To assume that globalization is a phenomenon of the 20th century is in this sense quite misleading. Furthermore, the invention of the printing press—first in Asia in the 14th and in Europe in the 15th centuries—and the subsequent transborder “flow” of books (so-called newsbooks and news pamphlets) shaped a quite sophisticated culture of transborder communication. Printed news in those days consisted of reports of wars, sensationalism, crime, and royals that arrived sometimes years after the events occurred. However, these early forms of transborder flows, made possible through the printing press, are rarely mentioned in debates about globalization.

The first forms of transborder broadcasting emerged after about 1920 with shortwave radio stations, such as *Voice of Russia*, founded in 1922; *BBC World Service*, founded in 1932; and *Voice of America*, founded in 1953. These and many other national shortwave stations targeted clearly defined audiences in a variety of countries and can be considered a first form of international communication, in the true sense of communication between nations. Beyond these first forms of transborder delivery, national broadcast signals—intentionally or unintentionally—crossed national borders into neighboring countries, such as from the United States to Canada and Mexico.

However, the first theory of what we might call “international communication” was developed in the late 1950s. This approach aimed to utilize

communication for the modernization of developing countries. This concept is based on a typically Western model of modernity in which media are traditionally viewed as platforms for public communication, that is, for public deliberation within a functioning democracy. Daniel Lerner, who taught at MIT from 1953 onward, coined the term *development communication* to describe this first “modern” approach to the strategic use of media as drivers of the transformation of “traditional” societies, meaning developing countries. Lerner’s 1958 work on *The Passing of Traditional Society* was, in fact, the first international comparative study on these “mediated” modernization processes in various Middle East countries, such as Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, and Syria.

Throughout the 1960s, new complex geopolitical structures emerged that refined international relations in a new sense of political, cultural, and social “connectedness”—not, however, in the sense of a global connectedness but connectedness within the sphere of the West, led by the United States, and within the sphere of the “East,” led by the Soviet Union. Each of these superpowers created its own transnational media sphere and attempted to link countries within its sphere of influence politically, culturally, and economically. In the West in particular, international trade—including trading film and television shows—became a crucial component of post-World War II Western economies. The “free flow doctrine,” which dominated the Western world of those days, was promoted by the United States after the end of World War II as an unregulated transnational trade doctrine that enabled the unregulated sale of U.S. media products on an international scale. As television became a household medium among emerging middle classes—not only in the United States, but also in other Western industrialized countries (such as Japan)—the already well-established and technologically advanced television production industry in the United States was ideally positioned to sell its programs to these new transnational television cultures where newly formed national television stations were in need of attractive audiovisual formats of entertainment programs. In addition, the early satellite age of the 1960s, with the first satellites provided by the *Intelsat* consortium being positioned above the Atlantic Ocean, created the technological infrastructure for this new form of

internationalization. Television shows, news, and a small number of live events could be easily delivered across continents. However, given the tremendously expensive satellite dishes at this time, these were not directly delivered to households (as is the case today) but to national broadcasters. One of the early moments of transcontinental collective “mediated” world experience was the moon landing of Apollo 11 in 1969, which was delivered live by satellite to a great variety of countries. This televised experience inspired Marshall McLuhan’s theory of the world as a *global village*, which envisions the shrinking of the world due to an “electronic connectedness.”

The internationalization of Western (mainly U.S.) media was soon criticized as a way of homogenizing the world through American values, identities, and lifestyles. Herbert Schiller defined these powerful influences as “media imperialism.” The delivery of Western media, in particular television programs and films, created international economic structures around “centers” and “peripheries” and—in consequence—reproduced old imperial models in an international media world where Western transnational corporations delivered mainstream products to “passive” audiences, thus creating various dependencies from an emerging Western media empire. A quite profound critique of such a dominance, which is also described as *cultural imperialism*, was drafted by a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization commission chaired by Sean MacBride—a first approach to conceptualize policy frameworks of globalization. The internationally published report of this commission in 1980, famously called the *MacBride Report*, suggests a number of policies, such as the elimination of imbalances and inequalities of media trade from the North (i.e., the northern hemisphere of mainly developed countries) to the South (i.e., the Southern hemisphere of mainly developing countries). Furthermore, the report argues that communication is an individual and collective right required of nations and communities. This important conviction had strong ideological connotations in the late Cold War climate. Western governments (such as the United States and the United Kingdom) considered the idea of such an unrestricted universal right as politically provocative because this idea was taken to legitimize censorship by authoritarian governments in

the developing world. In today’s view, the severe criticism of the MacBride report among Western nations can be seen as an overreaction; however, in the Cold War period of internationalization, these concerns seemed to be justified. Important to note is that the *MacBride Report* was one of the last debates in which transborder flows were linked to Cold War political ideologies.

With the emergence of a second phase of satellite communication throughout the 1980s and 1990s, when advanced technologies enabled an increase of satellite platforms and, in consequence, a decrease of leasing costs, a great number of new radio and television formats were developed that combined global delivery and local programs for a variety of world regions. So-called satellite television channels, such as Cable News Network (CNN) and Music Television, began to deliver their programs globally and locally. “Around the World in Thirty Minutes” was CNN’s famous promotional slogan: Indeed, “breaking news” delivered worldwide was followed by a “local” analysis through regional (or even national) CNN outlets directly to households. These new forms of not so much transborder flows or internationalization (in the original sense, between nations, as in earlier decades) as now supranational and subnational program delivery became quite difficult to conceptualize within media and communication studies. As the old paradigms of “mass” communication and traditional forms of media imperialism began slowly to diminish, the conceptual debate in media and communication studies began to shift. In particular, cultural studies began to reconceptualize audiences in a new transnational sphere. Studies of diaspora—ethnic minority communities—as well as new transnational audience cultures and journalism helped to conceptualize at least the contours of a paradigmatic change within the field of media and communication. One of the key theorists of these new forms of disjunctures is Arjun Appadurai, who defined a number of transnational cultural “landscapes”: *ethnoscapes*, the globalizing sphere of migrants and refugees, but also *mediascapes*, or the culture of “imagined” lives, delivered through transnational media. These studies also revealed that former approaches, such as media imperialism, required some refinement as new forms of communication emerged in a transnational context, reshifting the former center–periphery model.

In addition, international communication as an early form of globalization, that is, communicating between nations, was increasingly replaced by supranational and subnational communication spheres. Advanced satellite technology and the Internet allowed for the possibility of reaching and connecting individuals directly within nations. These advanced communication technologies, in particular satellite communication and the Internet, have created a transnational media infrastructure that requires new conceptual approaches in order to understand new forms of public participation and media cultures.

Manuel Castells is the first theorist who combines technological developments and the paradigm of globalization. His 1996 theory of *global network society* has shifted the globalization paradigm to a new level, and new technologies such as the Internet are transforming nations, identities, and political power. Castells argues that the social organization of a global society is being organized as “networks” operating through a “space of flows,” creating communication hubs in a “timeless time,” resulting in constant, 24/7 communication. Castells’s network society theory constitutes a first social theory of the global communication sphere. In this sense his work is linked to globalization theories, such as that of Anthony Giddens, that have claimed that globalization creates “disembedding” processes due to new communication spaces. The network society approach reveals new forms of reembedding within today’s global communication space.

Ingrid Volkmer

See also Diaspora; Free Flow Doctrine; International Communication Theories; International Development Theories; Media Sovereignty; Network Society; Structuration Theory

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GROUNDING THEORY

Grounded theory (GT) is a qualitative research methodology commonly employed by scholars to analyze communication processes and content, often for the development of *interpretive* theories. As a methodology, GT is more than a method or set of methods for collecting or analyzing data. Instead, GT is an approach to social research that specifies an emergent rather than predetermined research design through an atypical sequence of activities for building and developing theory; it is an approach that arguably runs counter to traditional notions of scientific method as developed

initially in what is referred to as the natural sciences. Distinguishing characteristics of GT include delay of the literature review, simultaneous collection and analysis of data, *emic* construction of analytic codes and categories from data (vs. *etic* or a priori application of previous theory), development of *midrange theories* (vs. universal laws) to explain communication behavior and processes, the composition of theoretical memos to define analytic categories, and sampling procedures inspired more by a concern for theory construction than for representativeness.

Traditional social science methodology proceeds predictably in discrete stages that are predetermined: the development of hypotheses from a single theoretical perspective, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of results. GT does not. Instead, research employing GT is highly emergent, allowing for the possibility that research questions, access to participants, and even definitions of core constructs may change over the course of a study. For example, in most variable-analytic research methodologies, one does not begin analyzing data until all are collected. Alternatively, GT methodology suggests an iterative process in which data are analyzed during an evolving data collection process. Tentative hypotheses are developed, tested, and refined in a manner that is *abductive*—both inductive and deductive.

The purpose of abduction in GT is to develop *tentative theoretical propositions* (sometimes called exploratory hypotheses) that can be explicated through deduction and validated through induction. In other words, theory development involves two overlapping logics. Inductive logic must be used to identify its observable qualities and components of phenomena and speculate about the ways in which they may be related. At the same time, deductive logic must be employed to evaluate explanations of why the phenomenon proceeds in the manner that induction revealed. Therefore, sampling, analyzing data, and interpreting findings are interdependent activities that together comprise a cycle of inquiry.

Origins

Outside of variable-analytic content analysis, GT is among the most common methodological approaches taken to qualitative research in the

communication studies discipline. GT was created by sociologists Bernie Glaser and Anselm Strauss, who began formalizing the methodology while conducting field studies through the University of California–San Francisco Medical School about the relationships between expectations of death and interaction with people who were dying. Strauss, who had been a student of symbolic interactionist Herbert Blumer, recruited Glaser, a student of Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton, to assist with the project. Their work yielded not only a topical book (*Awareness of Dying*) but eventually a methodological treatise (*The Development of Grounded Theory*). GT became one of the first qualitative research methodologies to find some acceptance among U.S. social scientists.

Relationship to Traditional Modes of Inquiry

The potential of GT research to inform, extend, corroborate, or challenge extant theory is likely a primary explanation for its acceptance within mainstream social science generally and communication studies specifically. GT studies typically do not meet many of the validity criteria pursued in variable-analytic social science. However, a primary function of GT, particularly as it is interpreted in communication studies, is to produce conceptual definitions and hypotheses with sufficient heuristic value that they may be tested through traditional methodologies more likely to meet those criteria. For example, researchers may rely on the tenets of GT methodology to develop a traditional survey instrument that operationalizes a communication phenomenon. They can generate data by conducting various forms of observation and interviewing relevant to the theory in question.

GT methodology is primarily used to ground concepts, constructs, and the hypothesized relationships among them in data derived naturalistically from the context for which an application of theory is intended. Research designs that include conceptualizations, operationalizations, and hypotheses without this grounding are less likely to be internally valid. Internal validity concerns a range of criteria most social scientists try to apply in evaluating whether a phenomenon is measured or described as intended. Thus, GT is one among many useful tools not only for generating new theoretical propositions but also for confirming,

revising, or adding detail to those that have already gained some acceptance.

Constant Comparative Analysis

GT is also bolstered by the formality of its data analysis protocol, which is relatively technical and systematic yet straightforward. Constant comparative analysis calls for the analyst to begin coding a portion of collected data line by line (open coding), identifying topics, characteristics, or themes suggested by the text. Where possible, code labels and tentative code definitions should mirror the language used by the research participants (*in vivo coding*). Next comes *focused*, or hierarchical, coding in which the codes appearing most continuously or commonly during open coding become categories, which ascribes them more significance than a code. Categories are defined through *theoretical memos* that describe properties of the phenomenon; tentative conclusions about its consequences; the circumstances in which it emerges, endures, and changes; and how it relates to other phenomena. Focused coding also requires that the analyst account for variations within a category by constructing subcategories and theoretical memos that describe distinctions between them. Importantly, because researchers are still collecting data as they analyze it, the coding system or framework is continuously refined on the basis of new or conflicting cases and insights until the final stages of the research project.

Theoretical Sensitivity

The capacity of GT to incorporate contextual factors into theorizing can be considered a final explanation for the success of GT. The point of GT is to develop more theoretical propositions than from previous research by using data derived from observations of the context in which phenomena operate. Thus, GT is intended to privilege the perspective scene of the social actor over prevailing theoretical assumptions or scholars' respective points of view.

Confusion and Conflict

In spite of its popularity, GT is an often disputed and confused—if not misused—term. Although

some of this can be blamed on careless application of basic GT principles, much of what remains is explained by a core contradiction that has never been resolved.

Conflation of Methodology and Method

In research reports, GT is often equated with the “constant comparative method” of qualitative data analysis, which is an important but still partial element of the larger approach Glaser and Strauss originally proposed. Thus, some studies claiming to take a GT approach could more accurately be described as employing the constant comparative method in data analysis because GT was not applied to other elements of the research design. For example, many studies espousing a GT approach employ the constant comparative method of data analysis because, while espousing a GT approach, they ignore other key tenets of GT such as emergent research design or simultaneous data collection and analysis.

Latent Contradiction in Early Grounded Theory

Furthermore, as proponents have developed protocols, guides, and other reference material that detail and clarify the methodology, conflicts have formed regarding how GT is executed analytically. Glaser has argued that the more recent work contradicts the original formulation outlined in *The Development of Grounded Theory*. Others have argued that Glaser and Strauss's original work glossed over mutually exclusive understandings of the relationship between data and theory. In either case, most of the disagreement seems to result from two competing needs: (1) the extent to which constructs and theoretical propositions can be identified through constant comparative analysis in a truly emic manner (*emergence*) without the influence of preexisting theories and concepts and (2) the extent to which analysis of data should strategically relate to or rely on terminology and constructs of the theories researchers are attempting to revise or extend (*theoretical sensitivity*).

GT specialists generally deal with this tension in one of two ways. Strauss and Corbin and colleagues, whose work since Strauss's death is often seen as a continuation of a “Straussian” view of GT, suggest that analysts rely on a general action

model of behavior based on symbolic interactionism and pragmatist social theory that emphasizes intentions, strategies, goals, and processes that comprise human action and interaction. Alternatively, Glaser and colleagues call for relatively pure *substantive* codes that are emic, serving the goal of emergence, and *theoretical* codes that rely on basic sociological concepts that can be used to make fundamental claims about how the social world is ordered. These include terms like conditions, causes, contexts, and consequences, which Glaser and colleagues have mapped to a complex array of *coding families*.

Views of Grounded Theory in Communication Research

Straussian approaches to GT have found more favor in communication studies than have those suggested by Glaser and colleagues. Given the historical influence of pragmatism and symbolic interactionism on the fields of interpersonal, group, and organizational communication, the favor found with Strauss is not terribly surprising. However, it can be argued that this approach to GT privileges micro phenomena to the exclusion of macro forces. Some communication methodologists who specialize in qualitative fieldwork argue that the tension between emergence and theoretical sensitivity is best resolved through greater *self-reflexivity*. They suggest that researchers account for the unavoidable influence of subjectivity in their analyses by actively highlighting their own predispositions, standpoints, and personal experiences. By revealing these subjectivities somewhat openly in their work, they hope to empower readers with added insight for evaluating the validity of their claims.

Cliff Scott

See also Culture and Communication; Empiricism; Epistemology; Ethnography of Communication; Inquiry Processes; Interpretive Theory; Pragmatics; Scientific Approach; Symbolic Interactionism

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GROUP AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURATION THEORY

The theory of structuration, developed by Anthony Giddens, has been applied extensively in the study of group and organizational communication. Its central concepts—the distinction between system and structure, the duality of structure, the reflexive model of agency, the role of social institutions in human action, the three modalities of structure, the dialectic of control, and time–space distancing—have been appropriated by numerous communication scholars. Structuration theory takes a processual view of the social world and features communication as one of the primary modes of being. It bridges conceptual divides between action and structure, stability and change, and macro- and microlevels of analysis. It offers a nondeterministic account of the social world but allows for regularities and the scaffolding of norms, power, and institutions to influence communication and its impacts. It also provides the foundation for a critical stance.

Structurational Theory in Group Research

Most theoretical applications of structuration in group research have focused on aspects of group decision making. From a structurational perspective, group decision making is the production and

reproduction of positions regarding group action, directed toward the convergence of members on a final choice. This occurs through the structuration of three elements of interaction—expression of preferences, argumentation, and tactics employed to garner assent.

Influences on structuration processes in groups include (a) immediate interaction in which interpretive schemes, norms, and power resources are invoked and reproduced through group communication patterns, decision rules, and the influence of members over one another; (b) features of the group's external system, including tasks and environment; and (c) structural dynamics, including the mediation of the elements of immediate interaction by other structures (e.g., when an economic "lens" is imposed on the discussion) and contradictions among structural features (e.g., the tension between pressure to act and the desire to make a reflective, rational decision). These factors, and member knowledge of them, also limit group and member agency, or freedom of action.

Groups acquire coherence through being structured and, as self-organizing systems, can channel the agency of their members into common projects. The members of groups are themselves formed and reformed through structuration. So rather than being prior to the group, members are positioned within the group through actions and discourse creating and sustaining various roles and arguments. Hence, groups may be the primary unit of analysis rather than individuals. Three theoretical tributaries flow from this basic framework—decision development, group argument, and use of information technology.

Decision Development

The structurational theory of decision development attempts to explain why groups follow varied paths as they make decisions, rather than the single rational sequence of events emphasized in prior research. The theory posits that the influence of factors such as the group's task and decision-making norms on decision development is mediated by structuring processes in group interaction. How a group represents its tasks, in other words, serves as an implicit model of prerequisites for what a good decision is and how the group should organize the process by which it makes decisions.

These representations influence the phases and sequence of the group's interaction. For instance, a group may conclude that it already understands the problem and so the next steps are identifying a suitable solution and planning its implementation (a solution-oriented decision path). Task representations are the modalities through which the group's decision process is structured.

The group generates a sequence of decision phases by developing foci—internally unified episodes of discussion focused on a single topic or concern. These foci articulate the content of the discussion, and a phase may contain a single focus or several linked foci—for example, all being related to problem analysis. A central problem is maintaining coherency of discussion within and between foci to avoid disjointed talk that does not build toward a decision. Members manage coherence through moves including (a) moves that tie together the talk so that discussion is coherent from one sentence to the next (e.g., the next sentence refers to the topic of the previous one); (b) alignment moves, designed to avoid or remedy misunderstandings (e.g., a disclaimer that the speaker is just trying out an idea); and (c) structuring moves, which rebuild interrupted coherence (e.g., a procedural message that the last utterance is irrelevant).

The group, then, is acting on at least two levels as it makes decisions: working out the substance of the decision and structuring the way it represents its task, which recursively structures the decision process. When members agree on a task representation, the group's decision path is likely to unfold as it specifies, with complications introduced mainly by task-related issues such as accuracy about actual task requirements. When, however, there is disagreement on task representation and/or the logic of the decision, the group is trying to sort through these while working on its decision, and the resulting decision path is much more complex.

Group Argument

A second tributary is represented by the structurational theory of group argument, which focuses on constituents and combinations of expressed arguments. The theory conceptualizes argument as both structure—the rules and resources individuals draw on to produce argument—and system, the

observable interactive practices in which structure is implicated. The view of argument as emergent structure allows for development of norms and commonplaces, or typical lines, of argument that may differ from best practices. As a system, argument is construed as a pattern of reason giving, agreement and disagreement, and seeking of resolutions in communicative practice.

The theory proposes that argument structures interaction through three mechanisms. At the microlevel, members use logical and cultural norms and recipes. Second, members may generate broader, idiosyncratic argument webs by chaining arguments together, engaging in collaborative argumentation with other members, and generating multiple levels of argument. Finally, members invoke macrosocial norms, interpretive schemes, and various resources (status in the group, expertise, formal authority) to influence other members.

Information Technology

The third tributary is represented by adaptive structuration theory (AST), developed to explain the use of information technologies in task-oriented groups. It has been applied most to study groups using computerized group support systems but has also stimulated research on larger systems.

AST proposes that information technology (and all technologies or procedures) have a two-layered structure consisting of their *spirit*—the general values, goals, and attitudes the technology promotes (such as democratic decision making)—and specific *structural features* built into the system (such as anonymous input of ideas or a voting procedure). A structural feature is a specific rule or resource that operates in a group, whereas spirit is the principle of coherence that holds a set of rules and resources together. Usually the features of an information technology, such as a group support system, are designed to promote its spirit, barring disconnects between conception and system development.

AST focuses on appropriation, the ways in which groups take structural features and employ them in interaction. For example, members of a group may use a group voting system to promote democratic deliberation, or some members may use voting results to pressure members of the minority to accept the “will” of the group. Groups appropriate information technologies in diverse

ways, influencing the resulting group structures-in-use, process, and outcomes. AST posits that appropriations of information technologies will be most effective if they are (a) consistent with the spirit of the technology; (b) linked instrumentally with task execution and building the group; (c) based on positive attitudes of comfort, respect, and challenge toward the technology; and (d) consensual.

Structurational Theories of Organizational Communication

Structuration theory has been applied to the study of organization constitution and structure, to organizational climate and culture, to the generation and maintenance of communication networks, and to organizational identity.

Structuration and the Constitution of Organizations

Scholars increasingly view communication as a basic social process with powers to constitute social reality, so the communicative constitution of organizations has emerged as a focus of inquiry. As a result of structurational emphases on time-space distance and on multiplicity of structuring processes, one structuration-based theory argues for four distinct flows of constitutive communication. Each “flow” is a web of interaction across time and space, distinguished by the distinct impact it has on the organization.

The first flow, *membership negotiation*, produces and reproduces the way in which individual members relate to the organization. A product manager negotiates his or her staff, product responsibilities, responsibilities vis-à-vis other organizations, and career ladder, and the sum of all members’ negotiations helps create the organization. A second flow is the *institutional positioning* of the organization vis-à-vis the local and global ecology of regulators, suppliers, competitors, and customers. This flow can involve coordinated *image presentation* by members to outsiders and *environmental exploration* to find complementary outsiders and build relationships with them.

The third flow is spontaneous *activity coordination* among members and others in organizationally relevant contexts. As in groups, members build and rework task representations and exchange

signals about how to behave in sync. The last flow, *reflexive self-structuring*, creates abstract documents and demands that establish the organization and tie the other communication flows together as an official system. Research on organizational and even national policies has revealed the mercurial stream of interpretation and wrangling that accompanies attempts to steer or constrain broad domains of member activity.

One outcome of reflexive self-structuring is documents making up an organization's formal structure. A related line of structurational inquiry at the organizational level addresses a paradox of formal organizational structure: On one hand, formal structuring creates efficiency and coordination; on the other hand, formal structure inexorably becomes oppressive or maladapted and is ignored or manipulated.

The theory takes off from two main themes in the literature on organizational structure: (1) Formal structure substitutes for and preempts other communication. Once the organizational structure is set, its authority does away with the need to communicate to figure out what to do. (2) Formal structures are an authoritative metacommunication system—or communication about how communication is supposed to occur—for the organization that makes members aware of the authority structure and ways to manipulate it. The structurational concept of *distanciation* can be used to explain these attributes of formal structure. Distanciation means that people's decisions and actions are distanced, or separated, from their consequences in other times and places so that, for example, in some sites of the organization (the board room, the executive suite), formal structure is a tool for influence by powerful actors, while in others it is the focus of work (e.g., human resources departments) or just a contextual constraint (e.g., in production lines).

An element of formal structure that illustrates this pattern particularly well is the vertical hierarchy. This is often conceived of as a chain of command or chain of communication, yet research has repeatedly found that almost no communication flows for any distance through it. Instead, the chain of command is produced and reproduced on three different levels. At the top is the *executive* level, where many chains of command intersect, potentially overwhelming top managers. To enable

the executives to cope, formal mechanisms substitute for direct involvement with lower levels. Below the executive level is the *managerial* level, where managers have the responsibility for structuring and communicating with their units. These managers are distanced from their subordinate units in two respects: They view the organization differently from the way unit members do, and their downward communication is limited by a heavy cross-unit workload. At the lowest, *technical* level, the formal structure is taken as a given, but supervisors and workers often feel misunderstood and resist the programs of the managers. Within each level is a highly interconnected communication network, considerable consensus about important problems, and strategic posturing using or aimed to influence the other levels. However, there are often communication and perspective gaps between levels. The production and reproduction of the hierarchy maintains these variations in the character of a hierarchical structure across the three distanciated levels.

Structuration of Organizational Climate

Structuration theory has also been applied in the study of organizational climate. In traditional organizational research, *climate* is defined as a general property of the organization (“This company is supportive”) measured using standardized questionnaires to find patterns of agreement. Instead, a structurational approach regards climate as an array of rules and resources present at a deep level underlying organizational interactions. On this view, company “supportiveness” is an intersubjective belief that is contextualized differently by different people—some see it as present throughout the organization, others see it as applying only for a select group of employees, while still others see it as a myth preached by the powerful.

An underlying core climate level includes basic constructs and kernel climate tenets (“This company is supportive”), variably interpreted to generate particularized climates. These particular climates then influence organizational outcomes such as commitment, satisfaction, and performance, which may differ across the groups. Similar or differing orientations toward climate (co-orientation) constitute an important intermediate aspect of the structuration process. Thus, climate communication can

yield disagreements, misunderstandings of others' views, and even different degrees of realization that there is understanding or misunderstanding. Only if there is agreement, understanding, and realization is a climate truly shared and most impactful.

Three classes of elements shape the structuration of climate: (1) structural properties of organizations, such as centralization, formalization, and size; (2) various communication apparatuses, including newsletters, training programs, key managers, and workgroups; and (3) member characteristics, particularly their knowledge about the organization and its climate. These influence the generation and diffusion of climate themes in organizations. Spatial distancing can also affect the emergence of particular climates in different parts of the organization, especially if there are spatial or symbolic barriers between units or subdivisions of the organization.

Structuration of Organizational Communication Networks

Self-reported perceptions of who is connected to whom in a network often differ from actual observations of who interacted with whom. This frustrating finding can be explained by the structural theory of communication networks. The observable communication behavior is the communication *system*, while the network is more basically an abstract rule/resource *structure* employed by actors in the generation of the system. Self-reported network perceptions are based on the structure plus individually biased observations of behavior. Hence, observable networks and the structures that generate these are two different but interrelated orders of phenomena.

Three modalities—enactment, activation, and reticulation—underlie the structuration of networks. *Reticulation* encompasses varied member understandings of who may talk to whom and which are the most useful or valuable links. These enable communication activity, which in turn reproduces the network structure. This process is mediated by *activation*, an individual response tendency based on common systems of activity, or *foci*, in the organization. Structural foci give rise to the observable system of coparticipation in activities, which in turn reproduce the foci. Both reticulation and activation are mediated by *enactment*,

the process of making sense of and actually responding to significant events.

The three modalities are discussed as though they occur independently and mutually influence one another, but in reality, they are simultaneously involved in each case of observable communication in an organization.

Structuration of Identity in Organizations

Identity and identification in organizations have been a central concern of organizational communication scholarship. In the structural model of organizational identification, *identity* is viewed not as the more or less fixed core of an individual, but as a set of rules and resources that function as an anchor for who one is; *identification* is interaction or other behaviors illustrating one's attachment. In this model, identification is system and identity is structure. There is a duality of identity and identification in which identity figures both in the process of forming and maintaining attachment to the organization and as the product of this process.

For instance, when an employee is home with his children, he might draw on rules and resources including accumulated knowledge about his children and norms about appropriate parenting and the importance of family time together. A very different set of structural features might be invoked when the same person is at work. Cueing of identities that fit a particular situation is also influenced by institutions—organizations to which an individual belongs—and the nature of the family's situation, such as neighbors and local customs.

Time-space distancing helps to create separate subidentities or identity "regions." Regional identities develop because people enact subidentities fairly consistently in the various activities in which they engage. For instance, fatherhood is enacted mainly in the home, while employee roles correspond to the workplace. Four "regions" are particularly important in organizational identity: group, organization, personal life, and occupation.

This model can account for multiple identities and identifications common in organizational life and for changes in identities over time and across situations. It allows both for external influences shaping subidentities and for agency to construct, differentiate, and qualify identification within organizations.

Critiques and Debates

A common criticism of applications of structuration theory is that Anthony Giddens accords too much freedom to agency and underestimates the constraints imposed by material resources, ideology, or power processes in organizations. In response, defenders argue that the theory and its communicative applications acknowledge the role of institutional and material phenomena as vital in explanations of society and communication. The theory attempts to cover the whole continuum from micro-interaction to macro-institutions, thereby according influence to both agents and structural tendencies.

Another argument against group and organizational theories of structuration is that they take existing constructs, such as climate or organizational structure, and attempt to reframe or rework them in structurational terms. Instead, the argument goes, it would be better to take structuration theory as a basic ontology for communication research and develop novel constructs or analyses of communication guided by structuration theory. One response to these criticisms is to note that theorists can do both: generate new ideas or reframe and reinvigorate old ones.

A third critique is that group and organizational structuration theories underemphasize the role of power in organizations. In response, it can be argued that domination is without question an important phenomenon but that it is not the only process that figures in organizations.

Marshall Scott Poole and Robert D. McPhee

See also Argumentation Theories; Constitutive View of Communication; Critical Organizational Communication; Group Communication Theories; Identity Theories; Institutional Theories of Organizational Communication; Organizational Communication Theories; Structuration Theory

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GROUP COMMUNICATION THEORIES

When we meet together, face to face or online, in small- or medium-sized assemblies, associations, bands, clubs, cliques, and the like, we engage in group communication. As members of groups, we permit a part of our identity and goals to exist as part of a small collective, and the convergence of these parts of our individual lives gives the group a coherent meaning, boundary, purpose, structure, and norms. Group communication theory examines the formation, dynamics, and dissolution of such small groups, and it examines the mutual influence that occurs between the individual and the group.

General Features

From its inception, theories of group communication have aimed to develop practical knowledge about group behavior that can aid us as group participants and facilitators. This applied emphasis has steered group theory and research toward common and purposeful group settings, particularly decision-making entities (e.g., juries and councils) and task-oriented bodies (e.g., athletic and work teams). The development of theory in a

university setting with limited research funding has also led to an emphasis on student groups with limited shared history and straightforward assignments. Though recent research has moved in wider directions, these constraints meant that group theories had relatively little to say about principally social/emotional groups (more commonly studied in social work and psychotherapy) and long-lived clans, collectives, and organizational groups (regularly studied in sociology, anthropology, and industrial-organizational psychology).

Epistemological and methodological traditions have also shaped group communication theory. Group communication scholars have principally developed theory within an empiricist approach to knowledge. That is, group communication theorists have sought to develop general propositions about group behavior, or at least context-dependent statements about how and why groups behave the way they do. By contrast, relatively few group communication theories have concerned themselves principally with the interpretation of action (i.e., the hermeneutic investigation of the subjective experience and meaning of group life). Even rarer are critical theories of group behavior, which provide philosophical advances in our understandings of moral/ethical questions, such as modes of domination and exploitation within groups. Significant exceptions to these tendencies exist in modern approaches, particularly the more recent move toward studying *bona fide* groups, discussed below, and feminist critiques of group theory and practice.

Methodologically, group communication scholars have confronted formidable obstacles that have alternately spurred innovation and stunted the growth of group research. From the outset, group communication scholars had to decide what constituted *group* behavior; after all, a group does not have its own brain, which contains the motivations, memories, mores, and meanings that shape behavior. To rectify this problem, group researchers have pioneered means of aggregating individual-level data, such as questionnaires, to identify group-level attributes. Within-and-between statistical analysis helps theorists distinguish between within-group variance (i.e., members' divergent levels of satisfaction with a group decision) and between-group differences (i.e., between wholly satisfied and unsatisfied groups). Group theorists

have also foregrounded the concept of the *decision rule* (e.g., consensus vs. majority rule), a means whereby a group itself (and researchers) can determine the aggregate will of a group's members.

The methodological demands of group theory have also spurred the creation of intensive behavioral observation and coding systems. One of the most famous and widely used systems is the interaction process analysis tool created by Robert Bales in 1950 (refined as Systematic Multiple Level Observation of Groups in 1970); this tool permitted efficient categorization of each individual statement made by the members of a group. Subsequent advances made possible not only the classification of individual actions but also the recognition of patterns of communication behavior over the course of a group's life span. This allowed theorists to model how one member's statement might influence the next utterance, ultimately producing complex sequences and chains that shape the character of the group and its outcomes.

Early Developments

Among the earliest instances of group communication theory was the work of group discussion scholars in the early 20th century. The field of speech communication had experienced a shift from a focus on individual eloquence through oratory to a more balanced emphasis on a range of rhetorical skills, including the ability to lead and participate effectively in group discussions. Perhaps as an echo of the progressive era that preceded it, this period emphasized a collaborative, participatory view of democratic citizenship in which individuals could aspire to play an active role in the affairs of the day by studying and learning together in groups and arriving at their own informed, reasoned judgments. In the modern day, deliberative democracy theorists have revitalized the moral-philosophical thread in this work, but group communication theorists principally carried forward the interest in the mechanics and outcomes of effective discussion.

Social psychologist Kurt Lewin shared this interest in the efficacy of group discussion and developed a wide range of original concepts and theories, as well as the National Training Laboratory, which continues to shape group practice to the present day. In the 1930s, Lewin and his

colleagues compared the consequences of three different group leadership styles—autocratic, democratic, and *laissez faire*—on children’s groups. The core finding was that a participatory, encouraging, and egalitarian leadership style yielded the best student decisions and behavior, and this single finding grounded an optimistic approach to theory and practice that valorized democratic practices (e.g., using majority rule or consensus) and assumed that such democratic behaviors generally characterized any high-functioning group.

A separate study Lewin conducted for the National Research Council during World War II showed another direction that small-group research would take. To aid the war effort, Lewin showed that homemakers would more readily accept the idea of cooking with sweetbreads (organ meat) after participating in a group discussion than after listening to a lecture on the subject. Though Lewin viewed these findings as a useful insight consistent with democratic discussion principles, it foreshadowed a growing concern about the potential damage group pressure could wreak on otherwise independent-thinking individuals.

In the 1950s, Solomon Asch devised an experimental paradigm that showed the extent of precisely this danger. Like many of his contemporaries in social psychology, such as Stanley Milgram and Theodor Adorno, Asch hoped to understand the processes that could lead people to embrace fascist ideology or authoritarian rule, as had occurred in the Axis powers during World War II. Asch had individuals look at a card featuring three lines and asked them to identify which line was longest. In his experiment, the group members each answered in turn, with all but the last individual being *confederates*, trained actors whom the other subject(s) mistakenly thought to be fellow participants. Each confederate would give the same wrong answer, and if the final member also gave the wrong answer, Asch took this as evidence of conforming to an (incorrect) group judgment. As Asch had theorized, some people did, indeed, conform, but the majority of study participants did *not*; moreover, Asch found that if a single confederate gave the correct answer, that act typically would embolden the last group member to give the correct answer instead of conforming.

The legacy of Asch’s research, however, was an enduring concern about the prevalence of group

conformity and misperception. Reinforcing that anxiety, among the lay public as well as scholars, in the late 1970s Irving Janis blended social-psychological theory with archival historical research to discover that many U.S. foreign policy blunders traced back to *groupthink*. Groups falling victim to this malady reached a premature decision as a result of their insularity, rigid thinking, biased leadership, and conformity pressure. The key factor for Janis was high cohesion—the mutual attraction and bonding that can occur in groups. Subsequent researchers clarified that cohesion, per se, does not limit a group’s productivity, but many investigations confirmed that cohesive groups could fall into groupthink if they also featured a constellation of other structural defects.

Much of the work that followed the path blazed by Lewin, Asch, and Janis kept sight of the fact that groups can yield widely varying outcomes depending on their procedures, as originally suggested by the group discussion pioneers who preceded them. By the 1970s and continuing to the present day, studies investigate the efficacy of a wide range of group practices, such as different ways of polling members, voting, taking speaking turns, or structuring a discussion. Practices such as devil’s advocacy (being responsible for articulating a dissenting point of view), round robins (taking turns one by one around a group), and trained facilitation (keeping groups on task, monitoring a group’s social/emotional behavior) have become commonplace in the contemporary practice of small groups in everyday life as a result of these studies.

Modern Communication Theories

In spite of the fruits of these and other social-psychological theories, the volume and visibility of small-group research declined in the fields of psychology and sociology during the 1970s and 1980s, leaving a widening vacuum. Filling this vacuum were small-group theories originated within the field of communication. Interdisciplinary studies of small groups had failed to study carefully certain aspects of group interaction, and group communication theorists developed original theoretical frameworks and study designs that complemented the existing body of social-psychological theories.

Ernest Bormann's *symbolic convergence theory* brought insights from rhetorical scholarship to bear on the study of group behavior. Bormann found that groups invariably gravitated toward a shared set of self-descriptions and self-understandings—what he called a symbolic convergence. Careful examination of discussions revealed that groups came together through a kind of dramatic negotiation. When a member used a rhetorical device, such as a word play or a metaphor, it could shape the group's symbolic reality if one or more of the other group members picked up on, amplified, and reinforced it. Once a symbolic identity emerged, it could shape the group's trajectory, such as when a group takes on an achievement-oriented identity that pushes its members to bring more energy and effort to its tasks (or a playful group runs the opposite course).

Dennis Gouran and Randy Hirokawa also advanced the group literature by developing a functional theory of group decision making. Drawing on earlier writings by the American philosopher John Dewey, Gouran and Hirokawa theorized that the same steps taken in rational thinking would be critical for arriving at effective group decisions. In their view, the *function* of task-oriented communication is to lead group members through these necessary analytic stages—from defining the problem to arriving at a final judgment. Among the many findings their research yielded were that groups too often fail to explicitly consider which evaluative criteria should be used to judge alternatives. Also, the most effective decision-making groups typically devote considerable effort to weighing the potential negative consequences of potential decisions, a sober exercise that contrasts with the wishful thinking and avoidance of dissent characteristic of dysfunctional groups. Gouran and Hirokawa also linked their theory to others by identifying the various individual and contextual constraints on decision making that cause groups to fail to engage in rigorous discussion.

Marshall Scott Poole and his many collaborators introduced another set of influential ideas. Poole's initial research dispelled the commonly held belief that groups routinely developed through a series of stages, such as Bruce Tuckman's poetic sequence of *forming*, *storming*, *norming*, *performing*, and *adjourning*. Some groups do mature in

this way, but many others follow different courses as they develop over time.

Not coincidentally, Poole's attention turned to structuration theory, a *grand theory* (i.e., an overarching set of theoretical concepts and models) developed by British sociologist Anthony Giddens in the late 1970s. Poole, along with Robert McPhee and David Seibold, suggested that group researchers view groups in structurational terms: In choosing what to say or do, each group member draws on his or her own understanding of how society operates—the *structures* of meaning, norms, and power perceived to exist. When deploying these structures in interaction, group members are often reproducing existing social structures or, other times, challenging and potentially altering them. Small groups, in this view, play a uniquely important role in society as one of the most tangible contexts in which individuals can apprehend societal-level structures (i.e., speaking norms, patterns of authority, linguistic conventions) and either sustain or subvert them. This fluidity inherent in structuration theory provided an account of group behavior that could explain both regularized patterns and deviations, such as the ones Poole had earlier uncovered.

Poole also advanced group communication theory by narrowing the scope and meaning of this approach to create an adaptive structuration theory. This theory explained how groups adapt to new technologies, particularly the group decision-support software systems that Poole himself helped develop. This particular research program also presented group communication scholars with a new model of research that combined systematic experimentation, licensed software innovations, and major grant funding from the National Science Foundation—a synergy that could support intensive, sustained inquiry and rich theory development.

As group communication scholars developed and refined these theories, they came to define a new approach to studying small groups—one focused on the content of group discussion, not merely the structural features of the group or the personalities of individual members. Contemporary small-group research continues along this same trajectory, with the most ambitious work using detailed direct observations, videotapes, and transcripts to understand the

complex structure of discourse that leads to group decisions, role structures, cohesion, and other group outcomes.

Future Trajectories

The most striking trend in small-group research, however, traces back to the aforementioned *bona fide* group perspective. Developed by communication scholars Linda Putnam and Cynthia Stohl, this is not so much a set of theoretical propositions as it is a governing set of assumptions and methodological commitments. In this view, the bulk of real groups have long histories embedded in richly textured natural settings; groups and their members have multiple interdependencies with other groups that shape their behavior. To understand a laboratory group is to understand an exceptional kind of *zero-history* group—an assemblage of strangers who tackle a single task and then dissolve. Although such groups do play important roles in society, such as in the case of the American jury, strong group theories need to look at groups in their natural settings.

Adopting this orientation leads group researchers to adopt an intensive case study approach to see the full complexity of a single group, rather than measuring some of the surface features of a sample of groups. This naturalistic approach often involves participant observation, ethnographic interviewing, and archival research, along with traditional transcription and survey research methods. From this multimethod mountain of data, one often aims to develop a *grounded* theory, one built from the details in the “ground” (i.e., raw data) up to the level of more general theoretical statement.

The clearest evidence of the ascendance of this approach is the proliferation of widely varied case studies that populate the group communication field’s edited volumes, journals, and conferences. Original studies now exist on a much wider range of small groups, including such diverse group forms as musical troupes, covens, Bible-study groups, support groups, and criminal gangs. Intensive group case studies predated the *bona fide* movement, such as the aforementioned studies by Janis and Helen Schwartzman’s landmark book *The Meeting*. This approach, however, has become common—perhaps even the norm—in

small-group research, particularly within the field of communication.

The other movement reshaping group communication theory is the emergence of a coherent field that encompasses but reaches far beyond the communication discipline. The Interdisciplinary Network for Group Research (INGroup), which first met in 2006, has fostered the cross-pollination of concepts, theories, and methods among group researchers who come from different academic traditions. If successful, INGroup and other interdisciplinary initiatives simultaneously will enrich group communication theory and widen its influence.

It may also be possible to forecast the topical direction of small-group researchers, thanks to a recent survey of this field’s leading theorists. The highest research priorities for these scholars included many traditional topics—leadership, status/power, decision making, social identity, and conflict in and between groups—but interest has grown in the understudied subjects of creativity, diversity, and technology in groups. Researchers also intend to pay greater attention to cross-cultural variations in group behavior and the relationships between groups and their larger organizational and social contexts.

In the end, theoretical advances in each of these areas will likely continue to serve the same aim initially proposed by group discussion pioneers—effectively participating in and facilitating the many groups that populate our lives. Given the ubiquity of group discussion, the public creation and distribution of this knowledge not only meets our practical needs but also could help us better secure a social and political commitment to democratic group process.

John Gastil

See also Bona Fide Group Theory; Deliberative Democratic Theories; Functional Group Communication Theory; Group and Organizational Structuration Theory; Groupthink; Structuration Theory; Symbolic Convergence Theory

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GROUPTHINK

Irving Janis used the term *groupthink* to refer to a condition in which highly cohesive groups strive to reach unanimity in their decision making at the expense of adequately examining alternative solutions. Such groups desire to maintain a cohesive atmosphere in the group to the extent that members are not to “rock the boat” or “stir the waters.” The condition ultimately leads to a deterioration in decision processes that usually results in poor decisions. The groupthink hypothesis is intimately tied to how group members communicate with one another. This entry explores groupthink, identifying its antecedent conditions, corresponding symptoms, effect on decision processes and decisions, and ways the phenomenon might be prevented.

Although Irving Janis did not coin the term, his conceptualization of groupthink has had the most significant and lasting impact on those wishing to learn more about group and organizational functioning. It all started with the Bay of Pigs fiasco. In April 1961, a rebel force backed by the U.S. government made a landing at the Bay of Pigs,

Cuba, in an effort to topple the newly established government of Fidel Castro. President John F. Kennedy and some of his most trusted advisers made decisions to cancel plans for additional rounds of bombings of Cuban airfields, changed the original and better landing site of the invasion force, and failed to provide air support for the rebels. The decisions doomed any hopes of the success of the invasion. A substantial number of the rebel force were killed in battle or captured and executed.

Irving Janis later claimed the Bay of Pigs disaster was one of the biggest fiascos ever perpetrated by a government. He was bothered with the question of how groups of learned people could collectively make such bad decisions. He suggested this topic to his daughter, who was writing a term paper. Examining her research, Janis’s curiosity was piqued, and he subsequently formulated the essential features of what would come to be known as the *groupthink hypothesis*.

There are certain characteristics that lay the foundation for groupthink. Among these antecedents are group cohesiveness, structural faults, and a provocative situational context. *Cohesiveness* refers to a state of mutual liking and attraction among group members; group members are amiable and united and have a desire to maintain positive relationships, and a feeling of esprit de corps is present. *Structural faults* may include the group’s insulation from external sources of information and counsel, lack of an established tradition of impartiality on the part of the leader, lack of norms for decision-making procedures, and homogeneity of group members with regard to social background and ideology. *Provocative situational contexts* are the kinds that impose high levels of stress on group members. These stresses may be due to a previous or recent record of failure, perceptions that the task may be too difficult, or the belief that there is no morally correct alternative available.

Of the three antecedents, cohesiveness is believed to be primary and, when paired with one of the other two antecedents, results in a greater likelihood that the group will suffer from groupthink. When cohesion is moderate to high, and one of the other antecedents is present, group members are likely to have a concurrence-seeking tendency when making decisions. This tendency in turn is

likely to manifest itself in the eight symptoms of groupthink outlined by Janis:

1. *Illusion of invulnerability*: Members are highly optimistic and willing to take extreme risks.
2. *Collective efforts to rationalize*: Members cast doubt on the validity of information that brings into question assumptions made.
3. *Illusion of morality*: The moral consequences of a decision go unexplored because group members do not question the morality of the group.
4. *Excessive stereotyping*: The group views rivals as too evil to warrant serious negotiation with them, or too weak or stupid in efforts to defeat the group.
5. *Pressure to conform*: Pressure is brought to bear against those members who disagree with the group, often through claims that such disagreements are indicative of disloyalty.
6. *Self-censorship*: Members do not voice dissenting or contrary views to the group consensus.
7. *Illusion of unanimity*: There is a false perception that members have achieved a consensus; silence is consent.
8. *Self-appointed mindguards*: Some members take on the role of guarding the group from information that might call into question the effectiveness and morality of decisions made.

If these symptoms are present, the group fails to use *vigilance* in its decision-making process. When groups engage in *vigilant decision making*, they adequately (a) survey the possible alternatives/solutions available; (b) survey the objectives to be accomplished; (c) examine the risks and benefits associated with the alternatives; (d) perform an information search; (e) process the information in an unbiased manner; (f) reappraise the alternatives in light of risks and benefits before making a final choice; and (g) work out a plan for implementing the desired choice, along with contingency plans should additional risks associated with that choice become known.

When vigilance is not present, the likelihood of making bad decisions increases and ultimately may

result in a decision-making fiasco. Given the negative consequences of groupthink, there are several steps a group should take in an effort to prevent it. The group leader should establish an atmosphere of open inquiry and impartiality and should withhold stating preferred courses of action at the outset. The leader should also encourage members to air objections and doubts; one or more members should play the role of *devil's advocate*, taking and voicing informed positions contrary to the prevailing position. Several subgroups working on the same problem should be formed, coming together at a future time to iron out differences. Finally, individuals from outside the group should be brought into group meetings to observe and challenge prevailing views, especially those of powerful group members.

The research that has investigated the groupthink phenomenon has at times yielded equivocal results. Primarily, the importance of cohesiveness in the groupthink model has been questioned. As a consequence, some have called for a reformulation of the original model to include other variables that might help to better explain the tendency toward ineffective group decision making. Among these calls has been a need to focus on, for example, the concept of collective efficacy (the belief of group members about their ability to effectively accomplish the group's task) and the role of motivations in decision making.

The groupthink hypothesis has spurred much research, and the phenomenon has been put forward as a reason for faulty decision making in many historical contexts: the Bay of Pigs, Pearl Harbor, Viet Nam, the Watergate break-in, and the space shuttle *Challenger* explosion. The research and analyses concerning the groupthink hypothesis have also had a tremendous impact on policymaking in organizational and community settings. In the communication discipline, Janis and his colleagues' work on groupthink has directly influenced the development of the functional perspective of effective decision making and the vigilant interaction theory. The hypothesis has retained its appeal in the years since it was first put forward, as evidenced by the number of scholarly references to it, the research it has spurred, and the changes it has instigated in the workplace.

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See also Bona Fide Group Theory; Creativity in Groups; Functional Group Communication Theory; Group Communication Theories

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H

HAPTICS

See Nonverbal Communication Theories

HAWAIIAN *HO'OPONOPONO* THEORY

Ho'oponopono, or setting to right, is a method of interpersonal conflict resolution practiced in the traditional Native Hawaiian culture. As a highly collectivistic society, the Native Hawaiian community generally perceives interpersonal conflict as negative and to be avoided or ignored whenever possible. However, when interpersonal conflict between members of the community creates much distress for any of the parties involved or the community at large, *ho'oponopono* is likely to be performed. Essentially, then, the overall goal of *ho'oponopono* is not only to resolve interpersonal conflicts but also to restore a sense of togetherness and harmony among all members of the community.

A third party, normally a respected elder of the community, serves as the facilitator. This elder is responsible for monitoring and controlling both the verbal and the nonverbal behaviors of the disputants as he or she guides them through an opening, discussion, resolution, and closing phase. In the opening phase, the facilitator typically says a prayer to bless the conflicting parties. He or she

then encourages the disputants to conduct themselves in a sincere and truthful manner and may remind them about how the whole community has been affected by their discord. The elder then outlines the alleged problem and describes how *ho'oponopono* will proceed.

During the second phase, the discussion, the facilitator attempts to identify the source(s) of the problem. This phase is normally the most time-consuming because family members and others who have been affected by the conflict may share their views at this juncture. As can be expected, this process of uncovering the cause(s) of the conflict can also be extremely emotional. Therefore, the elder must be able to steer all participants away from blaming and recrimination. Should tempers flare at this point, the leader would call for a period of silence to bring emotions under control. He or she would then remind participants of the purpose of *ho'oponopono* and emphasize self-scrutiny over finding fault with others.

In the third phase, resolution, parties express sincere apologies and ask for forgiveness. It is important that forgiveness is granted, for this symbolizes a release from the ties of conflict and discord that linked the disputants. If forgiveness is not given, *ho'oponopono* is not complete.

When the facilitator feels that all issues of conflict have been resolved between disputants, he or she moves the participants to the closing phase. In this phase, the *ho'oponopono* leader reaffirms a sense of harmony among all community members and reminds all those who have been affected that the conflict should never surface again. This sense

of harmony is readily evidenced by the mutual preparation and partaking of a celebratory meal.

Essentially, ho'oponopono is a method of conflict resolution designed to maintain harmony among members of the traditional Native Hawaiian community. Further, as with collectivistic societies, it emphasizes the importance of face-giving rather than the face-saving concern of individualists.

It is believed that the practice of ho'oponopono predates the arrival of British explorer James Cook in 1778. However, as Western influence dramatically altered the social and cultural systems that flourished during the precontact years, the use of ho'oponopono sharply declined. It was not until the early 1970s, when a highly respected elder of the Native Hawaiian community, Mary Kawena Pukui, who described in some detail her understanding of ho'oponopono, that the practice experienced a renaissance. Today, ho'oponopono is used to resolve interpersonal conflicts in business and professional organizations and with people of non-Hawaiian ancestry.

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See also Conflict Communication Theories; Culture and Communication

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HEALTH COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Health communication is a relatively young, vibrant, and interdisciplinary applied subfield of communication studies that examines the powerful

roles performed by human and mediated communication in the delivery of health care and the promotion of individual and public health. Health communication is a very broad and complex field of study that draws from the research and theory of just about every other area of communication research, including intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, group communication, organizational communication, media studies, public relations, intercultural communication, rhetorical studies, and new information technologies. Not surprisingly, health communication scholars apply a wide range of different theories, models, and research methods from these different areas of communication inquiry to examine health communication phenomena. They also adopt theories and methods that derive from many other related disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, public health, medicine, nursing, health education, epidemiology, and social work. There are a growing number of dedicated health communication theories that guide current health communication research and applications that will be reviewed here.

Health communication research investigates the ways health care providers, consumers, and many relevant others (such as health care administrators, health care suppliers, health system regulators, insurance company representatives, family members, legislators, and researchers) use communication, both in person and through mediated channels, to coordinate the efforts of many different people in promoting health and delivering health care. Health communication scholars also examine the many different ways communication strategies can be used to disseminate relevant health information to key audiences. This is particularly evident in the development, implementation, and evaluation of strategically designed persuasive communication campaigns for health education and promotion. Health communication scholars study the important ways that communication can be used to alert key publics about relevant and dangerous health risks and coordinate prevention and response to public health emergencies. Health communication scholars also examine the many different ways news, entertainment, and social media channels, including new computerized information technologies (e-health), influence health care and health promotion. Health communication inquiry will be

examined here from four different interrelated perspectives: (1) health communication and the delivery of health care, (2) health communication and the promotion of health, (3) health and risk communication, and (4) health communication and new information technologies (e-health).

Delivery of Health Care

Scholars who study the ways communication influences the delivery of health care are part of the larger interdisciplinary *health services research* tradition. These scholars often examine the interpersonal interactions between health care consumers and providers, evaluating both the *verbal* and the *nonverbal messages* exchanged during patient appointments, diagnostic interviews, checkups, and examinations. A number of theories guide this examination of *message exchange patterns* between health care consumers and providers, often with the use of *interaction and conversation analysis* research techniques. A large number of interpersonal communication theories have been used to guide the consumer-provider interaction health communication research tradition, including *social penetration theory* (examining the development of relational closeness through self-disclosure), *uncertainty reduction theory* (examining how interpersonal exchanges are used to gain knowledge and understanding), *social exchange theory* (examining the negotiated costs and benefits of relational exchanges for participants), *communication accommodation theory* (examining the ways personal and social identities are negotiated in interactions), and *expectancy violations theory* (examining the ways unexpected behaviors that break social norms can influence participant beliefs and behaviors).

There are also a number of dedicated health communication theories and models that have been developed to guide consumer-provider communication research. These dedicated health communication theoretical perspectives include the *transformation model of communication and health outcomes* (which predicts how antecedent participant and situational conditions combine with consumer-provider communication processes to achieve cognitive, behavioral, and physiological health outcomes), the *relational model of health communication competence* (which posits the

influences of health care participants' level of communication competence on achieving desired health outcomes), the *cognitive-affective model of relational expectations in the provider-patient context* (which describes the ways participants' expectations for content and relational information influence health care interactions), the *cancer advocacy and liaison model* (which describes how communication can be used to empower patients to take control of their health care), and the *health care partnership model of doctor-patient communication* (which describes how patient advocates with doctors and patients can influence the outcomes of health care exchanges).

Communication variables and outcomes that are often examined from the consumer-provider interaction research tradition include *relational dominance* between health care providers and consumers. For example, verbal messages are often examined to determine dominance by examining who does most of the talking, who introduces new topics, who controls the conversation, and who asks most of the questions during consumer-provider encounters. Nonverbal messages that are examined to assess conversational dominance include the use of different *paralinguistic cues* (such as speaking volume and tone), *proxemic cues* (such as physical distance established between interactants, their postures, and the extent to which the interactants face one another), as well as examination of eye contact and the use of gestures during conversations. A large body of research has established that health care providers typically dominate conversations with consumers, establishing an imbalance in *relational power* in health care communication. Another conversational outcome examined in consumer-provider research is *message congruence* (the extent to which responses to comments match the topics and requests made in those comments). Research has shown that too often in health care situations, consumers and providers do not directly answer the questions asked of them or respond congruently to topics raised during conversations. Sometimes health care participants have different agendas for the conversation, may not be ready to disclose personal information that is requested, or have difficulty understanding comments or effectively articulating responses. Incongruencies in conversation often lead to misunderstandings between health care

providers and consumers and can limit the participants' satisfaction with communication encounters. They can also lead to mistakes with diagnoses and poor adherence to therapeutic recommendations. Another communication outcome that is often studied is the expression of *empathy* between communicators (do the messages that are exchanged demonstrate concern and compassion for the relational partners?). Research has shown that the expression of empathy is a key factor in establishing trust, rapport, and cooperation in health care encounters, but unfortunately there are many instances in the delivery of health care in which empathy is not expressed particularly well.

A related area of research within the health care delivery approach to health communication examines the provision and influences of *social support* through interpersonal, group, and organizational communication to help individuals cope with difficult situations and events. Much of the social support research derives from *social network theory*, which describes the patterns and influences of interactions between communicators within social systems. People facing major health challenges often need social support to help them maintain socioemotional balance and build strength to confront health problems. Sensitive, caring, and empathic interpersonal communication has been shown to be the primary channel for providing social support, yet too often individuals who are confronting serious health challenges do not have access to sufficient social support. *Social penetration theory* has been used to examine the development of relational closeness and social support between participants within the health care system, as well as how closeness progresses and how self-disclosure enables movement from a superficial to an intimate relationship.

Still other research conducted within the health care delivery tradition examines *interprofessional* and *team communication* among interdependent health care providers and consumers within health care delivery systems, such as hospitals and clinics. This research illustrates the tremendous need for information sharing, conflict management, and coordination among interdependent members of health care teams, as well as the many impediments to achieving cooperation in the delivery of health care within complex and bureaucratic modern health care systems. Much of the team

communication research has been grounded in different *role theories*, *leadership theories*, and *decision-making theories*.

Promotion of Health

Scholars who study the ways communication influences the adoption of recommended health behaviors for prevention, early detection, and treatment of health problems are part of the *health promotion* tradition of health communication research. These scholars examine both the persuasive strategies that are used for developing and implementing *health communication campaigns* and the many ways that relevant health information is disseminated to key publics through a variety of communication channels.

There are a number of theories of mass communication that have been used to guide health promotion research. Some of the mass communication theories that have been adopted in health communication include *cultivation theory* (which describes how audiences learn about the world and model behavior from media portrayals of people and events), *uses and gratification theory* (which describes how people use media to achieve various goals), *agenda-setting theory* (which describes the ways media influence audiences' prioritization of important topics and social issues), the *two-step flow model* (which describes how human agency, such as *opinion leadership*, combines with the media to influence audiences), and the related *diffusion of innovations theory* (which describes how new ideas and activities are communicated and adopted in society). The *knowledge gap hypothesis* describes the differential acquisition of health information by different groups in society.

There are also a wide range of persuasion theories that are commonly used to direct health communication inquiry. These theories include the *theory of reasoned action* (sometimes referred to as the *behavioral intentions model*, which predicts behavior change by examining attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral intentions), *social learning theory* (which posits how behaviors can be learned through reinforcement, punishment, and observation), and the related *social cognitive theory* (which describes how people learn new behaviors by observing and modeling relevant others to develop *self-efficacy* or confidence in their abilities

to enact new behaviors). Models of *edutainment* (the use of entertainment media to communicate engaging health information to diverse audiences) have developed from social cognitive theory, *message framing theory* (which describes the different ways messages that emphasize positive outcomes and negative outcomes affect audiences), and *information processing theory* (which illustrates how attention, comprehension, and acceptance of messages influence persuasion). There are also numerous theories of *attitude change*, *source credibility*, *social influence*, and *message exposure* that are used to guide health communication research, including *cognitive dissonance theory* (which describes the motivation to reduce cognitive imbalance or dissonance by changing or rationalizing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors), the *elaboration likelihood model* (which describes both central and peripheral routes for analyzing, forming, and changing attitudes), *social judgment theory* (which describes how personal involvement, the structure of messages, and the sources of messages influence attitude change), *balance theory* (which describes how the drive for personal consistency influences responses to messages and social influence attempts), *protection motivation theory* (which describes the adoption of adaptive behaviors in response to threats), and the related *extended parallel process model* (which specifies how to channel fears into productive, adaptive actions).

There are several models that have been used to direct strategic design and implementation of health promotion campaigns. For example, the *social marketing model* (which illustrates how the traditional marketing mix for utilizing and blending product, price, place, and promotion can be used to influence behaviors) is often used to guide the development of health promotion campaign messages and delivery strategies. Similarly the *transtheoretical model*, which is sometimes referred to as the *stages of change model* (which describes audience members' relative readiness to adopt recommended changes as one of five *stages of readiness*: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, or maintenance), is often used to analyze the readiness of target audiences and to guide message development for health promotion campaigns. The *precede-proceed model* (which explains how predisposing, enabling, and reinforcing factors contribute to adopting recommended

behavior changes) is also often used to help plan health promotion campaigns. Similarly, the *health belief model* (which explains how beliefs about perceived threats and net benefits—perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, and perceived barriers—influence adoption of health recommendations) is often used to guide health promotion campaigns. The recently proposed *people and places model* presents an *ecological framework* for guiding health communication interventions by explaining and predicting how the health of populations can be influenced by communication according to the unique attributes of audience members, the attributes of the environments where people live and work, and the important interactions between people and places.

Health and Risk Communication

Health and risk communication research examines the significant communication demands involved in identifying serious health risks such as potential epidemics (such as the spread of infectious diseases; natural disasters; bioterrorism; public exposure to poisons; or contamination of food, air, or water), preparing at-risk publics to confront imminent health risks, and coordinating responses when these serious health crises occur. The advent of dramatic health-threatening public emergencies (such as the exposure to anthrax through the mail, spread of the avian flu and the West Nile virus, as well as the health-related repercussions from Hurricane Katrina and the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center) have sensitized health communication scholars to the need to study risk and emergency communication in response to dangerous health crises. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in particular, has become a leader in risk communication, developing extensive health and risk communication programs to help the nation respond effectively to health crises.

Several theories have been used to guide health and risk communication efforts. For example, the *risk perception model* describes the many interrelated factors (including voluntariness, controllability, familiarity, equity, benefits, understanding, uncertainty, dread, trust, reversibility, personal stake, ethics, origin of the risk, victim identity, and catastrophic potential) that influence how different audiences perceive and are likely to react to health

risks. The *mental noise model* examines how different publics process information under stress about health risks and how their interpretations influence their responses to risk communication. The *negative dominance model* describes the ways audiences process both negative and positive information when confronting health risks. The *trust determination theory* examines communication strategies (such as the use of caring and empathy, competence and expertise, honesty and openness, and dedication and commitment) risk managers can use to establish trust when communicating with different audiences about health risks. The *CAUSE model* has been used to guide risk communication efforts by encouraging risk communicators to earn the confidence of respected journalists, create awareness of health issues, increase public understanding, enhance public satisfaction with news coverage, and motivate enactment of risk management behaviors. The *strategic bio-defense communication model* describes a three-stage strategy risk managers can use to promote risk prevention, preparation for risks, and responses to biological threat crises. Recently *Weick's model of organizing*, which describes the systemic role of information and communication for social organizing and has seen long use by communication scholars, has been proposed as a theoretical perspective for guiding health risk communication research and intervention.

New Information Technologies (E-Health)

E-health is a relatively new area of health communication inquiry that examines the ways that computers and other digital information technologies can be used to enhance the delivery of health care and the promotion of public health. The rapid diffusion of the Internet and other relevant information technologies (such as electronic health records, *health information portals*, *tailored behavior change programs*, interactive health education systems, *telehealth* information and monitoring applications, *online support groups*, tobacco cessation *quitlines*, and even *virtual reality* training programs) has revolutionized the modern health care system and promises many additional changes and innovations in health communication. Research suggests that the vast majority of Americans are now using the Internet as a primary source of

health information. Yet, there are concerns about the accuracy of the information provided and the computer literacy of consumers to interpret the information they may access. In fact, there are major concerns about issues of information overload, misinformation, equal access to health information, lack of information privacy, and the predatory use of health information technologies to swindle health consumers.

A number of well-accepted communication theories and models, as well as new theoretical perspectives, have been used to guide e-health research. Several well-established communication theories have been applied to the study of e-health, including use of the *diffusion of innovations theory* to track adoption of new information technologies by health care providers and consumers. *Organizational culture theory* has been used to examine the ways the modern health care system has changed to embrace the use of information technologies for patient care, education, and support. Adoption of new information technologies in health care has been compared to the diffusion of other communication media, such as the television, the radio, and the cell phone. The *digital divide model* developed as a description of unequal access to and diffusion of new information technologies, as well as to describe the impact of this information inequality on access to health information. *Media complementarity theory* and *attribution theory* have been used to explain nonpurposeful media usage in the health information acquisition process. The *comprehensive model of information seeking* has been used to model consumers' search of online health information.

Similarly, research on the provision of social support online has been compared to earlier research on *social support networks*. For example, *social penetration theory* has been used to examine how online relationships are developed in online support groups and in the delivery of telehealth. *Social network theory* has been used to guide analysis of patient-centered social networks and communities of care online. The *online support group participation model* explains why some consumers use online support groups and others do not. *Social information processing theory* describes how online support group participants portray themselves in favorable ways to foster future interactions.

E-health inquiry has also borrowed from research on interpersonal communication. For example, *uncertainty reduction theory* has been used to guide examination of the ways e-mail is used between doctors and patients to provide relevant information concerning health care diagnosis and treatment. *Social cognitive theory* has been used to examine satisfaction with the use of e-health services. Theories of relational development have also been used to model the development of online health relationships.

Several dedicated e-health theories and models have been developed in recent years, often building on other health communication theoretical frameworks. For example, the *e-health behavior management model* combines the *transtheoretical model*, the *theory of planned behavior*, and several theories of persuasive communication to describe the ways consumers negotiate the Internet to gather relevant health information. The World Health Organization introduced the *5-C Model for eHealth* to model the development of e-health systems in developing countries. The five Cs include context, content, connectivity, capacity, and community development. As the e-health communication research area grows and matures, there will certainly be additional new theories and models developed to describe the intricacies of interactive online health information systems.

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See also Accommodation Theory; Agenda-Setting Theory; Attitude Theory; Campaign Communication Theories; Cognitive Dissonance Theory; Cognitive Theories; Conversation Analysis; Corporate Campaign Theories; Diffusion of Innovations; Digital Divide; Elaboration Likelihood Theory; Empathy; Expectancy Violations Theory; Framing Theory; Group Communication Theories; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Language and Communication; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Organizational Communication Theories; Organizational Culture; Organizing, Process of; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Power, Interpersonal; Reasoned Action Theory; Relational Communication Theory; Social Exchange Theory; Social Judgment Theory; Social Penetration Theory; Social Support; Uncertainty Reduction Theory; Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency

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HERMENEUTICS

Hermeneutics appears now to be something more than a passing fashion of continental theory. Like rhetoric, hermeneutics has a great and venerable provenance and a genuinely interdisciplinary breadth. But unlike rhetoric, its definition is contested and its standing controversial. It is considered a generic designation for interpretive criticism, a humanist philosophy that challenges the primacy of scientific method. It is an ontology of linguistic being, or a philosophy in which human experience becomes defined in language use. As such, hermeneutics is also a corollary to the idea of rhetorical agency, the idea that communicators act with intention. In its contemporary guise, it gained international notoriety in the 1960s after

the publication of Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method* and has continued to propagate in disciplines as various as theology, architecture, organizational communication, and physics. Although remaining strongly associated with Gadamer, a longtime student of philosopher Martin Heidegger, it has been further shaped and extended by such intellectual luminaries as Paul Ricoeur and Jürgen Habermas.

History of the Term

Long before the term *hermeneutics* was widely used, interpretive practices developed rules and conventions in various ancient school traditions of orality and literacy. Among the earliest and most significant are the extraordinary exegetical traditions of Hebrew scriptures. The Gemara, for instance, was a transcription of interpretive dialogues between rabbi and congregation over the meaning of the Mishnah (itself an interpretation of scripture), and these exegetical exercises became in turn a part of scriptural law. Canons of interpretive practice were embedded in Roman rhetorical teaching from Cicero and Quintilian to the Church Fathers, most famously in Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*. It was in this rhetorical environment that the principle of the *hermeneutic circle* gained prominence—the idea that textual meaning has a mutually reciprocal relation to its context. Initially this meant that one could understand a textual passage by relating it to the context of the larger work. Later this relation would be expanded to a work and the life of the author and then to any textual expression and its cultural–historical context.

Hermeneutics per se gained an independent disciplinary standing after the Protestant Reformation. The issue of interpretive method as a special study came to the fore with the rise of a culture of vernacular reading; the requirement for biblical exegesis, or interpretation, in Protestantism; the expanding interest in classical texts with the concomitant development of philology, or the study of human speech, literature, and language as a field that sheds light on cultural history; and a burgeoning jurisprudential interest in legal codes. These various disciplinary initiatives were carried on by many scholars. Philip Melanchthon was both a humanist and an aid to Luther's Reformation; he modified the Renaissance rhetoric curriculum to

teach his Protestant students how to read as well as speak (*bene dicendi, bene scribendi*). Martin Luther himself was a significant influence in hermeneutics, establishing the scriptural text as the authoritative key for interpretive practice (*sola scriptura*). Matthias Flacius, a follower of Luther, attempted to develop comprehensive linguistic and grammatical principles for deciphering obscure passages of scripture. The theologian Johann Dannhauer early on suggested the universality of hermeneutic understanding, anticipating both Romantic and 20th-century hermeneutics. The theologian and historian Johann Chladenius developed hermeneutics as a humanist alternative to Cartesian epistemology and famously transformed the rhetorical concept of *scopus* (point of view) into a powerful hermeneutic tool of psychological perception. These are only a few of the many Protestant scholars who contributed to the development of early hermeneutics. It should be noted that this early tradition was in the main a German phenomenon, and remained so through Heidegger.

It is difficult to locate precisely where hermeneutics migrated from a specialized interpretive method for particular fields of study into a broadly applied philosophical perspective, because elements of its universal tendency were present almost from the beginning of hermeneutics. Chladenius, in 1742, already spoke in general terms of hermeneutics as a science comprehending all writing and speaking. Georg Friedrich Meier extended hermeneutics beyond the interpretation of texts to a semiotic theory encompassing all signs. The philologist Friedrich Ast lectured on principles of interpretive practice (including the circularity of the relation of text and cultural context) that sketch out a general hermeneutics.

But the movement toward making hermeneutics universal in interpreting all matters culminates with Friedrich Schleiermacher; he combined a devotion to Protestant theology with a close involvement in the early Romantic movement and proposed a systematic universal hermeneutics as the art of understanding coordinate to the art of speaking (rhetoric). Schleiermacher developed hermeneutics as a technique of transposition, of placing oneself in the whole context out of which a text emerges in order to understand it accurately and fully. He saw the subject of hermeneutics to be essentially the problem of *communication*, that is,

how one person can understand the meaning of another across the barriers of speech, culture, history, and textuality. His psychological focus shifted hermeneutics from the understanding of a text to the understanding of understanding itself. This conceptual change in the function of hermeneutics would make possible its later appropriation for, respectively, a fundamental ontology and a humanist philosophy.

At this stage another development in German intellectual culture had a profound impact on hermeneutics: the movement known as German historicism. The linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt had prepared the way for this movement by moving away from what we now call the instrumentalist view of language and adopting the view that culture resides within language, and meaning arises in discursive interaction. Humboldt also shifted the emphasis of the circle of interpretation from the interior life of the individual mind to the spirit of the age.

Hermeneutics thereafter exchanged a primarily psychological orientation for a cultural one. With the rise of the historicist school, hermeneutics became the methodological basis for distinguishing the human studies (*Geisteswissenschaften*) from the natural sciences. August Böckh, Gustav Droysen, and Leopold von Ranke were among the leaders of this movement. Further radicalizing Humboldt's cultural perspective on language, they shifted the agency of human development further from the will of the individual to the active determination of history and culture by the spirit of the age.

The next great hermeneutic impetus came from Wilhelm Dilthey, who still hearkened back to strands in German Romanticism; he mediated the historicist and psychological perspectives by melding the biographical and sociohistorical into an interconnected system. He continued the effort to put the human studies onto a sound scientific footing and immortalized the distinction between explanation and understanding as the modalities, respectively, of the natural and human sciences. He appropriated Schleiermacher's hermeneutics as a methodology of the human sciences, treating the outward signs of expression and culture as a key to the inner life of the human being. His massive system was never completed, but his work has served as an impetus for hermeneutics that is still being felt today.

Following close on him in the next generation, Edmund Husserl, the father of phenomenology, did not extend the hermeneutic tradition directly, but his theory of intentional consciousness would be an important impetus for hermeneutics—a link between the effort to ground the human studies in nonobjectivist methods and Heidegger's effort to dissolve the subject-object dichotomy with a hermeneutics of being-in-the-world. Husserl epitomized his rigorous descriptions of the organic link between consciousness and “worldhood” by coining a famous term, the *lifeworld*, which became a resonant descriptor for the existential ground of hermeneutics.

Martin Heidegger was an inheritor of all these lines of thinking—the textual-interpretive, historicist, subjectivist orientation of the human sciences, the Hegelian ideal of objective spirit—all of which he brought to bear in a revolutionary effort to move beyond the transcendental subject-object dualism of the Western tradition. He did this in part by historicizing Husserl's idea of the lifeworld. The organic relation of inextricably embodied consciousness now also traverses the dimensions of culture and time. In the early 1920s, Heidegger briefly appropriated the term *hermeneutics* to signify that human life itself is an interpretive movement between the hidden cultural-historical currents that carry us along and our existential orientation to an indeterminate future. The circular movement between the whole expanse of our life and the present, as it disappears into both the abyss of memory and the contingent future, is analogous to the complex process of finding meaning in a text.

This explosion of the interpretive metaphor to the level of ontology, or being, was a major impetus behind the linguistic turn that dominated 20th-century cultural studies and continental philosophy. For the German successors of Johann Gottfried Herder and Humboldt, it was not difficult to link factual being-in-the-world to a linguistic paradigm. In the latter half of the 20th century, Gadamer carried on Heidegger's legacy by focusing on how a hermeneutic perspective transforms the premises underlying knowledge production in the human sciences. Gadamer's allegiance to the classical tradition of the humanities, including what he referred to as rhetoric's “broad” and “ancient” meaning, was the basis for his development of an alternative to the model of empirical science and technology

that he felt dominated not only the learning culture but contemporary life. Gadamer himself defined *hermeneutics* variously—as a practical philosophy, a theory of understanding, a theory of speech as the basis of human interchange—and probably quite intentionally cultivated a certain ambiguity around his theme. Nevertheless, it is clear that Gadamer sees hermeneutics as a bid to undermine a knowledge paradigm underwritten by positivist assumptions and return to its rightful preeminence a humanist standard of judgment and practice that guides the progress of science rather than the reverse. At the root of this proposal is a shift from monologic instrumentalism to understanding through dialogue. Rejecting the model of an inner mental agency of pure reason, hermeneutics locates deliberative judgment in the social process inherent in our speaking with one another.

This thrust has been challenged by more orthodox sociological perspectives. The Italian juridical scholar Emilio Betti, the philosopher Karl-Otto Apel, the sociologist Jürgen Habermas, the American literary critic E. D. Hirsch, and others have attempted to refashion hermeneutics into a more objectivist methodological procedure, but Heidegger and Gadamer cast a long shadow, and their influence remains dominant. Ricoeur attempted to mediate these opposing efforts dialectically, showing how the interplay of these two sets of ideas yields value.

Hermeneutics in Communication Studies

This history of hermeneutics as a once-marginal “special discipline” turned major philosophical perspective has not left communication studies in the United States unaffected. Hermeneutics rode quietly into the discipline on the tail of continental theory over the past several decades, but it remains intact and in dialogue with communication while many of the more fashionable imports have lost their currency. Despite Gadamer’s overriding determination to prevent hermeneutics from being assimilated as a method, a number of communication scholars have attempted to systematize hermeneutics methodologically. This manner of appropriation is not universal. Both interpersonal and intercultural communication have been less methodological, using hermeneutics more as a perspective than as a method.

The relation of hermeneutics to rhetoric studies eclipses all this. In 1994, Jeffery Bineham suggested that rhetoric should turn from epistemology, or knowledge claims, to the more interpretation-based position of hermeneutics. In so doing, he essentially reversed Klaus Dockhorn’s famous 1966 effort to reveal the deep rhetorical origins of Gadamer’s *Truth and Method* of 1980. Both statements become ironic in the light of history. Since its inception as a disciplinary practice, from Cicero to Augustine, from Melancthon to Schleiermacher, hermeneutics has been intimately tied to, even housed in, rhetoric and its teaching traditions. In its early modern history, hermeneutics separated from rhetoric, its mother discipline, to become a satellite field allied with philology, theology, and legal studies, but up until late in the 19th century, the ground of hermeneutics was reflexively understood to be the school tradition of rhetoric. Academic rhetoric is still discovering that organic relationship.

To be sure, there have been significant inroads toward a recovery. Michael Hyde and Craig Smith were among the first to bring a Heideggerian frame of reference to academic rhetoric in order to harvest its onto-epistemic (being-knowledge) potential. Steven Mailloux in literary studies has developed a concept he calls *rhetorical hermeneutics*, which is primarily a reflective examination of how critics interpret the tropes, or nonliteral expressions, of a culture. Michael Leff inverted Mailloux’s phrase and offered a *hermeneutical rhetoric*, pointing to the fact that the rhetor has always acted as an interpreter of texts for a public. Mailloux’s and Leff’s appropriations tend toward field-specific applications, which is to say, respectively, literary criticism and public address. Dilip Gaonkar’s attribution of a hermeneutic function to rhetoric broadens the field of hermeneutics, attributing a new theorizing impulse to a wide swath of academic rhetorical education. Rhetoricians, in Gaonkar’s view, no longer educate students in the art of public speaking, but become cultural critics who deploy rhetorical concepts in the analysis of culture. Hermeneutics in this sense designates a critical–interpretive activity performed by humanist scholars. A strong indicator of increased interest in the rapprochement between rhetoric and hermeneutics is represented by the publication of the interdisciplinary volume entitled *Rhetoric and*

Hermeneutics in Our Time. But perhaps the most intriguing sign of a new alliance is Daniel Gross and Ansgar Kemmann's 2005 book, *Heidegger and Rhetoric*, a collection of essays by rhetoricians and philosophers that uncovers Heidegger's early and largely unknown debt to Aristotelian rhetoric.

Despite these incipient links, mainstream rhetoric studies has been cautious of a too close alliance with hermeneutics. This hesitation is a function of disparate disciplinary histories and of genuine concern for the ambitions of hermeneutics to become a universal framework, as Gaonkar's important essay warns. Cultural and critical studies perspectives, in addition, look on Gadamerian hermeneutics with suspicion as a nod to traditionalism. In addition, the extreme diversity of understandings of both rhetoric and hermeneutics multiplies the difficulties of finding a workable relation between them.

Yet it is important to note that Gadamer himself, with repeated urgency toward the end of his life, called for a revitalization of a humanist rhetoric, which he tied to hermeneutics through the concept of *phronesis* and dialogic practice. Gadamer courted rhetoric through his long career as a paradigmatic counterthrust to the hyper-rationalism of the method-driven sciences, but in his last years this appeal became more and more insistent.

What Hermeneutics Offers Communication

Hermeneutics provides a rich and focused challenge to the methodological presuppositions of the social sciences, so students of communication who wish to interrogate the tools of their trade could hardly find a richer source for this topic. The question of methodology was at the root of Gadamer's writing, and the debate between humanist and methodological perspectives animated many of the great writings in hermeneutics.

In addition, hermeneutics, as much as any perspective, moves communication from its instrumental identity to its ontological (i.e., constitutive) function. In attempting to break down the subject-object paradigm by relocating and dispersing agency across audience, issue, and situation and relocating speaker or writer from the center to the margins, it supports the general move toward dialogic models of communication. Listening studies will find much material in hermeneutics, which

insists that word, world, and other must speak to us first.

At the heart of hermeneutics is a novel view of the structure of discursive understanding, which it takes to be circular rather than linear. Analytic logic moves one step at a time toward a conclusion and attempts to exclude presuppositions or pre-determinations. Hermeneutics not only affirms the impoverishment of this kind of thinking, but it makes predispositions and predeterminations constitutive and central to the communication process itself.

Hermeneutics teases out the implicit philosophical implications of rhetorical practice and engages rhetoric on the complex and controversial interaction between theory and practice. The enduring strength of rhetoric's focus on the particular and the pragmatic is the premise of the hermeneutic approach toward theory.

Philosophical hermeneutics is one of the pre-eminent traditions offering defensible alternatives to the philosophies of the subject. The particular inflection of its polemic is particularly congenial to communication studies, since its emphasis is on communality through dialogue as the counterweight to the Western tradition of the soul thrust back on itself.

Future Directions

The future of hermeneutics in communication studies will depend on answers to a series of unresolved questions about its disciplinary appropriation: Is hermeneutics to be treated primarily as a paradigm, a perspective, a corollary to rhetoric (as listening to speaking), a critical approach, a method of analysis? Does it work its way into the texture of rhetorical thought, for instance, and simply die of its own success? Does it develop its own disciplinary niche in ways analogous to, for instance, the theory of Kenneth Burke or critical rhetoric? Or does it stand in its own disciplinary orbit in cooperative tension with rhetoric, as, for instance, cultural studies? If it is to be useful in the wider area of communication studies, particularly as it impinges on the social sciences, then it will have to resolve hermeneutics' relation to methodology. Most critically, the discipline of communication must revisit the philosophical impulse to transform a general hermeneutics from a

systematic canon of textual exegesis into a theory of knowledge. It was that historical turn in the road that eventually led hermeneutics, as its own self-standing theoretical perspective, to fuse epistemology and ontology against the dualism of positivist science. Gadamerian hermeneutics can be read as an argument for the return of communication to its preeminent status as the foundation of the humanities and general education, not simply as training in speaking and writing skills, but as the underlying framework for the liberal arts.

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See also Critical Discourse Analysis; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Existentialism; Interpretive Theory; Language and Communication; Phenomenology; Rhetorical Theory

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HEURISTIC-SYSTEMATIC MODEL

Shelly Chaiken's heuristic-systematic model (HSM) is a "dual process" theory that identifies *two* coexistent, but qualitatively dissimilar, means by which receivers of persuasive messages process information. It applies to those contexts in which receivers aim to assess the validity of a point of view, to determine the truth of the persuasive message, or to connect attitudes with relevant facts. This model posits that there are two cognitive paths—systematic and heuristic processing—that can be used by persuasive message recipients in this quest. The HSM is one dominant theoretical perspective in investigating persuasion and attitude change. This entry defines the two process modes and their determinants.

Message Processing Modes

Systematic processing involves methodological, critical, and thorough processing of messages in which receivers scrutinize message-relevant content in relation to other information concerning the object or issue addressed. Here receivers carefully ascertain or evaluate the validity of the position advocated in a message. In persuasion of this type, recipients' comprehension and careful cognitive examination may mediate the message's influence.

Heuristic processing, in contrast, occurs when receivers attend only to a subset of available information, exert limited cognitive effort, and employ relatively simple decision rules called *schemata* or *cognitive heuristics* most probably learned from experiences and observations in life. They use such heuristics in this mode to judge the validity of messages and arrive at attitude judgments. Chaiken offers three sets of heuristic cues that lead receivers

to utilize certain heuristics. These are communicator cues, context cues, and message cues.

With regard to *communicator cues*, persons may consider statements by experts as more veracious than statements by nonexperts, leading to the use of the expert heuristic, “statements by experts can be trusted.” Similarly, people may retrieve and employ a liking-agreement heuristic such as “people agree with people they like” or “people I like usually have correct opinions on issues.”

Contextual cues in the message or situation may also affect attitude change. For example, overhearing an audience member’s approval of a message may prompt receivers to utilize the consensus heuristic of, “if other people think the message is correct, then it is probably valid.” *Message cues* also have their heuristic processing implications. According to Chaiken and associates, people may have experienced situations in which strong, convincing messages characteristically contain extra arguments, longer and more comprehensive arguments, statistically grounded arguments, or arguments from highly credible sources. In this case, “length implies strength,” “more arguments are better arguments,” and “arguments based on expert opinions are valid” may be the derived rules employed in the presence of such message cues. The HSM suggests that message receivers may use such premises to ascertain the veridicality, or truth, of a persuasive message rather than carefully examining the quality of the arguments. In such cases, people agree more with messages containing numerous (vs. few) arguments, with messages that are of considerable length (vs. shorter), or with statistically laden messages or messages attributed to expert sources.

The use of systematic or heuristic modes will have implications for the persuasion that occurs. Attitudes formed or changed solely on heuristic processing will likely be less stable, less resistant to messages of a counterattitudinal nature, and less predicative of subsequent behavior than attitudes fashioned via systematic processing.

Determinants of Message Processing Mode

The heuristic-systematic model identifies the factors that must be present for either processing mode to operate. For instance, systematic processing requires

motivation (e.g., issue involvement or response involvement) and the ability of the receiver to engage in effortful cognitive processing. When processing systematically, an individual must have knowledge of the topic and be free from the constraints of time. Thus, comprehensive processing of a message, requiring attention to message and topic details, is likely to affect the nature of persuasion that occurs.

Heuristic processing depends on the existence of heuristic cues in the persuasive environment. Humans are assumed to be “economy-minded souls” who seek to accomplish the tasks and goals in the most efficient means available. HSM’s *least effort* principle states that people in general prefer the heuristic mode, involving considerably less effort, to the more effortful systematic processing.

People will follow the *sufficiency* principle, or the idea that resourceful information processors must find the balance between satisfying their motivational concerns and reducing the effort they must put forth. That is, people will put forth the level of effort that meets a “sufficient” degree of assurance that they have satisfactorily attained their message processing goals.

Systematic and heuristic processing are considered parallel modes of information processing. For this reason, both modes can operate simultaneously when the persuasive context is favorable. When operating both modes simultaneously, message receivers are engaging in what HSM considers *concurrent processing*. Here, each form contributes statistically as both independent (i.e., additive) and interdependent (i.e., interactive) variables related to message and attitude judgment. A receiver might evaluate a message containing several strong arguments attributed to a credible source by using both forms of processing. For example, if motivated and able, the receiver might use systematic processing to evaluate the strong arguments and, independently, use heuristic processing to judge the source of these arguments. Or a receiver might use both processing modes interdependently, if the credibility of the message source affected the perceptions of argument quality.

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See also Attitude Theory; Cognitive Theories; Elaboration Likelihood Theory; Inoculation Theory; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories

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HIERARCHY OF EFFECTS MODELS

See Advertising Theories

HINDU COMMUNICATION THEORY

Hindu communication theory, or the account of the methods and purposes involved in the use of language, concerns a diverse grouping of religious/philosophical traditions on the Indian subcontinent. In some cases, sources in the Hindu tradition explicitly theorized about communication (such as Bharata on *rasa* theory and Bhartrhari on speech). In most cases, however, accounts of language and its use were bound up with other concerns. This entry will largely concentrate on the implicit theory of communication in Hindu tradition. The purposes/ends and methods/means of communication will be examined.

Hindu tradition begins with an important group of texts called the *Vedas*. The earliest of these texts dates from around 2000 BCE. The *Vedas* were learned and transmitted among priestly castes (classes) by the oral means of chanting. These texts are classified as *śruti*, a term that literally means “perceived through hearing.” There are no known actual authors of these texts; instead, they are likely a collection of verses inspired by tribal experience and are remembered as useful as parts of vedic rituals. Whereas the *Vedas* tend to focus on

ritual means of edifying the gods and in gaining worldly goals, another group of texts began to become prominent between 1000 BCE and 400 BCE—the *Upaniśads*. These texts contain the core of what would become modern Hinduism—the commitment to reality being undivided at its most basic level and to a general renunciation of worldly goods. After the time of the Buddha (circa 563–483 BCE), a prominent critic of vedic concerns, what could be identified as modern Hinduism began to develop the upaniśadic themes in a variety of ways. These include the six orthodox schools (*darśana*) of Indian philosophy that flourished in India after the time of the Buddha.

One significant aspect of Hinduism presupposed by most schools of Hindu thought is the idea of liberation (*mokśa*). This end is important to communication, as the way that a person understands language (such as *śruti* or philosophical texts) will impact that person’s chances for liberation. From what is a person to become free? In most schools of Hindu thought, the sources of suffering are the cycles of change evident in this world. Often the problem relates to how one orients to desire and its changing objects and to the “self” that supposedly gains from attaining the objects of one’s desires (success, goods, etc.). Thus, Hindu traditions tend to emphasize the desirability of relieving the burden of harmful orientations to the world; indeed, this liberation is often talked about as becoming enlightened about the true nature of one’s self and the world. Instead of the normal everyday notion of self (the empirical body one appears to have), the *Upaniśads* argue that a person’s true self (*Atman*) is really the Self of all beings and objects (*Brahman*). One’s self is the Self of all things, undivided and nonindividuated.

Hindu views of communication have an interesting relationship to this underlying *monism* (the view that reality is without divisions or parts). On one hand, language is extolled as a way to achieve such knowledge. Instead of merely transmitting knowledge, the Hindu tradition tends to see the hearing and understanding of language as a realization of some state of affairs. Thus, if one has an enlightened teacher (*guru*), one can attain the state of liberation by attending to that teacher’s utterances and commands. In such accounts as that offered by the *rasa* theory, attending to poetic or dramatic uses of language can instill certain moods

of renunciation or detachment (i.e., that of realizing that one's empirical, divided self is not really "who" one is). In this view, then, language holds the power to remove ignorance and illusion about the world. On the other hand, Hindu communication theory seems pessimistic about the ability of language to "grasp" ultimate reality (Brahman), since that reality is undivided and utterly whole. Language excels at categorizing and dividing, whereas reality is the undivided substratum to all change and division we appear to witness in life.

These two themes can be unified in another concern of Hinduism—the activity of the receiver in interpreting language. Some language use can encourage enlightened states of mind, whereas others can lead one to focus more on the empirical self and on the objects of one's desires. The purpose of good communication, on the Hindu account, would be to maximize enlightening uses of language that help free individuals from the illusion that individuation (the separation of different selves) is real. Instead, by focusing on how words are understood, speakers can use language in a way that has a better chance of enlightening listeners. This seems to be the point of Bhartrhari's 6th- or 7th-century analysis of spoken language in his book, *Vakyaṭpadiya*, as well as the assumed purpose behind Śankara's analysis of vedic scripture in his *Advaita Vedānta* school of philosophy, which most likely appeared in the 8th century.

The methods or means of using language to enlighten are often different from those employed in Western traditions. Dialogue between a teacher and a student is often used, as well as the method of composing aphoristic *sūtras* (literally, thread). In the latter method, short and memorable phrases are used to continue a tradition of scholarship and learning. After the *sūtras* are composed, subsequent teachers write commentaries elucidating the meaning of these cryptic and ambiguous phrases, and these commentaries are then transmitted to and analyzed by students. A respect for the power of language and the extralinguistic nature of enlightenment is evidenced by this practice—words and commentary are used to get at knowledge beyond any mere set of words.

Another common communicative means employed in Hindu tradition is narrative. Narratives used range from short examples (such as the common example of mistaking a rope for a snake) to

complex stories with plot and characters (such as the *Bhagavad Gita*). Such a method is useful as it can combine various values and propositions in an attempt to get a reader or hearer to move beyond assumed illusions into a more enlightened state.

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See also Asian Communication Theory; Indian *Rasa* Theory

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HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE

The humanistic perspective, often called the *third force* in psychology because it was developed after behaviorism and psychoanalysis, took form in the middle of the 20th century and expanded greatly in the 1970s and 1980s. This perspective arose in reaction to the deterministic and pessimistic view espoused by both behaviorism and psychoanalysis. According to the humanistic perspective, to understand a person's motives and behaviors, you must view the person as a whole, and you must focus on the subjective experience of the individual. The focus must be on the individual, and it is

assumed that a person's behavior is connected to his or her inner feelings and self-image. Humanistic psychology rejects behaviorism and psychoanalysis because they are too deterministic and too often see unconscious, instinctive forces as determining human thought and behavior. The humanistic approach was a radical change in then current psychological thought because, unlike behaviorism and psychoanalysis, one of the assumptions behind the humanistic approach is that human beings have free will and personal agency. The humanistic perspective sees behavior as not determined by the subconscious mind.

Humanistic psychology approaches the study of human behavior from a more phenomenological approach than either behaviorism or psychoanalysis. There are five main ideas that are often used to summarize the humanistic perspective. First, human beings cannot be reduced to components. Second, human beings must be understood in a uniquely human context. Third, human consciousness includes self-awareness and a concept of oneself in the context of other people. Fourth, human beings have and make personal choices. And fifth, human beings are intentional beings who seek meaning and value in their lives.

Assumptions Behind Humanistic Psychology

Beyond humans' having free will and personal agency, there are many other assumptions behind the humanistic approach absent from behaviorism and psychoanalysis. Humanism sees people as having an innate drive to achieve their maximum potential. In other words, people are basically good, and humans continuously strive to make themselves and the world a better place. The humanistic approach emphasizes the worth of the individual and the centrality of human values. Personal growth and fulfillment are the basic human motives. We strive to make our lives better, and this is the guiding force behind our behavior. This is inherent in being a human being.

Another assumption of the humanistic perspective involves the locus of study when examining the individual. The humanistic psychologists argued that objective reality is less important than a person's subjective perception and subjective understanding of the world. Each individual is unique, and what matters is each person's subjective view

and not objective reality. Reality is defined by the individual's perspective.

Studying Human Behavior

Because the humanistic perspective focuses on the subjective experience of the individual, studying communication or psychology from the humanistic perspective requires the study of the individual case rather than the average performance of a group. Typically, then, qualitative research is employed when studying behavior from the humanistic perspective. It is important for the humanist to study at the individual level, so techniques such as diary accounts, open-ended questionnaires, and unstructured interviews are often used to gather data and find out, in depth, how people think and feel. Another major difference between the humanist perspective and behaviorism and psychoanalysis is the use of animals as study subjects. Humanists who work in psychology would never study animals in an attempt to determine the causes of human behavior because humans are conscious beings capable of thought, reason, and language. Therefore, research on animals is of little value because it can tell you little about human thoughts and motivation.

Major Researchers

Perhaps the most well-known researcher to use the humanistic approach is Abraham Maslow. Maslow felt that individuals have certain needs that must be met in a specific, hierarchical fashion. These are (in order from lowest to highest) basic needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, achievement needs, and ultimately *self-actualization*. All lower needs must be satisfied before a person can fulfill a higher need. For example, all basic needs must be satisfied before safety needs or achievement needs can be satisfied. People move from the lowest level of needs up to the highest as they go through life and gain wisdom and knowledge about how to handle different situations. That humans are motivated by unsatisfied needs is what guides human behavior. Because each individual's motivations are different, the individual must be the unit of analysis, and the results cannot be generalized to others or to a larger population.

Carl Rogers was another researcher who came from the humanistic perspective. He believed that

all people have the tendency toward growth and a strong need to maintain and enhance life. Existence itself, according to Rogers, has the main goal of satisfying these needs. Becoming self-actualized is the primary goal of human existence and guides much of our behavior. According to Rogers, we all have a real self (how we see our characteristics, traits, and abilities) and an ideal self (perceptions of what we would like to be). The ideal self comes from the influences we have had in our lives, including our friends and parents. It is the ideal self which we strive to become, which would lead to self-actualization. On the way to becoming self-actualized, Rogers claims, we engage in a process called *organismic value processing*. Experiences we perceive as enhancing our lives are valued as good and therefore sought after. Experiences perceived as not enhancing are seen as bad and are avoided. Rogers saw the self-actualized person as open to experiencing his or her feelings and not threatened by those feelings, regardless of what they are. Rogers considered a self-actualized person “fully functioning.”

Rogers felt the main determinant of whether we become self-actualized is our childhood experiences. These experiences guide the development of our ideal self. He felt that it is crucial for children to receive positive reinforcement and affection and approval from the important people in their lives. This was particularly important from their parents. He thought that it is important for us to receive unconditional positive regard and acceptance with no strings attached. However, he noted, acceptance often does come with strings attached. Children are told that to be loved and to receive approval, they must be quiet and well behaved and meet other socially constructed ideas of “the good child.” These things are incorporated as conditions of worth. If the conditions are few and reasonable, then the child will be fine. But if the conditions of worth are severely limiting, self-actualization will be severely impeded.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Many of the strengths and weaknesses of the humanistic perspective are inherently linked. One strength of the humanistic perspective is its focus on phenomenology and the whole person rather than on the unconscious mind and observable

behavior. Both behaviorism and psychoanalysis see the unconscious mind as controlling thoughts and behaviors. The humanistic perspective sees humans as having free will and as in control of their own lives. However, some theorists feel this is an ethnocentric point of view and that while it might be a reality for middle-class Westerners, it is not necessarily true for less-developed parts of the world. Additionally, some feel that the disregard of the humanistic perspective for the unconscious mind is a weakness.

Another advantage of the humanistic perspective comes from the way that it is studied: through qualitative data analysis. While this allows the researcher or clinician to thoroughly understand the subject being studied, it makes it difficult to generalize to others or to larger populations. Additionally, it is more time-consuming and difficult to interpret than quantitative data analysis.

One weakness of the humanistic perspective is that some of its concepts are difficult to measure. For example, how would one measure self-actualization? The theory itself does not lend itself to empirical verification because many of the tenets of the theory are vague and untestable. For example, Maslow described self-actualized people as open, spontaneous, loving, and self-accepting. Some argue that these are value judgments and do not constitute a scientific definition. Additionally, the humanistic perspective assumes that we are all capable of achieving self-actualization. This may not be true as differences in intelligence, education, and personality may be mitigating circumstances. Additionally, critics often argue that the humanistic view of personality paints too “rosy” a picture. It fails to recognize the human capacity for evil and that, for some, doing good for humankind is not a motivating behavior. The humanistic perspective ignores the more negative aspects of human nature.

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See also Agency; Epistemology; Interpretive Theory; Ontology; Rogerian Dialogue Theory

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HUMOROUS COMMUNICATION THEORY

Humor is fundamentally a communicative activity. Humor is an intended or unintended message that is considered funny or evokes laughter. As a result, humor is a communicative process that is subject to the interpretation of the receiver. Shakespeare noted in act 5, scene 2, of *Love's Labour's Lost* that “a jest's prosperity lies in the ear of him that hears it, never in the tongue of him that makes it.” Put another way, a comedian knows a joke works if the audience laughs. Even though humor is recognized as a communicative process, there is not a communication-based theory of humor that can fully explain what humor is (or is not) or encapsulate the diverse role humor has within our social lives. Humor, like power, love, and communication itself, is far too ubiquitous and meaningful in our lives to fit neatly into one theory or framework. To add complexity to an already complex subject, one also has to consider the *duality* of humor—that when humor is assumed to have one function or meaning, it always simultaneously supports (on some level) the opposite. This duality is also termed the *paradox of humor* or *double*

edge of humor. In other words, humor is a juxtaposition of layers of meaning; this is what gives humor its edge, what makes something funny. Because of the complexity and significance of humor, there is a vast body of literature that examines humor from a philosophical, psychological, sociological, and communicative perspective that can be used to reveal both why we use humor and the role that humor has within social interactions and organizations.

Why We Use and Laugh at Humor

There are three broad and competing theories of why we use humor: to express *superiority*, to *relieve tension*, and to make sense of *incongruity*. Though each of these conceptions does not provide a universal understanding of humor, taken together they can form a scheme to help us fully appreciate the complexity of our motivations for using humor. From a communication perspective, scholars should also consider not just the motivations of the humorist but why the audience corroborates a symbol or message as humorous with its laughter.

The origins of the *superiority theory of humor* trace back to Aristotle, but in recent literature the theory is usually attributed to the writings of Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes believed that all human action arises out of the desire for self-preservation. The passion of laughter is then the expression of sudden glory that humor brings as another is ridiculed. Superiority humor is usually associated with laughing at others' perceived inadequacies, in effect making a caricature of the target that centers on a scorned quality. Kenneth Burke's *burlesque frame* describes how humor exaggerates the absurdity and neglects the humanity of a situation. For example, Sen. John Kerry never recovered from his caricature as a flip flopper in the 2004 U.S. presidential election campaign.

Superiority can be ugly and can reflect the brutish side of the joke teller and the corresponding coarse qualities of the laughing audience. For this reason a joke that *ridicules* requires strong *audience analysis* and can be used effectively to reinforce *social bonds*. If ridicule is used unsuccessfully, the opposite is true. Consider if a person of perceived privilege (or hierarchical authority) makes fun of a person or group with less

perceived power: He or she runs the risk of being interpreted not as a humorist but as a bully. Don Imus's racist caricature of the Rutgers women's basketball team in 2007 is an example. Curiously, humor as *self-derision* can be considered superiority at its base. When a joke teller is laughed at, it demonstrates the duality of humor. The humorist is also recognized for his or her honesty and self-confidence.

The *relief theory of humor* explains how a joke or laughter can be used to reduce tension or stress. Herbert Spencer, the father of social Darwinism, is credited with providing the first reference to relief humor when he suggested that laughter was a result of the physical energy that is built up to deal with disagreeable feelings. Spencer's work has had considerable influence on the conception of humor as a relief of tension, but the primary text of relief theory used in modern analysis is Freud's *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. According to Freud, relief humor has two properties. First, it has a healing quality, allowing built-up tension and energy to be released. Second, humor is an act of *disguised aggression* and *sanctioned resistance*. This second property of Freud's relief theory will be examined further below because of its influence on humor research within organizations. A scholar who has had very little influence on humor theory and research outside of rhetorical studies of communication is Burke, who wrote about the *comic frame*. Burke's lack of influence in this area is both unfortunate and ironic because he argues that the comic frame provides relief from human folly and tragedy. This humorous framing of misfortune is necessary for humans to respond to life in a moral way and work toward a peaceful coexistence.

The *incongruity theory of humor* argues that something can be found to be funny if it is irrational, paradoxical, illogical, incoherent, fallacious, and/or inappropriate. Henri Bergson and later Mary Douglas saw humor as a result of juxtaposing two unlike things. Laughter comes from the recognition that something is inconsistent with the expected rational nature of the perceived environment. Jokes, as a rhetorical form, capitalize on the incongruous nature of humor because their very structure is designed to build cognitive tension (a horse walks into a bar) and then smack you with a

punch line that relieves this tension in an unexpected way (barman says "why the long face?"). The conception of humor as incongruity does not exclude the superiority or relief motivations of humor but suggests that humor is based on intellectual activity rather than a drive to feel superior or to relieve tensions. This cognitively based activity is successful when it elicits laughter, which is a physical response. A good laugh is actually a loss of bodily control. It is this paradox of mind and body that attracted philosophers to take humor quite seriously.

Incongruity as humor is found not only in violation of the expected, but also in the realization that what is taken as normal, appropriate, logical, and rational in the everyday can be revealed to be absurd. For example, consider the popular show *Seinfeld*, which often based its humor in questioning the presumed rationale behind everyday social activities such as standing in line. Incongruity humor defamiliarizes the familiar, therefore presenting an opportunity for change by revealing that what is expected is not necessary. Using humor in this way also provides comic relief that soothes tensions that if left free may push individuals to actually challenge the status quo.

Humor Within Social Interactions and Organizations

Humor serves a large variety of functions in social interactions. Beyond simply entertaining and demonstrating a sense of humor, 21 additional and separate interpersonal functions of humor are derived from literature in a meta-analysis by Elizabeth Graham, Michael Papa, and Gordon Brooks. These functions of humor can be categorized by the motivational basis behind the three humor theories: *superiority humor* (to transmit verbally aggressive messages, demean others, control others, defend the ego against possible attack, put others in place), *relief humor* (to disarm potentially aggressive others, decrease aggression, minimize anxiety, disclose difficult information, allow others to cope with difficult situations), and *incongruity humor* (to allow insight into another's state of mind, adjust to a new role, ease tensions around new information and situations, express feelings, avoid revealing information). To document and expand on many of these asserted functions of humor, there

is a growing body of work that first came out of the Victoria University of Wellington Language in the Workplace project. These researchers analyzed spontaneous conversations of friendship and workplace groups that have been recorded over long periods. This research, discussed by Holmes and Marra, reveals the multifunctional role of humor in social interactions, as well as the differences and similarities in the use of humor by men and women, management and subordinates, and people of different ethnic origins.

Organizational scholars have long recognized humor as an essential and pervasive part of workplace culture and practices. The goal of organizational studies, especially recent studies from a communication perspective, is less focused on revealing the motivations for humor's use and more concerned with the role everyday humor has within the dynamic process of organizing. As a result, organizational researchers have examined humor's role as the basis for *workgroup cohesiveness*, *identification*, and *sensemaking* and its impact on *managerial control* and *organizational effectiveness*.

Laughing at work implies both a shared meaning and a shared bond between members as they negotiate their roles within the organization. It is widely contended that many of the workplace jokes either take the form of inside jokes or take on specialized meaning for those who tell jokes and laugh at the humor. Everyday humor at work therefore (re)produces the specialized language, stock knowledge, sensemaking processes, and shared experiences that form the basis for inclusion or bonding within a group while simultaneously keeping the outsider at a distance. The inclusion and exclusion role of humor at work engenders *in-group cohesion* and *out-group conflict*. The tighter the in-group cohesion, especially within the context of work that is demanding and/or demeaning, the more prominent role humor has in retaining and selecting self-affirmed meanings and constructing identity.

Humor is never power neutral, and exploring humor's role within the dynamics of organizational power is a pervasive and well-documented area of research in organizational studies. Humor's role in negotiating power at work can be grouped into four categories: humor as managerial control, humor as social control, humor as sanctioned resistance, and humor as subversive resistance.

The first category, humor as *managerial control*, is seen when a person with hierarchical status uses humor to gain compliance without emphasis on the power differentials. Humor can be used as a rhetorical strategy to mask the sting of authority, also called "doing power politely" in humor research. This use of polite humor (or disguised authority) by managers is a cornerstone of a broader emphasis on functional humor research: how humor as a discursive strategy ensures organizational effectiveness and successful business culture. Humor, beyond providing entertainment at work, is said to increase workplace collegiality, organizational identification, worker compliance, group problem solving, and the acceptance of change.

The second category, humor as *social control*, argues that humor is the basis of in-group cohesion within a work culture. Humor as social control is also recognized as a powerful means by which members enforce conformity in the workplace. *Barbed humor*, *jocular abuse*, *shaming*, and/or *teasing* are all forms of humor that is directed at someone. Teasing humor is often used in workgroups between peers to socialize new members because it encourages the target to play along or accept the "joke." Teasing is an ambiguous form of *social control* and a significant element of *peer management* (or *concertive control*) as subordinates use humor to discipline each other and enforce social norms.

The third category, *humor as sanctioned resistance*, emphasizes how subordinates and group members can also use humor to criticize or ridicule a higher member or an organizational rule or norm without causing change. *Humor as sanctioned resistance* is a well-established and still vibrant area of study. However, these organizational case studies have traditionally supported the relief theory frame that states that the organizational impact of resistance humor is only temporary. Resistance humor is allowed/tolerated in organizations as *sanctioned disrespect* that reduces the physical and psychological stress of the workers without significantly challenging the basis of power and authority itself. Resistance humor is generally viewed as a *safety valve*, a means of blowing off steam, to deal with incongruity or the stress of organizational life.

The last category, *subversive resistance humor*, or humor that functions as actual

resistance—challenging authority and creating change—is an emerging yet still undeveloped area of research, due possibly to the overemphasis (or reality) of humor as temporary relief, not as a transformative force. David Collinson, in *Managing Humor*, and other researchers have begun to warn against the growing trend of management's attempts to use humor to make the workplace fun and productive. These researchers argue humor is not a thing that can be turned on and off, that formalizing humor actually suppresses it, and that incorporating humor as a basis for organizational control is unethical. They also remind management, and the functional scholars of humor, of the duality and unpredictable nature of humor. Managers who attempt to use humor strategically are at best unlikely to succeed and risk backlash. Humor can be a subversive act, but the grounds for recognizing humor as a critical practice in organizations have not been fully developed.

Owen Hanley Lynch

See also Group Communication Theories; Identification; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Organizational Communication Theories; Organizational Control Theory

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HYBRIDITY

Hybridity has become a favorite buzzword in academic circles and in popular reflections on processes of globalization—typically presented in the American media as emanating from the United States—on various parts of the world. Celebratory accounts of transcultural fusion as U.S. businesses spread their fares around the globe have come to dominate this popular discourse. While the term's definition has remained vexingly vague and its meaning varies greatly depending on the context of its use, as generally conceptualized by communication scholars, *hybridity* relates to processes of racial, linguistic, or cultural mixing that are understood to result in something different from the sum of their discrete parts.

From a historical perspective, the modern notion of hybridity started to take shape in the 18th century, as European imperialist nations had to come to terms with the possible consequences of racial mixing with members of colonized nations. The deep racist anxieties of European colonial powers were manifest in the perception of hybridization as a dangerous process resulting in the contamination of superior (White) races. In this context, racial mixing and its resulting hybridity were to be avoided in order to protect not only the racial purity of colonial powers but also their cultural identity as imperialist aggression spread their influence beyond national borders.

The meaning of hybridity further evolved, however, in the aftermath of postimperialist liberation movements. Reclaimed by newly independent nations needing to come to terms with the racial and cultural legacies of their colonial past, hybridity—and its more culturally specific manifestations in the concepts of *mestizaje* or *creolization*, which developed to incorporate the heterogeneous elements of various Latin American cultures into new national identities—took on more positive connotations. Used as a tool for nation building and cultural-identity formation in an effort to revalorize and ultimately embrace the complex consequences of historically imposed transcultural and racial mixing, hybridity was conceptualized as a set of unique and generally positive cultural processes.

More recently, postcolonial scholars have similarly celebrated hybridity as a source of cultural

renewal and resistance against imperialist forces and cultural domination. Focusing on the demographic and ideological movements between Europe, Africa, and the Americas in his book *The Black Atlantic*, British sociologist Paul Gilroy challenges conceptualizations of transcultural exchange that are based on dichotomized perceptions of race and culture that falsely reduce these to some kind of “essence”; he argues for a more complex understanding of intercultural exchange, paying closer attention to the dynamic nature of processes of hybridization. Exploring hybridity in the context of the postcolonial novel, postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha emphasizes its potential as a subversive practice used to challenge and reappropriate dominant colonial discourse and create new forms of subaltern agency. Argentinean-Mexican scholar Néstor García-Canclini focuses on border towns between Mexico and the United States to explore hybrid cultural forms such as graffiti and comics as examples of cultural resistance to dominant interpretations of modernity. He sees the notion of hybridity as a useful analytical tool for the investigation of the complex tension between externally imposed definitions of modernity and local traditions in places where the former have rarely replaced the latter in a straightforward manner.

This approach has helped complicate communication scholars’ understanding of mediated transnational exchange by challenging interpretations of transnational cultural flows as one-way processes of homogenizing “cultural imperialism” imposed by powerful Western nations on the rest of the world. It has also encouraged communication scholars to pay attention to the reception and interpretation of “foreign” media in various local environments, as well as their global production and distribution.

As a theoretical concept, hybridity has also proven useful to feminist scholars intent on deconstructing the essentializing categories of gender, race, class, culture, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, which they see as problematically naturalized in (White/male/middle-class/Western/heterosexual) dominant media discourse. By treating the clearly dichotomized character of these categories as a problem, hybridity brings to light their socioculturally constructed nature and consequently challenges the patriarchal naturalization of difference into subordination. Hybridity also provides a

useful theoretical space through which to explore the interlocking nature of various sets of oppression and the complexity of identity formation and representation. Feminist scholars recognize this effort as a crucial step toward developing a useful understanding of gender dynamics and power relationships in an increasingly global environment.

The concept of hybridity is not, however, without critiques or dangers. The vagueness of its definition, its polysemic (having multiple meanings) nature, and its early origins in colonial discourse have led some scholars to question whether the term should even be employed. Others argue that the concept is not particularly useful since cultural exchange has been going on for centuries, and all cultures are thus necessarily hybrid. Still others are concerned that hybridity may be used to gloss over remaining power relations among different actors on the global geopolitical scene by constructing a version of transnational influence based on a cheery pluralism that ultimately celebrates American-style capitalism and excuses its abuses. Much of the popular discourse on globalization in the U.S. media illustrates this tendency. By pointing out the increasingly hybrid nature of a global capitalist culture fueled by other nations’ desire for American-style products with a local twist—green-tea frappuccinos come to mind—this scenario of hybridity suggests that processes of globalization are not only necessary but fair and justified since, after all, we all are influencing each other. Communication scholar Marwan Kraidy calls this strategic rhetoric “corporate transculturalism” and warns against its excesses.

In response, communication scholars have advocated a more critical approach to hybridity that considers how global influences are locally constituted and negotiated in relationships of unequal power—what García-Canclini calls “oblique powers”—in culturally, socially, and historically specific contexts. While sharing the broad concerns of theories of cultural imperialism about power and cultural influence, this approach proposes to explore transcultural exchange empirically in order to tease out the multiple ways in which global power and local resistance may be mutually constitutive. By recognizing the power of globally produced and distributed commodified cultural forms while remaining sensitive to local agency, this critical form of hybridity offers the potential to bridge the gap between pessimistic

analyses of global economy and celebratory accounts of local resistance.

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See also Culture and Communication; Feminist Communication Theories; Postcolonial Feminism; Postcolonial Theory; Transculturation

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I

I AND THOU

I and Thou is the most durable and important conceptual contribution of the 20th-century philosopher of dialogue, Martin Buber, and the title of his most famous book. As often happens with such terms, it became so well known and seemingly accessible that it developed its own reputation as a pop-culture slogan. Self-help gurus and critics alike have used it in ways that surely would have surprised Buber and other Continental philosophers, such as Gabriel Marcel and Hans-Georg Gadamer, who developed similar concepts and applied them in sophisticated ways.

Although it can be mischaracterized and even parodied, *I and Thou* is not a simplistic exhortation to love your neighbor, to avoid confrontation or conflict, or to be your most honest and genuine self. It is neither an uncritical celebration of subjectivity nor an attack on rationality. Buber was not advocating mystical experience or a near-religious obligation to sustain intimate relationships with people who should be treated as solemn “Thous.” He was creating nothing less than an ontology of, or way of characterizing, communication that could ground the human sciences: “All real living is meeting,” he wrote in *I and Thou*, in a line that captures its theme. At the center of this ontology was neither the individual self, as *I*, nor others with whom the individual interacts. Buber focused instead on relationships and relational attitudes—the often forgotten realm of the “between.” This entry briefly discusses Buber’s biography, describes

the basic I-Thou concept, and explores several relevant implications for communication theory.

Biography and Background

Martin Buber was influential on the world’s intellectual stage for more than 6 decades and participated in many of the 20th century’s major philosophical, theological, literary, and political controversies. Fluent in nine languages, he had a multifaceted career that involved many roles, including journalist, editor, sociologist, theologian, novelist, translator, political activist, educator, and, although he was at times reluctant to embrace the term, philosopher. He knew and corresponded with many of the century’s celebrated intellectuals and was himself intellectually versatile enough to be nominated for Nobel Prizes in both literature and peace.

First published in German in 1923, *I and Thou* has been widely translated internationally, but two important English translations exist in an uneasy relationship to each other. The first, by Ronald Gregor Smith, appeared in English in 1937 and has been available in a second revised edition (with a new postscript by Buber) since 1958. The more recent is Walter Kaufmann’s 1970 translation, which he claimed made the book clearer and corrected conceptual errors from the previous version. Some scholars prefer Kaufmann’s work, which kept the earlier title but in the text revised its central concept to the more familiar, if prosaic, *I-You*. Others, including Maurice Friedman, Buber’s most famous biographer and scholarly commentator,

believe Smith's version to be more accurate and to have more engagingly captured the poetic meaning Buber had in mind. Kenneth Paul Kramer quotes from both translations side by side in his readable explication of *I and Thou*.

I-Thou and I-It

Buber's *I-Thou* and *I-It* are what he called "primary words" for understanding human relationships. *I-Thou* refers to the relational attitude or orientation of regarding the other in his or her concrete uniqueness, as someone capable of full responsiveness to one's own speech. An *I-It* attitude, on the other hand, primarily regards the other as an object to be dealt with, affected, changed, measured, endured, or understood in role. The hyphenated paired words are "primary" for Buber because the *I* moves into different forms of being as a result of its relation with elements outside itself. It is impossible, thus, to understand the *I* apart from its relations, or from the manner in which it is expressed. Although the *I-It* can be spoken—enacted—with less than one's full presence or being because it refers to the world of things, the *I-Thou* involves the person's whole being in its address to a mutualized, and mutualizing, person. Buber believed the potential of a dialogic *I-Thou* attitude distinguished the action of *persons* from mere *individuals* whose inclination is persistently toward the world of *It*—the conceptualization, manipulation, and accumulation of things. There is nothing necessarily wrong or deficient about the *It* or the *I-It* attitude. Both the *I-Thou* and *I-It* are essential to what Buber called the *twofold I* and to human life. In fact, Buber indicated realistically that each *I-Thou* relation, because it so thoroughly involves "whole being" dialogic speech, is by nature transitory and must return to the world of *I-It*. Treating reality in objectifying ways is not immoral or unethical but normal, natural, and even necessary; defining reality as if it is essentially objectification (measurement, strategy, disseminating facts and opinions to passive audiences) misses the interhuman potential of our existence. Buber was not worried about the existence of the world of *I-It*; he was worried about the tendency of his era (as surely he would have been of ours) to elevate the *It* to supreme status.

Buber for Communication Theorists

In the 4 decades following the publication of *I and Thou*, Buber extended his ideas about dialogue expressed there. Six implications for communication theorists of *I and Thou* and Buber's subsequent writing on dialogue are discussed below.

Listening and Turning

Speech and the between are intricately woven in how humans co-construct a meaningful world. The element of spokenness, or enactment through communication, in fact, was Buber's entrée to understanding what makes us human, and it is in the occasions of speaking that readers most clearly glimpse his concerns. His analogy of embodiment, *turning*, set the stage for his distinction between monologic performance—to which creative response is neither expected nor required—and dialogic "genuine spokenness," which demands a responsive listening presence. Listening is a relational, not a psychological, phenomenon. We turn toward others when we expect meaningfulness. If we are interested merely in hearing or accumulating messages, any posture will do; monologue is fine. The problem of monologue is not that someone fails to hear a message but that he or she does not listen as a potential interlocutor. The difference, Buber thought, has enormous implications for what it means to be a person, and a person in relation to others, which he called "philosophical anthropology." Monologue works well for some purposes, such as announcing cast changes before a theater production, but is ill-suited for deliberative bodies, citizen mobilization, or family problem solving. Thus, the baseline implication of Buber's thought for communication studies is how it recommends a philosophy of *turning toward and listening* as a guiding center for personal discipline. As communication researchers study voice and persons' availability for relational difference and surprise in personal, organizational, cultural, or political relationships, they discover a focus for their theoretical concerns.

Mutual Definition and Polar Reality

For Buber, causality, traditionally defined, is an outgrowth of the world of *It*. In the "world of relation," *I* and *Thou* freely confront one another with

plural, mutual, and interdependent consequences that cannot be traced to one-way causes. Each side in effect helps to define the other(s)—an interdefinition—that brings things into existence without causing. Thus, human categories are not static, dualistic, or mutually exclusive, despite Buber's tendency to describe polar opposites in dialectical or transactional terms. Although skeptical readers have suggested that he encouraged exclusivist either-or dichotomies ("you're either dialogic or you're not"; "I-Thou' communication must replace the 'I-It'"), he forcefully denied this interpretation. Instead, he described an approach in which two contrary principles could be held simultaneously, in tension with each other, each influencing the other while being influenced by it.

For example, when Buber wrote about dialogue and monologue, he was not describing a relation of one *versus* the other, as if one is always right and the other wrong; he saw them as polar possibilities, each influencing the other, both as constant choices in human existence and both valuable, although in different ways, to human beings. They exist in tension with, not separation from, each other. Buber saw no inconsistency between standing one's ground in an argument and being radically available for, even vulnerable to, another person's assertions. Each defined the other. Being persuaded means little if your position was not strongly held in the first place. Another example of this necessary tension of polarities can be seen in Buber's treatment of the relationship between *distance* and *relation*. Although it would be easy to think he would favor relation over distance (the too-easy assumption that communication, a "good thing," bridges distance, a "bad thing"), Buber showed how genuine communication relies as much on difference and gaps between persons as on the friendly sounding goal of interpersonal closeness or bonding.

Narrow Ridge

Buber was suspicious of what he called the *psychologizing* of human experience—the tendency, even among scholars, to believe that genuine reality is based on inner phenomena such as the "self," which govern perception, thought, and emotion. Yet Buber was equally suspicious of the collective social tendencies he saw around him, and how they impeded the uniqueness of individuals. How to

resolve the dilemma? Again: Keep the tension. Between these twin threats—immersion in the self or in the collective—dialogically conscious persons must walk as if on a narrow ridge, equally aware of the challenges on either side. In this engaging metaphor, humans need not reconcile oppositions into an artificial unity; rather, the human task is to seek contact with them both by walking the ridge between. Maurice Friedman considered this concept so important that he put it in the foreground with the title of his one-volume biography of Buber.

Concreteness and the Particular

I and Thou, or dialogic thinking, as Buber developed it, is a curious blend of the intensely particular and the poetically abstract. It is not systematic enough in elaborating intellectual principles to qualify as philosophy for some academic philosophers, but it offers a philosophical perspective with a particularly *applied* tone. Buber invited readers and listeners to use his examples to flesh out their own. This may explain the lasting appeal of *I and Thou*, despite its challenging syntax and sometimes obscure language: While it might appear to float above acts of everyday organizational and political life, it also enfolds such contexts, inviting readers' own recognition.

Buber's focus on difference and particularity suggests cultural implications as well. By insisting that real meeting is uniquely immediate, that persons must encounter the other with as few prior conceptions as possible, his nonprescriptive ethic of dialogue applies especially well to intercultural relations. Knowledge about others' situations and practices can help people respond to unfamiliar cultural encounters. But knowledge is not enough. The other is not simply a representative of a culture or group, and a preoccupation with knowledge about group characteristics can lead communicators to miss the uniqueness of the very person(s) before them. Similarly, too much conscious reliance on one's own cultural or group affiliations can mean the difference between being (and being perceived as) a genuine "person," on one hand, and a self-absorbed "individual," on the other. The former can speak and listen in the moment, while the latter becomes caught in the web of "my"—*my* characteristics, *my* race or ethnicity, *my* habits, *my* way of doing things.

Surprise

One of the traditional problems of conceptualizing communication often lurks just below the discursive surface of everyday life: What is communication for? Is it to be understood in terms of fidelity to intention? To express clearly what we already believe and feel? To persuade others of the validity and appropriateness of our beliefs? To hear what another is saying? Or, as Buber and other dialogue theorists would have it, is it also to generate creativity out of a conversational meeting with otherness and difference? In dialogue, in other words, surprise is a key criterion.

Communication scholars have often studied occasions of persuasion or influence, arising from speakers' entrenched positions, commitments, or certainties; they have been relatively less interested in exploring occasions of genuine surprise in which communicators find themselves taken to places and ideas they never expected they would go. Thus, the newfound interest in dialogue theories is encouraging. Ironically, perhaps, given that some have celebrated the Socratic method as a model for dialogue, Buber believed that it was not motivated by an appreciation of dialogical surprise; Socrates' questions were like "moves" in a game designed to reveal the deficiency of the learner's position. For Buber, the questioner's or teacher's more dialogic impulse would be to ask *real* questions—those that explore what is not already known. In Buber's philosophy of I and Thou, teachers can be changed by their students, just as students are changed by their teachers. Despite his admiration for Socrates the man, Buber considered his dialectical method, however skillful, as a monologic event of one participant, set in the participant's own beliefs, applying a technique to persuade another. The student was surprised, of course, but only by recognizing his own deficiency and the answers the teacher had already decided were necessary. Socrates, of course, seemed not to be surprised at all. Neither became a genuine Thou for the other.

Inclusion

Dialogic meetings are characterized in part by *inclusion*, the willingness of partners to attempt to imagine what others' reality might be, how the world looks and sounds "over there," without relinquishing one's own personal ground. At various

times in his career, Buber invoked similar concepts, such as *imagining the real* or *making present*, to indicate communicators' responsibilities to each other as well as to standing their own ground. Inclusion could be distinguished from *empathy*, he thought, because empathizing encouraged persons to forgo their own side in order to see the other. This distinction became an issue in the famous 1957 public dialogue between Buber and the American psychologist Carl Rogers.

Presence as Confirmation

Not surprisingly, Buber's *I and Thou* has become known in communication studies as an evocation of the power of dialogue. Yet, contrary to a popular misconception, Buber's dialogue is not an extended state of being to be desired; it appears to spark only in transitory moments of meeting. It is not a transcendence of everyday mundane reality but an immersion in its concrete detail. Dialogue is associated with an intense presence in the immediate situation that cannot be sustained for long. It is not the skill of knowing exactly what the other is thinking, or of predicting the future, but the willingness—even between opponents—to include the other in one's own experience, listening for responses. Buber asks whether communicators could persistently be open to such moments. This openness is what counts as confirmation. Through it, we become human.

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See also Dialogue Theories; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Ontology; Relational Communication Theory; Rogerian Dialogue Theory

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IDENTIFICATION

Identification is a key term in contemporary rhetorical theory that describes the fundamental process of using symbols to overcome inherent divisions among human beings. It is important in understanding the increasing complexity of the process of social influence as nonlinear, sometimes unintentional, and potentially nonverbal. This entry will examine the transition from the old rhetoric to the new rhetoric, the concepts of identification and consubstantiality, and the three strategies of identification.

The key term for traditional Western rhetorical theory or *old rhetoric* prior to the 20th century was *persuasion*, a concept that stressed the deliberate design of messages by rhetors as they attempted to convince audiences. Among the old rhetorics is Aristotle's definition of the available means of persuasion, as well as the medieval emphasis on the credibility of religious texts, the epistemology of the 18th century, and the *elocution movement* of the early 19th century. The common denominator

among the old rhetorics was the emphasis on deliberate design of influence.

Identification, according to Kenneth Burke, its primary contributor, is a term that is associated with contemporary rhetoric because it acknowledges the complexity of interactions that may not have a single, identifiable rhetor directing a message to a specific, known audience. For contemporary theorists, identification allows for unconscious or unplanned meaning to influence many people in multiple ways. Unlike traditional rhetoric, this removes the deliberative intention and planning from the equation. So, if the interests of A are joined to those of B, they have identified with each other even though A and B are not identical. To the extent that A and B identify with each other, they have become *consubstantial*. For Burke, consubstantiality is a way of acting together, of sharing sensations, ideas, attitudes, and approaches to life. It allows human beings to overcome, although temporarily, their inherent biological division and the separation created by social hierarchies. And it is through consubstantiality that identification is achieved.

The impact of this change expands the scope of rhetoric from the deliberate planning and execution of persuasive strategies to the nondeliberate identification among people through *consubstantiation*. This expansion of the scope of rhetoric suggests that wherever there is meaning, there is also persuasion, and wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. Rhetoric, for Burke, includes any and all the resources that function to induce attitude or action and to promote social cohesion. Although the preeminent tool of rhetoric is language, images and other nonverbal forms can also convey meaning. And since we can simultaneously be both sender and receiver of messages, as when we talk to ourselves or write in a diary, there is also the possibility of a *rhetoric of the self*.

For the new rhetoric, persuasion occurs to the extent that a communicator uses words, gestures, images, attitudes, and ideas that mesh with those of the receiver. Such choices are called *strategies*. Among potential strategies, at least three deserve special attention: strategies of naming, strategies of form, and strategies of spiritualization. Note that these strategies begin with more concrete uses of language, move to larger forms, and finally transcend both language and form to create a cluster of values.

Strategies of naming exploit the rhetorical nature of language that posits language is never neutral. By choosing a term or cluster of terms to describe a situation or thing, we name it. Along with the name, we have applied the values that are inherent in the name we have chosen. Thus, a person might be called “savage” or “civilized,” implying a value judgment and specifying the appropriate response toward the person. Names also suggest our orientation toward the situation or thing, establishing a preferred point of view or position in relationship to the named thing. Even seemingly neutral names convey an orientation and place those using the names in some relationship to the thing that is named. Some scholars have called names associated with a constellation of explicit positive or negative values—such as *freedom* or *communism*—*god and devil terms* or *ultimate terms*.

Strategies of form arouse and fulfill desires among listeners through the structure of the form of the expression. Messages have form to the extent that one part leads receivers to anticipate and be gratified by the part that follows. Thus, we are satisfied when villains in a film receive their due, when sonnets rhyme, and when presidents use formal language on state occasions. There are five potential forms, according to Burke: syllogistic or progressive form, qualitative progression, repetitive form, conventional form, and minor or incidental forms.

Syllogistic or progressive form allows that if A then B, if B then C, if C then D, and so on. In contemporary Western culture, if two people fall in love, they will marry, raise a family, and grow old together. *Qualitative progression* links qualities together. If a person is kind to his or her mother, that person will probably be kind to others. *Repetitive form* occurs when there is restatement with new details, such as when a character whose nature is flighty wears a feathered hat and frilly collar. *Conventional form* recognizes the appeal inherent in forms that have been learned. For example, national holiday celebrations such as the Fourth of July or Cinco de Mayo are marked by similar foods and events every year. *Minor or incidental forms* are usually imbedded in other forms, such as when a metaphor, paradox, disclosure, or reversal occurs in a written text or when montage, freeze frame, slow motion, or rack focus is used in a film.

Strategies of spiritualization occur when symbolic actions are tied to ideals in a way that resembles secular prayer. Such ideals transcend individual concerns to unite groups in their common struggle toward perfection. Thus, the sacrifice of something held dear for a larger good, the regeneration of the past in light of a better future, and the overcoming of sin for eventual salvation are all strategies of spiritualization. Thus, the community that glorifies a war hero, parents who sacrifice for the education of their children, and ceremonies that cleanse participants of their transgressions are all utilizing the strategy of spiritualization.

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See also Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Rhetorical Theory; Symbolic Interactionism; Values Studies: History and Concepts

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IDENTITY MANAGEMENT THEORY

See Identity Theories

IDENTITY NEGOTIATION THEORY

See Identity Theories

IDENTITY THEORIES

Identity is defined as the cultural, societal, relational, and individual images of self-conception, and this composite identity has group membership, interpersonal, and individual self-reflective

implications. Identity is a colorful kaleidoscope with both stable and dynamic characteristics. The study of identity and communication issues is a challenging and yet rewarding enterprise. By understanding how individuals define themselves and how others define them on multiple grounds, persons can communicate with culturally different others with more interpersonal sensitivity and understanding.

Two macro theories of identity that guide the development of this review are Young Yun Kim's 1986 *contextual theory of interethnic communication*, with a recent update version in 2005, and Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner's 1986 *social identity theory of intergroup relations*. Young Yun Kim conceptualized *cultural identity* as both a sociological (or demographic) classification and an individual psychological attribute with a particular group. She uncovered five themes that are relevant to the study of contemporary cultural identity issues from the critical theory perspective to the social science perspective. These include intrapersonal processes, intercultural communication competence, adaptation to a new culture, cultural identity in intercultural contexts, and power inequalities in intercultural settings. While critical theorists emphasize the dominant societal structure that slots co-cultural members along a pecking-order ladder, social science theorists emphasize the power of interindividual identity negotiation process in reframing group membership and personal identity issues.

Henri Tajfel conceptualized an individual's identity as comprised of both social identity and personal identity dimensions on the psychological level. *Social identities* can include cultural or ethnic membership identity, gender identity, sexual orientation identity, social class identity, or social role identity, to name a few. *Personal identities*, on the other hand, can include any unique attributes that we associate with our individuated self in comparison with those of others. Both social identity and personal identity dimensions influence our everyday behaviors in a generalized and particularized manner.

Identity Theories: Conceptual Approaches

This section is organized in two sections: identity theories that focus on the interindividual level of

analysis and identity theories that focus on the interface of dominant societal practice and individual identity resistance practice. The two camps share a permeable boundary rather than a rigid one: Some key concepts can be located on the borders of both sites.

Interindividual Interactional Approaches

According to Stella Ting-Toomey's *identity negotiation (IN) theory*, developed in 1986 and updated in 2005, human beings in all cultures desire identity respect in the communication process. However, what constitutes the proper way to show identity respect and consideration varies from one culture to the next. The IN perspective emphasizes particular identity domains in influencing individuals' everyday interactions. *Cultural identity salience* is defined as the emotional significance that members attach to their sense of belonging or affiliation with the larger national culture. *Ethnic identity salience* is defined as the subjective allegiance and loyalty to a group—large or small, socially dominant or subordinate—with which one has ancestral links.

The IN theory assumes that human beings in all cultures desire both positive group-based and positive person-based identities in any type of communicative situation. How individuals can enhance identity understanding, respect, and mutual affirmative valuation of the other is the essential concern of this approach. To illustrate, two of the IN theoretical assumptions are posited as follows: (1) The core dynamics of people's group membership identities (e.g., cultural and ethnic memberships) and personal identities (e.g., unique attributes) are formed via symbolic communication with others, and (2) individuals in all cultures or ethnic groups have the basic motivation needs for identity security, inclusion, predictability, connection, and continuity. However, too much emotional security will lead to tight ethnocentrism (i.e., thinking of your own cultural community as the center of the universe), and too much emotional insecurity (or vulnerability) will lead to fear of out-groups or strangers. Identity-support strategies, such as mindful listening and dialogue, and confirmation and empathic inclusion behaviors are some productive moves that can promote quality intergroup relationships.

Closely aligned with the IN theory is Tadasu Todd Imahori and William Cupach's *identity management theory*, developed in 1993 and updated in 2005. The theory emphasized the importance of facework support in developing quality intercultural relationships. Identity management theory suggests that individuals manage their identities differently at different junctures of their relationships. It also proposed three interdependent phases of an intercultural relationship development process: trial, enmeshment, and renegotiation. The trial phase refers to the trial-and-error experimentation stage of finding the balance point of how to negotiate cultural identity differences via appropriate facework balancing acts. The enmeshment phase refers to the stage of moving beyond cultural identity emphasis to a focus on building a common relational culture via symbolic convergence (e.g., use of nicknames) and relational expectancy coordination. The renegotiation phase refers to the reincorporation of the cultural identity negotiation process due to the secure base of the relational identity culture.

Ronald Jackson's *cultural contracts (CC) theory*, developed in 1999 and updated in 2005, conceptualized the term *negotiation of cultural identity* as a contractual process in which individuals consider the potential gain or loss of their interpretations of their own cultural worldviews or identity options. The basic premise of the theory asserts that the coordination of intercultural relationships is initiated after an initial negotiation with one's self concerning which worldview to "buy in" or contract.

A *cultural contract* refers to the patterns of norms, rules, and interaction that guide everyday behavior. There are three contract types: ready-to-sign contracts (nonnegotiable contracts with assimilation expectation), quasi-completed contracts (room for partial negotiation of identities and relational coordination), and cocreated contracts (room for mutual identity negotiation and valuation). If cultural contracts are breached, there are relational penalties associated with the "rule" violation. Two points from the theory illustrate its assumptions: (1) Communicators' personal histories and antecedent interactions influence the degree to which they are open to entering identity negotiations with others and (2) a contract will be completed or "tendered" if there is a strong desire

or perceived need for it, even if it is forcibly signed for the sake of survival. Jackson's CC theory starts to bridge the macrolevel societal lens with the individual's stance on self-identity preservation work. In addition, Michael Hecht's *layered communication theory of identity*, with its developmental root in 1993 and updated in 2005, echoed the importance of communication as the locus of performance for all identity layers.

Macrosocietal Critical-Interpretive Approaches

Mary Jane Collier's *cultural identity (CI) theory* was developed in 1988, with the latest version appearing in 2005. She conceptualized *cultural identifications* as shared locations and orientations evidenced in a variety of communication forms, including discourse in public texts, mediated forms, artistic expressions, commodities and products, and individual accounts about group conduct. Working from a combined interpretive and critical perspective, she fine-tuned her CI theory with seven theoretical assumptions. Two of the assumptions are that (1) cultural identities are formed through processes of avowal (self-views) and ascription (views communicated by peers) and (2) the intensity with which particular cultural identities are avowed and ascribed differs depending on situation, context, topic, and relationship. She also incorporated critical perspective into the CI interpretive theory with the broader goal of uncovering social injustice and power inequality issues in the larger hierarchical structure of a society. Judith Martin, Thomas Nakayama, and Robert Krizek in 1996 and 2002 also worked from a critical theory lens in addressing the *privilege of Whiteness* issue and viewed the study of cultural identity as a contested zone of identity meaning construction. For them, communication is a way of contesting and resisting a dominant culture's encroachment.

Mark Orbe in 1998 and together with Regina Spellers in 2005 strengthened the base of the *co-cultural theory* with the goal of understanding the various interactional ways in which marginalized or co-cultural members negotiate their everyday identities. Two core assumptions guide this critical theory: (1) A hierarchical structure exists in each society that gives privilege to certain groups of people. In the United States, these groups include men, European Americans, heterosexuals,

and so forth. (2) Dominant group members, on the basis of varying levels of privilege, occupy positions of power that they then use to create communication systems that reinforce their own fields of experience. Co-cultural group members, however, can strategically adopt certain communication behaviors to navigate the oppressive dominant structures. The communication strategies include the interaction between three communication approaches (nonassertive, assertive, and aggressive strategies) and three preferred interaction outcomes (assimilation, accommodation, and separation).

The major differences between the critical and interindividual interactional camps are as follows: First, for the critical theorists, the bargaining table is an unequal playing field, and the bargaining chips are loaded toward the power holders of the dominant group. For the interindividual identity theorists, the starting point of identity negotiation is the persuasive communication process of identity support or assertion. Second, from the critical theorists' lens, the voices of co-cultural group members or minority group members are often muted or suppressed. From the interindividual theorists' standpoint, it is possible to create collaborative partnership via authentic dialogue or mutual identity valuation work. Third, from the critical theorists' lens, identity negotiation often entails internal and external struggles, and co-cultural group members are often placed in the "victim" or "marginalized" roles while dominant group members are positioned in the "oppressor" roles. From the psychological, interindividual theorists' viewfinder, the dynamic use of verbal and nonverbal messages can transform an individual's identity entrapment and encapsulation. Finally, from the critical theorists' camp, institutional oppressive power creates the condition of identity resistance and intergroup separation. From the interindividual theorists' camp, identity struggles can ultimately lead to a committed, multicultural identity with strong ties to other co-cultural and dominant members' vulnerable selves. Overall, while critical theorists emphasize the struggles of domestic co-cultural groups and their struggles to get their "voices" heard, the interindividual identity theorists emphasize the struggles of new arrivals or immigrants and their aspirations of "making it" in their adopted homeland.

Conclusions

Young Yun Kim's *integrated communication* theory on the cross-cultural adaptation process is one of the rare theories that connects the macrolevel factors such as the institutional patterns of the host environment to the microlevel factors such as the background and psychological characteristics of the immigrants. The theory can be traced to 1979, with a last update in 2005. Drawing from open-systems principles, the integrated communication theory emphasizes the inevitable adaptive change process of immigrants and their identity strain and stretch process. This stress–adaptation–growth spiraling process is played out within a macrostructural model of environmental factors such as host receptivity to cultural strangers and host conformity pressures. Mass communication activities, interpersonal interaction activities, and personality traits such as openness, strength, and positivity also help to motivate cultural strangers to take on the challenges of identity stretch and growth.

Cultural strangers achieve increasing levels of functional fitness and positive psychological health by embracing change and engaging in various self-adjustments. It is the individual resilient spirit that, in the end, can transform a static identity into an all-encompassing, multicultural identity field. Communication plays a pivotal role in either reinforcing the identity status quo or challenging self-views and other-views of the dynamic, multifaceted self.

Stella Ting-Toomey

See also Co-Cultural Theory; Communication Theory of Identity; Contextual Theory of Interethnic Communication; Critical Race Theory; Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory; Cultural Contracts Theory; Cultural Identity Theory; Face Negotiation Theory; Social Identity Theory; Whiteness Theory

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IDEOLOGICAL RHETORIC

While there are multiple ways to define *ideology*, for our purposes the most general will suffice—an ideology is a belief/value system that functions to maintain or challenge the existing order. This implies a relationship to power as a central feature of an ideological orientation to the world but does not restrict ideology to the early Marxist sense as “false consciousness.” Ideology may be theorized as distinct from rhetoric in that its expression is merely a by-product of its attitudinal perspective. The preference taken in this discussion is the opposite: An ideology exists in and through the symbol system that gives it meaning. An ideology is a rhetorical construct. As such, it lives or dies by virtue of the resonance its expression has in the lived experience of those who declare allegiance to the orientation it takes toward the world. An ideology, thus, is not a fixed but rather relatively fluid system whose principles may appear permanent but are in fact subject to change.

As noted above, an ideology is keyed to relations of power. What this means, in a postmodern context, is that changes in ideology manifest themselves as changes in power relations between social actors. The critique of power is inescapably a response to the shortcomings of a particular ideological orientation. Power, in this context, is not totally a repressive instrument of social control, though that is a dimension that an ideological critique will focus on in challenging the outcome or consequence of a specific relationship. From

another perspective, power may also be seen in productive terms—what relationships allow to be created through the use of power in positioning people to engage in positive change. In this context, an ideological critique will focus on how power can be used in fashioning relationships that have the potential to demarginalize a group or to otherwise enable its members to gain control of their own lives in ways a prior power relationship did not.

From this perspective, *ideological rhetoric* is that discourse (which includes visual as well as textual artifacts) that reflects, establishes, or challenges existing power relations between and among people. It is a rhetoric that, in Burkean terms, pronounces how people should behave toward one another. The discourse of skinheads (as repelling as that may be personally) is just as ideological as that of progressive politicians seeking to redress the marginalization of a people. Moreover, both discourses contain a clear sense of what the power relationship is seen to be or is proposed to be in a given context.

In the context of the 2008 presidential election, race relations were never far from the surface in the discourse during the campaign. Once it concluded, those who see the election of a “Black man” as president as anathemic to their vision of America have begun voicing their displeasure in vitriolic terms. Conversely, those who see in the same event hopefulness for a better future voice their pleasure in positive language. Both reflect different (and perhaps incommensurable) ideological positions in that either vision, in the language of the other, is a “false consciousness” of the real social relation. From a visual perspective, Gustave Courbet’s *The Stonebreakers* and Picasso’s *Guernica* function as representational icons of a specific ideological formation. The one, in the mid-1800s, can be seen as a socialist orientation toward privation, while the other is a response to war. The point, with these examples, is to suggest that an ideology is not something external to the discourse that gives it life. It is not “out there” to be pointed to as if it were a fixed entity apart from ourselves. Rather, to critique each vantage point, or to see in a painting a vision of privation or a reaction to war, is to react to the symbolic reality each manifests at a given point in time. If one is unaware, for example, of *The Stonebreakers*’ or

Guernica's history, the interpretive reaction may be far different.

With this broad gloss on “ideological rhetoric” as a starting point, it is important to note the historical development of this perspective. From the early part of the 20th century through the 1950s and into the 1960s, critical approaches to discursive events were seen in more objective terms—the role of the critic was to stand at a distance, in both time and space, from the artifact and critically assess the impact a text might have on others. Criticism, from this perspective, was not about the critic. That orientation began to change with the publication, in the early 1970s, of Phillip Wander and Steven Jenkins’s “Rhetoric, Society, and the Critical Response.” This was followed by Michael McGee’s work on “ideographs” and McGee and Wander’s trenchant critique of the kind of criticism that neither acknowledged nor interrogated the relationship between rhetoric and ideology. The “proper role” of the critic was reformulated during this period between the early 1970s and late 1980s. This transformation proved a fertile ground for the development of more politicized orientations toward critical reflection. At the same time, a view of what could or should be considered “rhetorical” was also undergoing alteration. The resulting expansion of rhetoric’s “province” meant that discourse or “oral/written text” was not the only purview of the critics. Today, these developments are represented in the growth of “critical-cultural” and visual approaches to the study of symbolic events.

A caveat is important: The transformation of the role of the critic, in what has been styled an *ideological turn*, is not to be seen as the better way to conduct critical inquiry. Whatever form criticism takes, it always is subject to the question being investigated. Thus, a close reading of what a text says can be the best way to answer some questions, but not others. Likewise, an avowedly ideological perspective can also be the best way to answer other questions—especially those involving an interrogation of how symbols construct, maintain, or challenge existing power relations.

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See also Critical Rhetoric; Critical Theory; Ideology; Rhetorical Theory

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IDEOLOGY

An ideology is a concept that refers to the collective beliefs, attitudes, and values of a given group of people, from social cliques and small communities to an audience or an entire nation. Although ideologies can be positive, most scholars who study or critique them focus on those that cause harm or suffering. For example, in Western societies the ideology of individualism is believed to be positive, while the ideology that promotes the idea that men are superior to women, sexism, is believed to be negative. Consequently, sexism is studied and critiqued more heavily than individualism, although both ideologies are operative in the United States. In this respect, there is a rather long history of studying subordinate ideologies in communication studies, such as sexism and racism. Recently, however, there has been a growing interest in studying dominant ideologies such as Whiteness (that about identity which goes unmarked and unnoticed) and masculinity.

In general, it is believed that ideologies work largely unconsciously and tend to promote the status quo, usually by supporting those individuals who are in power. Although the concept derives from the materialist theories of Karl Marx, the use of ideology is not limited to materialist contexts. Today, the notion of ideology is widely assumed and referenced in a variety of communicative contexts.

Marxist Origins

Now commonly assumed in communication scholarship, Marx's main philosophical argument is that the way the world is materially arranged determines how we think about it. Until the articulation of this philosophy, it was widely assumed that society as we know it is the product of human ingenuity: A group of individuals got together and dreamed up the way society should look and function and then went about making society in conformity with that dream. If this were truly the case, suggested Marx, then why hasn't utopian thinking brought about a better world? When Marx was working out his philosophy in the mid- to late 19th century, he witnessed an increasingly prosperous class of people (capitalists) exploiting poorer people for profit. Factories were inhumane, and people—sometimes even children—worked long hours for a meager wage. Despite the increasing successes and growing wealth of the individuals who owned the factories, their workers were getting poorer, even dying. Observing how willingly the working class accepted their poor conditions, Marx concluded something was wrong; thought had become “inverted” or turned upside down from what it should be. *Ideology* was the concept that Marx developed to help explain how this inverted thought came about.

Although it is true that one must imagine and then create a blueprint for a building before it is built, Marx argued that the ideas behind the blueprint were actually influenced by material conditions including (a) what resources were available for building, (b) who owned the resources for building, (c) what class of individuals was ruling society, and so on. Marx argued, in other words, that the building imagined by an architect and then subsequently built would reflect the way the world was materially arranged at the time, ultimately serving the interests of those in power (e.g., those who owned the resources and means for making things).

Analogously, Marx argued that state governments tend to support the material and political interests of a dominant group of people (the “ruling class”). For example, it is often taught in American schools that the founding fathers of the United States of America gathered together at the Philadelphia Convention in 1787 and invented

the current government system, which is designed to serve “the people.” A Marxist perspective, however, would emphasize that the government structure created at this convention only reinforced and stabilized the status quo: To this day, the government created by the founding fathers continues to support the most empowered in American society, who are wealthy White men. In sum, Marx reversed the way we think about thinking: it is not that we dream up a better world and then create it; rather, it is that the material, concrete world preexists us, and that whatever we create will conform to the constraints of this preexisting, material world. This view is known as *materialism*.

What, then, continues to maintain the existing material arrangement of society? Why do governments continue to support those in power? Even though technology is constantly changing our material and communicative interactions, why does it seem the same group of people always continues to benefit? In other words, despite obvious, dynamic change, why do political and state structures seem to stay the same? Marx's answer is *ideology*. For him, ideology was fundamentally an inversion of the materialist view. If materialism is the idea that the concrete arrangement of the world influences how we think about it, then ideology is the inverse notion that thought distorts people's views of material reality. For Marx, then, ideology referred to something negative. Fundamentally, ideology is a kind of consciousness that makes one incapable of seeing the fundamental contradictions of material reality that might lead to radical change. An individual under the sway of ideology, for example, believes that social class (e.g., rich and poor) is a natural arrangement and not the product of oppression and force. Because ideology is so powerful, argued Marx, only a violent, material disruption could change how we think about the world: revolution.

Positive and Neutral Ideology After Marx

After Marx's death in 1883, the concept of ideology expanded to include new meanings, some of which were positive. Vladimir Lenin was most influential in shifting the negative connotation of ideology toward a more neutral connotation. If Marxism mounted a critique of the status quo and its commonly held beliefs, attitudes, and values as

an inversion of material conditions, then such a critique must be coming from an alternative position with its own beliefs, attitudes, and values. In other words, Marxism is itself an ideology. Consequently, Lenin argued that ideology must be understood as the political consciousness of a given group of people, most especially that of an economic and social class. After Lenin, the concept of ideology became “neutral” when it was understood that the working class, which Marxism champions, was ideologically opposed to the capitalist ideology of those in power, the wealthy ruling class.

After Lenin, the most influential thinker of ideology was Antonio Gramsci, who further expanded the concept to denote a set of representations or mental images of reality that is gleaned from a given culture’s legal and economic systems, as well as art and other forms of community expression. For Gramsci, this concept of the world also included codes for social behavior and action. Consequently, if a given group’s ideology was pervasive, then that ideology had *hegemony*, or a tacit, largely unconscious control over social behaviors, forms of art, economics, and the law. If a group’s ideology has hegemony, then that group’s beliefs, attitudes, and values seem natural and like common sense. Like Lenin, Gramsci believed ideology was neutral and governed the political consciousness of a given group. Whereas Lenin argued that a group’s ideology only achieves hegemony over others through contest and struggle, Gramsci believed that hegemony is increasingly achieved without direct force or coercion and often with the unwitting help of intellectuals. According to Gramsci, two forces—the State and leadership within civil society—were responsible for perpetuating dominant ideologies. In this way, Gramsci challenged the classical Marxist view that the dominant ideology of a given society was a direct reflection of ruling class mentality. Ideological hegemony was achieved through struggle and in concert with multiple agencies and could not be reduced to a narrow reflection of basic, economic arrangements.

Althusser and Ideology

Perhaps the most recent and influential thinker on ideology today is Louis Althusser, a French Marxist

thinker who Jorge Larrain has argued sought to reconcile the negative and neutral understandings of ideology. Although Althusser would agree with Gramsci that ideology is struggled over, he expanded the concept further by adding a psychological dimension: Ideology concerns the imagined relationship that individuals harbor about their real, material conditions. In other words, ideology concerns how a given person thinks about his or her relationship to the “real world.” Althusser argues that we have to understand ideology as a kind of necessary illusion, which we borrow from the world outside to make sense of our identity and purpose in life. No one of us, suggests Althusser, has direct access to the real, material world; our relationship to the world is filtered through and by representations (at the very least, by language itself). Ideology is the main source of those representations. Consequently, some of us grow up and reckon with our real conditions of existence as Chinese citizens, while others of us contend with material reality as evangelical Baptists from the southern United States. In this respect, for Althusser ideology is unavoidable and necessary because it is the very basis of identity itself.

Althusser’s contribution to the concept of ideology cannot be underestimated, for it is the basis for a relatively recent theoretical movement, *post-Marxism*, that has had a strong impact on communication theory. For Althusser, one needs to incorporate an ideology to become a self-conscious person. If I am a Marxist, for example, then I know material conditions directly influence what is thinkable, that my purpose in life is to uphold the ideology of the working class, and so on. If I am a Christian, then I know material reality is but an illusion of a greater, spiritual reality, that Jesus will return to earth again, and so on. In either case, ideology gives me a sense of who I am and what my relationship to the “real world” is about. Absent ideology, I cannot “know” who I am. Hence, every communicative encounter with another person is in some sense an ideological negotiation.

Another important element of Althusser’s understanding of ideology is that it is diffuse and dynamic. For an individual to assume a set of beliefs, attitudes, and values about, say, the importance of capitalism, he or she must be confronted by them in multiple venues. A given ideology is not promoted by one person or even a class of persons, but rather

by multiple agencies working simultaneously and in concert: the mass media, the educational system, economic and legal structures, the family, and so on. For example, let us use the ideology of individualism, which consists of the belief, attitude, and value that every person is unique and should take personal responsibility for his or her destiny.

One is not born to value individuality but learns it through multiple agencies over a long time. As a youngster one is told about one's unique and special character by one's parents; the family teaches individualism. At the church, synagogue, or mosque, one is taught that Deity has a unique plan for one's life; religion teaches individualism. On television, talk show hosts tout the virtues of individual achievement and personal responsibility; the media teaches individualism. At school, one is given one's own desk, told to bring one's own materials to class, and is cautioned that one should keep one's eyes on one's own paper because one's grade is determined by singular, individual effort; school teaches individualism. In this way, different agencies—the family, the media, the education system—work to instill and reinforce the ideology of individualism. Borrowing a concept from psychoanalysis, Althusser terms the way in which multiple sources perpetuate a given ideology *overdetermination*.

The Concept of Ideology Today

Since Althusser's attempt at compromise, the concept of ideology has been freed of its Marxist origins. Absent the materialist tie, the concept of ideology differs from one context to the next. In the popular media, ideology is frequently used as a synonym for one's political orientation. In academic work, however, the concept of ideology is associated with scholars who critique culture (e.g., the mass media). Generally, it remains the case that those who study ideology are interested, as Terry Eagleton has noted, in how people become invested in their own unhappiness. Although some ideologies—for example, the Christian ideology of loving one's enemy—can promote good things, in general scholars are interested in the ways in which ideology can harm and oppress people and often without their noticing it.

Owing to the psychological turn of Althusser and the more popular work of mass movement

scholars such as Eric Hoffer, however, in the last half-century, ideology has taken on the connotations of political brainwashing. Unwilling to believe that individuals are “dupes” of ideology, many scholars abandoned the concept. Coupled with what is sometimes termed the *poststructural turn* in theoretical debates of the late 20th century, this negative connotation has also led some scholars to call for abandoning the concept because it is self-defeating. In a charge that recalls Lenin's reworking of Marx's negative conception, some critics argue that ideology critique presumes a privileged vantage external to ideology for the critique to be possible. Such a presumption is, in fact, ideological itself, and consequently, any claim to discern hidden or obscured contradictions is itself an ideological ruse. Instead, critics of ideology have argued for abandoning the concept in favor of Michel Foucault's conception of *discourse* or *power/knowledge*. Contemporary defenders of ideology and ideological critique frequently counter by returning to Lenin's or Gramsci's more complicated notions of ideology as reflecting a deeper, material contradiction or antagonism or by arguing that the abandonment of ideology critique is motivated by an investment in the status quo.

More recently, Slavoj Žižek has defended the utility of ideology for scholarship by offering a Leninist rereading of the concept. He suggests that an ideology can be known only in contrast to a competing ideology. Insofar as ideology denotes the collective beliefs, attitudes, and values of a given group of people, one cannot become conscious of another set of beliefs, values, and attitudes unless there is a conflict between the sets. Consequently, ideology critique is not self-defeating, but rather self-interested.

Ideology in Communication Studies

In the field of communication studies, two contexts in which ideology is frequently studied include rhetoric and organizational communication. For rhetorical scholars, *ideological criticism* is a form of scholarship in which *texts* are closely scrutinized in order to uncover the hidden beliefs, attitudes, and values promoted by and/or influencing them. One popular method among rhetoricians for studying ideology across different texts is

known as *ideographic criticism*. This method traces a singular term, or an *ideograph*, across multiple texts, which is itself symptomatic of a much larger, external set of beliefs, attitudes, and values. Another approach to the study of ideology has been the *critique of concord*, which Celeste Condit argues derives from Gramsci's understanding of hegemony. Condit argues a critique of concord consists of examining the rhetoric of multiple contesting groups over a political or ideological issue. Dana Cloud has critiqued the idea of "hegemony as concordance" as "idealist" for ignoring the class-based and economic struggles at the center of Gramsci's theory of ideology. As a final example, *symbolic convergence theory* straddles both social scientific and rhetorical approaches to communication by tracking ideology in terms of *fantasy themes* or *visions* that are created and exchanged among small groups of people working toward a common goal.

In organizational communication studies, ideology has been studied to show how one ideology becomes dominant or hegemonic, influencing organizational cultures. In this respect, the work of Dennis K. Mumby on hegemony as a dialectical force among organizations has been instrumental.

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See also Critical Organizational Communication; Critical Rhetoric; Ideological Rhetoric; Marxist Theory; Materiality of Discourse; Rhetorical Theory; Symbolic Convergence Theory

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IMMEDIACY

Immediacy behaviors are actions that simultaneously communicate warmth, involvement, psychological closeness, availability for communication, and positive affect. Immediacy is the primary way humans signal interpersonal closeness, willingness to communicate, and positive feelings for other people. Immediacy behaviors are both verbal and nonverbal but typically occur in a cluster or group of consistent behaviors that provide fundamental connections between human beings.

Verbal immediacy behaviors include both styles of communication that signal warmth and connection and linguistic messages that explicitly communicate immediacy. Stylistically, verbal immediacy behaviors include plural pronouns such as *we* and

us that promote connection and relational closeness rather than individual pronouns such as *you* and *I* that express independence and separation. Similarly, informal forms of address, such as using first names or nicknames as opposed to formal names or titles, are a powerful, unobtrusive immediacy behavior. Open communication and increased self-disclosure are often classified as immediacy behaviors.

Verbal immediacy can be communicated explicitly through positive references to another person or to one's relationship. Compliments regarding another's personality, accomplishments, or appearance increase interpersonal immediacy. Likewise, positive, explicit relational comments such as saying "I love you" or saying how much one values a relationship are powerful, explicit indicants of immediacy.

Nonverbal behaviors communicate even more powerful messages of immediacy than verbal behaviors according to most theorists and researchers. Nonverbal immediacy is communicated as a consistent multichanneled message consisting of an entire set of interrelated nonverbal behaviors such as interpersonal touch, eye contact, closer distances, smiling, and positive vocal tones. Nonverbal immediacy is typically expressed spontaneously and mindlessly as a message of involvement with and affect for another person. Encoders are rarely aware of the many components of an immediacy display due to immediacy's spontaneous, mindless, multichanneled quality. Similarly, receivers typically perceive a message of warmth, interpersonal closeness, and involvement without being aware of all the components of multichanneled display. Communication theorists and researchers have analyzed the components of nonverbal immediacy, but typically immediacy is sent and received with little awareness of the components comprising an immediacy display.

In most relationships and interactions, immediacy is received positively by interactants according to Peter Andersen's direct effects model and Judee Burgoon's social meaning model. However, in some cases, immediacy displays are perceived as inappropriate or excessive, resulting in negative reaction, compensations, and relational deterioration. Tests of Andersen's cognitive valence theory suggest that the most common reason for perceptions of excessive immediacy is relational

inappropriateness; some immediacy displays are inappropriate in professional or nonintimate relationships. The theory has shown that perceptions of excessive or inappropriate immediacy can also result from cultural differences, lack of attraction for the person initiating immediacy, personality of the recipient, the physical or psychological state of the recipient, or the situation.

Tactile behaviors are conceivably the most immediate actions because touch is inherently involving and reduces physical and psychological distance between communicators. Tactile or haptic immediacy includes warm handshakes, hand-holding, pats, hugs, and other touch that is relationally appropriate.

Similarly, immediacy can be conveyed proxemically through decreased interpersonal space and distance. In North America and northern Europe, the most immediate distance is less than 1.5 feet, a distance called the intimate space zone. Larger distances are progressively less immediate, signaling unavailability, less positive affect, and greater psychological distance. Face-to-face positions are most immediate, side-to-side less immediate, and back-to-back least immediate. Similarly, communicating on the same visual plane rather than towering over someone is more immediate.

Eye contact and other oculosic displays constitute primary immediacy behaviors. Eye contact characterizes most interpersonal interaction and signals availability and invites communication. In public settings such as elevators or trains, passengers assiduously shun eye contact to avoid interaction.

Kinesic behavior, commonly called body language, constitutes meaningful movements that can communicate immediacy. Positive facial expressions, particularly smiles, are primary immediacy cues, as are facial animation, enthusiasm, and warm expressions. Negative expressions including emotional displays of fear, anger, and dominance are nonimmediate. Head nods, particularly when used as listener responses, establish rapport and immediacy between communicators. Bodily relaxation and an absence of tension, particularly relaxed arms and legs, are immediacy cues; tense, nervous people do not communicate positive affect, warmth, or approachability. Increased gestures produce greater rapport, enthusiasm, and immediacy. Matching and mirroring

an interactant's bodily movements are associated with perceptions of immediacy. Similarly, people who deploy synchronous kinesic behaviors, such as dancers in step with one another, produce perceptions of connection and immediacy. Finally, open body positions signal warmth, approachability, and readiness for interaction. Body barriers such as folded arms, facial covering, or hiding behind objects signal defensive avoidance and low immediacy.

Immediacy is also communicated vocally; warm tones of voice, an enthusiastic speaking style, and vocalized listener responses are associated with greater immediacy. Likewise, in the chronemic channel, the use of time can increase immediacy. Interruptions, late arrivals, and acting preoccupied or hurried are not indications of immediacy. One of the most powerful immediacy cues is spending time with a relational partner.

In sum, across a number of relational contexts including romances, close friendships, and new acquaintances, greater immediacy seems to be predictive of more relational closeness. Similarly, greater immediacy is beneficial in organizational contexts, especially instructional contexts, where greater teacher immediacy has been consistently associated with positive relational outcomes, particularly increased affect for learning, the classroom, and the teacher.

Peter A. Andersen

See also Emotion and Communication; Expectancy Violations Theory; Kinesics; Language and Communication; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Proxemics

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IMPRESSION FORMATION

An *impression* is our image of another person, consisting of the beliefs that we have of that person's characteristics. These characteristics include descriptors for the person's personality (warm, curious), roles (mother, lawyer), physical attributes (red-headed, tall), and normal behaviors (smiles a lot, talks loudly). *Impression formation* is the psychological process by which impressions are developed. Despite its psychological nature, communication scholars are interested in the impression formation process because it occurs through communication.

This entry focuses on the psychological approach to this topic. Readers should also consider entries that describe impression formation as a strictly communicative process (e.g., uncertainty reduction theory), that concentrate on communicative skill differences (e.g., constructivism), and that consider intentional impression management strategies (e.g., facework) for a full understanding of this topic.

The study of impression formation was inspired by the work of the German Gestalt psychology movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Gestalt psychologists believed that people actively strive to understand the world around them, in contrast with the mostly American learning theorists of that time who conceived of people as responding passively to their environment. The Gestaltists also differed from learning theorists in their interest in human cognitive processes, which probably led impression-formation theorists to ignore emotional factors in favor of the cognitive. One consequence of the Gestaltist legacy is the metaphor of

the observer forming an impression as a *naïve scientist*. This metaphor implies that, just like scientists, we form an impression of a person because we are trying to understand that person, and the formed impression functions as a scientific theory does for a scientist. Scientific theory attempts to describe, explain, and allow for predicting and controlling real-world events. Analogously, an impression provides both a description of a person's behaviors and appearance and an explanation for behaviors and appearance in terms of the person's personality and roles, and it enables one both to predict the behaviors and appearance of the other person in future circumstances and to try to control when and how to interact with that person. The work of two Gestaltists who moved to the United States to escape the Nazi government, Solomon Asch and Fritz Heider, was reflective of the naive-scientist metaphor and helped define the issues with which impression formation theories have grappled.

During an initial interaction between two people, the cognitive process by which an *observer* (hereafter known as Ann) forms an impression of a second, *target* person (Bob) can be modeled as a four-stage process. First, Ann observes Bob's behavior. Second, Ann attributes a cause to that behavior. Third, if Ann interprets that cause as associated with a permanent characteristic of Bob, Ann forms an impression of Bob. Fourth, Ann uses the impression to establish an evaluation of Bob. The following four sections consider each of these stages in turn.

Behavioral Observation

The first stage in impression formation is the observation of behavior. Although the potential exists for anything that people do to influence our impressions of them, behaviors that are unusual, surprising, or viewed negatively are more likely to gain our focus and to influence the impression formation process. Given such focus, there are two substages to behavioral observation: *unitizing* and *labeling*. Beginning with the first, behavior occurs in a nonstop stream, so we must divide this stream into manageable units. The size of the unit depends on several factors. One such factor is our knowledge about the observed activity; a novice typist typing the word *angry* would be likely to divide his

or her own behavior into typing an *a*, then typing an *n*, and so on, whereas experienced typists would think in terms of the entire word as one unit. A second factor is our goal; research has revealed that observers intending to form an impression of a person tend to divide the person's behavior into larger units than if they are trying to remember that person's actions. Given the same knowledge and goals, people watching the same activity tend to divide it into similarly sized units.

After we unitize, we establish a label for the unit. Our language often gives us alternative ways of describing the same behavior. For instance, what could be described in neutral terms (moves quickly toward me) might be viewed positively (runs excitedly toward me) or negatively (attacks me). The situation we are in (meeting a loved one at an airport vs. walking through a dangerous part of town) or our current mood will impact on the type of label we provide. The result of the labeling process is significant because its original positivity or negativity may color the subsequent stages in impression formation.

Causal Attribution

During the second stage of impression formation, we establish a cause for the observed behavior, specifically, whether responsibility for the behavior rests in the person who performed it or the situation which the person was in. In short, if Ann sees Bob insult Chris, Ann uses the information at her disposal to decide whether this action is indicative of something inherent about Bob (he characteristically acts this way) or circumstance (e.g., he is just in a bad mood today). If circumstance appears to be the better explanation, she will conclude that the behavior tells us nothing about Bob, ending the impression-formation process at that point. If, instead, something inherent to Bob seems a more likely cause, then Ann begins to form the basis for her impression by assigning a personality characteristic that is implied by the behavior (mean to others). The more that a given behavior is typical of the situation in which we see it occur, the more likely we see it as caused by that situation and not indicative of the person who performed it. As a consequence, behaviors that are unusual tend to induce causal responsibility judgments to the person. Note that these are the types of behaviors

that are more likely to have been noticed in the first place.

Impression Formation

When the observer has concluded that the target's character is responsible for the observed behavior, the result of the attribution process is the assignment of a personality characteristic to the target (in our case, Bob is mean). The subsequent impression-formation process consists of the assignment to the target of additional attributes believed to be associated with that originally attributed. If Bob is the type of person who insults others, Ann concludes that he would also break promises he makes to others and refuse to grant people's requests for help. If Bob is mean, then he is also untrustworthy and selfish.

Additional attributes are often evaluated similarly to the original ones. Since research in the 1920s, we have known that once an individual has attributed a behavior to a personality characteristic, he or she will tend to assign other evaluatively similar characteristics to that person. The term *halo effect*, in which both the originally attributed and later assigned characteristics are positive, dates back to 1920. This finding was extended as well in 1922 to the corresponding *horns effect* with negative attributes. By the 1930s, research showed that a similar effect occurs in evaluating behavior. Beginning in the mid-1950s, there has been an ever-increasing body of evidence implying that impressions are organized within a three-dimensional structure consisting of degree of positivity versus negativity, degree of power, and degree of activity or intensity.

The basis for impression formation can often be found in what has alternatively been referred to as *implicit personality theories* or *prototypes*: our beliefs about the characteristics of types of people. Research during the 1950s and 1960s indicated shared beliefs about the attributes of occupations such as police officers, librarians, and lawyers. More recent work has established analogous conceptions for more general categories such as the good communicator or good leader. When actions performed by a person lead to the judgment of, for example, a good leader, the relevant prototype serves as a mold from which an impression of the person's leadership-relevant characteristics is formed.

Target Evaluation

The final stage of the impression-formation process is the evaluation of the target. In general, that overall evaluation is the result of the evaluation of the specific attributes in the impression. If the attributes in the impression are consistently either positive or negative, the evaluation will be so as well. Attempts to model the evaluation process resulted in theoretical controversy during the 1960s and 1970s. Imagine that after forming an extremely positive impression, a judge notices an only modestly positive behavior. Some theorists argued for an *additive* process in which, since the additional information is positive, the overall impression becomes even more favorable, whereas others argued for an *averaging* process in which, since the new information is less positive than the old, the overall impression becomes less favorable. Research findings have tended to favor an averaging model weighted by the perceived importance of the characteristics. Solomon Asch preferred a model in which the actual interpretation of the additional characteristics can be influenced by those previously attributed. This can account for the circumstance in which specific combinations of characteristics bring relevant stereotypes to mind. Although *blonde* standing alone is at least neutral if not positive, linking it with *dumb* calls up a particularly negative image. In general, however, a mixture of positive and negative characteristics results in a neutral impression.

Mediated-Impression Formation

The study of mediated-impression formation began in the 1970s with the examination of the process via telephone and closed-circuit television and progressed to interaction via computer in the late 1980s. Early findings implied that impressions formed through mediated channels tended to neutrality, due to the absence of nonverbal cues that are critical for the process in face-to-face contexts, and these findings informed proposals such as media richness theory that implied an inability to form rich impressions through mediated interaction. However, since the early 1990s, research by Joseph Walther in particular demonstrates that in computer-mediated interaction, people compensate for the absence of nonverbal

behaviors with other relationally relevant cues, allowing the impression formation process to take place as it does face-to-face although at a distinctly slower rate.

Conclusion

Although laid out here as occurring in sequence, the four stages of impression formation actually occur simultaneously. We begin forming impressions and making preliminary evaluations of others soon after meeting them, and although these first impressions color subsequent judgments, continued observation of behavior may change our impressions over time. In particular, first impressions are prone to be unrealistically consistent—either all positive or all negative—but they become more nuanced with continued opportunities to observe.

There are times when the cognitive processes described here are short-circuited by evaluations based on physical appearance and nonverbal behavior. Such *snap judgments*, as these are called, consist of evaluations resulting directly from emotional responses to direct observations of targets.

Charles Pavitt

See also Attribution Theory; Cognitive Theories; Constructivism; Facework Theories; Impression Management; Media Richness Theory; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Social Information Processing Theory; Uncertainty Management Theories; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

Impression management is not a clearly focused theory but a construct representing the presentation and maintenance of social identity during interaction. When scholars speak about managing an *impression*, they are not suggesting an artificial or manipulative agenda. They are simply referring to the image that a person displays during interaction. Some scholars use the term *social* or *public self* to distinguish social identity from the private self. As individuals, we are constituted of countless idiosyncrasies—habits, mannerisms, beliefs, attitudes, values, abilities, needs, interests, family history, and so forth. When interacting with others, we cannot display all aspects of our private self. We therefore select characteristics from our psychological and behavioral matrix that we believe will present the person (the self) we should be during that occasion. We might be aware that we do this only when our identity is important, such as preparing for a job interview, or when we have lost our composure during an embarrassing experience. However, we actually display a social self during all our interactions—during a conversation with friends, when conducting a meeting at work, as a student in the classroom, and even on a first date. Indeed, although cultural norms for what is appropriate may differ, individuals within all cultures present and manage the impression they believe to be appropriate for a particular context.

Few concepts are more fundamental to our understanding of communication than impression management. If individuals did construct a public self constrained by interaction norms, coherent communication would not be possible. Individuals would simply say whatever was on their mind, would enter and leave the conversation at will, and respond (or not respond) randomly to the comments of others. In short, without recognizing and adhering to norms of appropriate communication

conduct, the co-construction of meaning would not be possible. The purpose of this entry is to provide the historical background for the concept of impression management and then to integrate the several related theories into a model of impression management goals and strategies.

Historical Background

Remarkably, although impression management is currently considered one of the essential features of communication, it is actually a relatively recent area of interest among communication scholars. Its origin lies in several theories formulated in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s by scholars in other areas of the social sciences.

Self-Presentation

The terms *self-presentation* and *strategic self-presentation* were used by Edward Jones and his colleagues to describe their conceptualization of impression management. Scholars in this tradition were psychologists and social psychologists interested in the link between patterns of behavioral displays in public and the psychological motivations behind these displays. The theory of self-presentation is predicated on the assumption that a person's presenting a coherent set of behaviors during interaction will lead others to make certain types of attributions about the person.

These behaviors and associated attributions have been summarized into a typology of five types of attributions, a characteristic strategy that should elicit each attribution, and various tactics to implement that strategy: (1) A person who wants to be perceived as likable or friendly will use the strategy of *ingratiation* and such tactics as displaying positive emotions during interactions, doing favors, giving compliments, and perhaps using self-deprecating humor. (2) A person who wants to be perceived as competent will use the strategy of *self-promotion* and such tactics as telling others about his or her achievements, good deeds, or accomplishments or by displaying plaques and awards for others to see. (3) A person who wants to be perceived as worthy will use the strategy of *exemplification* and such tactics as quietly demonstrating his or her abilities, competence, integrity, or values rather than stating them directly to others.

(4) A person who wants to be perceived as helpless will use the strategy of *supplication* (also called *self-handicapping*) and the tactics of appearing weak or sad to elicit nurturing behavior from others or of claiming lack of knowledge or experience to avoid responsibility for a task. (5) A person who wants to be perceived as powerful or in control will use the strategy of *intimidation* and the tactics of displaying anger or demonstrating the willingness to punish or cause harm to others.

Contemporary researchers have drawn on the theory of strategic self-presentation to examine communication practices in the workplace and the classroom, such as supervisors' and teachers' use of intimidation strategies. Emotion scholars have examined the manipulation of emotion displays such as simulating or intensifying positive or negative emotions to be perceived as likable or powerful. Scholars interested in gender have examined the differential effects of supplication strategies when used by women compared with their use by men in the workplace and in personal relationships. Finally, scholars interested in individual differences in impression motivations or strategies have explored the influence of personality traits such as self-monitoring, need for approval, public self-consciousness, shyness, communication apprehension, and extraversion. Taken together, this research supports the fundamental premise that impressions are strategically managed to elicit certain types of goal-directed attributions suitable for certain contexts. This research also, however, reminds us that if not very carefully managed, behaviors designed to elicit desired attributions can be misperceived, such as when self-promotion strategies elicit, not judgments of competence, but judgments of arrogance, conceit, or self-importance.

Situated Social Identity

The term *situated social identity* originated in sociology with the essays of Erving Goffman. Although he was developing his theory at the same time the social psychologists were developing the theory of strategic self-presentation, he was not concerned with psychological motivations for public displays of behavior. He simply stated that the organizing principle of all social interaction is the coordinated management of social identity, or *face*. Goffman used the metaphor of a play to

explain this view of impression management. He argued that when people engage in interaction, they construct and maintain face in much the same way that actors perform their scenes on stage. That is, people prepare for performance in the “backstage,” deliver their lines in the front stage, manipulate their props, and dress according to their role. Other interactants serve as the audience and presumably support the role being performed. Although this metaphor is most obvious in scripted roles such as doctors, nurses, restaurant servers, and teachers, ordinary conversations are performed in much the same way. We prepare public performances in the backstage of our home or apartment; we “costume” ourselves appropriately (sweats for home, jeans for class, slacks or skirts for work) and grab our props on the way out (glasses, wallet/purse, cell phone, and book bag). We deliver our lines when greeting others, when giving emotional support to friends who are distressed, and we laugh at jokes told by others, even when not very funny, to support their face.

Of course performances do not unfold automatically, nor do they always unfold smoothly. Constructing and maintaining face is accomplished through the various strategies known as facework. Facework strategies that prepare for a possible loss of our own face or the face of others are called avoidant or *preventive facework*. For example, we sometimes don’t speak up during a conversation or in a meeting to avoid saying something that will discredit us and thereby damage our face. If we do speak, we preface our comments with disclaimers such as “I may be wrong but. . . .” We also try to prevent face loss to other people. We would not likely turn to a person who is trying to make a point during a discussion and say bluntly, “You are very stupid and your idea is dumb.” If we have to call a person’s face into question, we usually soften the threat by confirming aspects of his or her competence first, for example, “I know that you tried very hard, but. . . .”

Facework strategies that help repair a scene and restore face after it is lost are called *corrective facework*. For example, when we lose face and experience embarrassment, we apologize and try to correct our poor performance (e.g., apologize for spilling our coffee and quickly clean it up). If our face loss is more serious, such as arriving late for an important meeting, we also offer

an explanation or account (e.g., “I’m sorry I’m late; I got stuck in traffic”). If another person loses face, we let it pass unnoticed, we accept their account or apology, or we otherwise support their corrective facework efforts. In other words, whether as performer or audience, participants can only continue the scene (i.e., the interaction) when face is maintained or restored.

Several decades after Goffman’s initial formulation of face theory, two sociolinguists, Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, extended Goffman’s notions of face and preventive facework in their formulation of *politeness theory*. According to politeness theory, people have two fundamental human needs: autonomy and validation. These are labeled *negative face* (the desire for autonomy and freedom from imposition) and *positive face* (the desire to be valued and included). Threats to negative and positive face are inherent in interaction. When we ask a favor, make a request, borrow change, or even force a person to answer the phone when we call, we threaten negative face. When we disagree with someone’s opinion, criticize their behavior, suggest that we don’t like their work or their appearance, we threaten positive face. In order to soften these *face threatening acts*, we use politeness. For example, to soften a threat to negative face such as asking for a ride, we might minimize the imposition by saying that we can be available any time that is convenient, or we might offer to do a favor in return (threatening our own negative face). To soften a threat to positive face such as in the classic dilemma, “does this make me look fat?” we might avoid the threat entirely by saying, “oh, no, you look great,” or we might use positive politeness by saying that another outfit is more flattering.

Impression Management Model

The several theories of impression management that have emerged over the past 50 years differ somewhat in their focus and terminology. However, they can be integrated within a hierarchical model of the impression management process. Although specific interactional goals are fluid and emergent, four broad metagoals represent increasingly complex and challenging demands on speakers’ impression management competence. At each level, more conscious effort must be directed toward interpreting the situation and enacting appropriate behaviors.

The first metagoal is simply *demonstrating social competence*. When we meet this metagoal, we conduct interactions so smoothly that social identities are formed and sustained without much conscious effort. They are in the background, and the content of the interaction is in the foreground. Interactants interpret situational cues such as status, relational definitions, and episode parameters appropriately and act in accord with these cues. They are willing and able to follow the communication norms, rules, and expectations for the episode(s) and the context. Interactants are mutually competent in displaying deference toward face that characterizes routine interactions.

On occasion, it is necessary to more consciously construct an identity. When giving a public presentation, for example, we are keenly aware that we want to be perceived as prepared, knowledgeable, and poised. When meeting new people or at a social event, we want to be perceived as pleasant, charming, funny, attractive, and so forth. If a pay raise at work is based on the supervisor's evaluation of our competence, we will attempt to construct an impression of being hardworking, productive, conscientious, and loyal. Thus, a second and somewhat more challenging metagoal is *impression construction*. We draw on the skills of interpreting the situation and then enacting the impression management strategies that we assume will create the most suitable impression. Of course the key to continued smooth interaction in these circumstances is the ability to monitor the impression that is created but have enough cognitive resources to also demonstrate basic social competence.

The third and fourth metagoals arise from the fundamental defining feature of social identities. Whether we call them face, face needs, self-presentations, or impressions, they are necessarily and always intangible—they exist only in their performance. The pervasive norm of reciprocity encourages people to be mutually responsive to each other's identity performances—if I support your identity performance, you will return the favor to me, and our interaction will be uneventful. In reality, no performance is perfect, and threats to identity are inevitable. Thus, the third metagoal is called *protecting impression integrity*. Interactants must be attentive to potential threats to a situated identity and must be capable of avoiding or minimizing these threats (both to self and to others).

Skillful use of preventive facework and elaborated politeness strategies can facilitate this need.

When efforts to prevent face loss are not successful, interactants work toward achieving the fourth and most challenging metagoal, *restoring impression integrity*. In order to do this, it is necessary to bracket, or single out, the ongoing interaction in order to reestablish the legitimacy or viability of social identity that has been lost. Restoration strategies might focus on restoring moral character, denying negative intent, or accounting for untoward or inappropriate actions. The offending person might offer a fully developed apology that expresses remorse, an excuse that denies intent or responsibility, or a justification that accepts responsibility but offers extenuating circumstances. Alternatively, if another interactant needs to restore impression integrity, a competent action would be to support his or her restoration attempts.

In sum, impression management is sometimes routine and sometimes strategic, sometimes successful and sometimes not. It is always, however, a fundamental and defining aspect of social interaction.

Sandra Metts

See also Accounts and Account Giving; Facework Theories; Politeness Theory; Social Interaction Theories

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INDIAN RASA THEORY

Speculation in classical India concerning the effects of art and language arguably began in a fully developed form with Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* (composition dates range from 100 BCE to 400 CE). A vital concept in explaining the impact of the dramatic (and later, poetic) arts was the notion of *rasa*. Later writers, such as Abhinavagupta in his commentary (c. 1100 CE) on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, expand the range of *rasa* and aesthetic psychology, making it a more useful theory to explain the aesthetic experiences of certain audiences. The concept of *rasa* will be detailed here, as well as its connection to issues in communication.

Rasa literally means *taste*—both in the sense of a taste and the ability to taste some object. Thus, *rasa* refers to both an experience and an ability. The *rasa* theory holds that artworks operate by suggesting or exemplifying one of several universal moods or emotions (*rasas*) in an attending audience. *Rasa* theory holds that ordinary emotions (*bhāvas*) typically involve a specific agent reacting to a specific situation. These emotions exist primarily as latent impressions (*samskāras*) due to the person's past experience. Our everyday experience of emotion, then, is thoroughly idiosyncratic and centered on an individualized notion of self (*one's own* self, in other words). These changing and everyday emotions are known as fleeting or temporary emotions (*vyabhīcāribhāvas*).

Contrary to these particularized ways of responding to one's exact situation and needs or desires are permanent emotions (*sthāyībhāvas*), which then attain the status of *rasa*. The former (*sthāyībhāvas*) are the moods that one experiences, and the latter (the *rasas*) are the moods used in response to some situation or object experienced by some auditor. Eight of these permanent *bhāvas* (*sthāyībhāvas*) are identified by Bharata: pleasure (*rati*), humor (*hāsa*), sorrow (*śōka*), anger (*krodha*), courage (*utsāha*), fear (*bhaya*), disgust (*jugupsā*), and wonder (*vismaya*). These are said to be caused by a subject's reaction to some specific situation containing various causes (*kāraṇa*) and to lead to certain effects (*kārya*) in terms of the bodily reactions of a subject (facial expressions, bodily gestures, etc.).

These signs of emotions are then incorporated into the writing and staging of dramatic artworks.

A sympathetic auditor attends to the artwork and experiences certain emotions. Due to the removal of his or her interests from the aesthetic situation, the audience member does not feel *real* fear, since there is no actual threat to his or her life. This detachment in the aesthetic situation is vital to producing the experience of *rasa*, universal experiences or moods that transcend everyday, particularized reactions of actual individuals. Bharata lists eight such *rasas*: the erotic (*śṛṅgāra*), the comic (*hāsyā*), the compassionate (*karuṇa*), the furious (*raudra*), the heroic (*vīra*), the terrible (*bhayānaka*), the odious (*bībhatsa*), and the marvelous (*adbhuta*). Abhinavagupta, in his commentary on Bharata's categories, adds a ninth *rasa*—the peaceful (*śānta*).

The important factor about all these states (*rasas*) is that they all occur in the detached and disinterested state engendered by attending to a work of art such as a play. These qualities hit a high point in the culminating *śānta* *rasa*. For example, in regard to anger (*raudra* *rasa*), one is not focused on anger toward those threatening one's interests; one feels or experiences the anger of that fictional character. Thus, classical Indian drama tended to ignore modern artistic demands such as the use of realistic and complex characters, naturalism in setting, and realism in plot. Instead, the play was seen as a highly artificial and contrived way to create these *rasas* in auditors who usually experience emotions (*bhāvas*) as they relate to themselves and their projects. The qualified auditor, one with a "similar heart" (*sahridaya*), is also a vital part to the experiencing of *rasas*. If the auditor is not prepared for the artwork, or if he or she is focused too much on issues centering on himself or herself, the details of the play will not interact with him or her to form the universal emotion (the *rasa*). Some classical commentators such as Bhattanayak (10th century CE) discuss the communicative potential of Bharata's *rasa* theory as *Sadharanikaran* (literarily, "simplification") and emphasize the simplification of the I–other relationship through one's relatively impersonal sharing of the mood or emotion of some portrayed character. Thus, the parallel experience of *rasa* is not only precipitated by a sympathetic heart (*sahridaya*); it also encourages states of convergence between an agent and other individuals (even fictional ones). This point of decreasing the distance

between self and others made rasa theory particularly valuable to Indian approaches to morality.

Rasa theory, especially as discussed by Abhinavagupta, was particularly important because it offered a chance for moral cultivation of the audience. *Moral cultivation* here implies a general improvement in how one relates to his or her self (*Atman*) and emotions. Abhinavagupta was influenced by the monistic strain of thought of *Vedanta*, a traditional school of thought (*darśan*) of classical India. Thus a major concern was in identifying ways to reduce one's belief in one's self being truly separate from other selves and from the objects of one's desires. Instead, the monistic view of *Vedanta* sees one's self (*Atman*) as not identical with one's physical body (or even an individuated soul). Instead, *Vedanta* follows the ancient Indian texts, the *Upaniśads*, and identifies one's self (*Atman*) with the ground of all that appears to be real (*Brahman*). In a real sense, one *is* all things. Thus, rasas are important as aesthetic instances of detachment and disinterestedness, states that are often hard to instantiate when one thinks that one's body and desires are truly the most important parts of the world in which one acts. All the rasas represent nonordinary (*alaukika*), non-individually based emotions. In this rarified or universal form they transcend individual experience and history and stand as a sort of aesthetic experience any auditor can have, as long as the artist has taken care in designing the artwork and as long as the auditor is open to a detached experience of the play qua art object. In a real sense, rasas constitute an experience of self as *Atman*—namely as separated from one's ego-driven desires and individuality.

Rasa theory holds at least three important points for the study of communication. First, the account given by Bharata and Abhinavagupta highly values the audience. Art objects work only insofar as they have a certain sort of interaction with a specific, actual audience. This theme is not far from Aristotelian and modern notions of communication being audience centered and effect driven. The auditor is said to play an important role in the actualizing of rasas. This includes being prepared or open in a certain way, as well as approaching the art object as an art object.

While this may lead one to see some notion of *identification* going on behind the rasa, such

identification is tempered by the second point rasa theory makes about communication. Artistic communication in rasa theory occurs only when the auditor is detached and disinterested in the action occurring in the drama. Thus, an auditor does not identify with a character on stage in regard to his or her specific ego needs, but instead experiences the general state of emotion evoked by observing that character. The main identity in such experience is in the mood that is experienced by both the character and the auditor. Rasa theory tends to use the evocation of experience in an audience in a communicative, albeit non-identification-based, fashion.

The third interesting point rasa theory makes concerning communication is that the detached communication that occurs in aesthetic contexts cannot be experienced in everyday communication. Classical rasa theory (that discussed here) was very emphatic about this—interested and individualized experience leads only to the temporary or transient *bhāvas*, not to the experience of a transcendental emotion (i.e., the *rasa*). Additional theorizing would be needed to extend the detachment and disinterestedness characteristic of the experience of dramatic plays to the interested and attached action of normal life. Thus, aesthetic communication differs from everyday communication from the perspective of rasa theory.

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See also Asian Communication Theory; Emotion and Communication; Hindu Communication Theory

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INFORMATION PROCESSING

See Cognitive Theories

INFORMATION THEORY

Information theory is the quantitative study of signal transmission. Primarily applicable to information technology and communications engineering, in human communication theory, it serves primarily as a metaphor for linear transmission between human senders and receivers. Although information theory has historical significance, contemporary theories of human communication rarely refer to it directly. Originating in physics, engineering, and mathematics, the theory addresses uncertainty in code systems, message redundancy, noise, channel capacity, and feedback. This entry defines basic concepts from the field, applies these to language and human communication, and summarizes insights about information transmission.

Information is a measure of uncertainty in a system of signals. In a counterintuitive way, information theory states that the higher the information in a system, the greater the uncertainty. This is because more information entails a larger number of states, which decreases clarity. The concept of *entropy* is the starting place for understanding this seemingly contradictory idea.

Entropy, taken from thermodynamics in physics, is the randomness or lack of predictability within a system. Highly entropic situations have little organization, reduced predictability, and therefore great uncertainty. In low-entropy systems, there is more organization, greater predictability, and therefore less uncertainty. Two dice have more entropy than one die, and a die has

more entropy than a coin flip. In thermodynamics, as atoms heat up, they “go crazy” and move all over the place in a frantic, entropic system. As they cool off, they slow down, assume a more organized order, and are more predictable. When entropy is high, there is more information; when it is low, there is less.

To grasp this correlation, think of making predictions based on a set of signs. If you worked in a chaotic organization in which so much is going on that you can never tell from one moment to the next what is going to happen, you would be experiencing “too much” information to process and predict outcomes. If the organization is simpler, with fewer variables to keep track of, prediction is easier because the information level would be lower. This is like cracking a code: Complex codes have more information and are harder than simple ones to decipher. A completely predictable situation is said to have *negentropy*. An example of negentropy is that every time you tap a certain place on your knee, your leg jerks. This is a completely predictable situation.

Another way to understand the concept of information is to think of the number of choices you could make in predicting an outcome: the more choices, the lower the predictability, and the greater the information inherent in the system. A complex system has many possible outcomes, choices, or alternatives, while a simple system has fewer. This is why there is more information in throwing a die than in tossing a coin. In the former, you have a 17% chance of being right; in the latter, a 50% chance.

The inverse of information is *redundancy*, which is a measure of predictability in the system. Like information, redundancy is a quantitative measure—the ratio of the entropy to the maximum amount possible in the system. Entropy is maximized when all alternatives are equally possible, as would be the case with a six-sided die. When a die is thrown, all sides have about a 17% chance of landing up. If the die is fixed and has two sides with one dot, there would be about a 35% chance of predicting this outcome, which is a measure of redundancy in the system. With the fake die, there would be more redundancy than with a fair one.

Language is an entropic code system because it consists of a sequence of signals (sounds in oral language, letters in written language, binary digits

in information technology). In writing, for example, one letter follows another in a sequence. If the letters appeared completely randomly, there would be 100% relative entropy—the highest possible information. Reading would be very difficult because the reader never could anticipate anything based on what had already been read. In actuality, however, language always has a lot of redundancy built in. In English, for example, the letter *q* is almost always followed by *u*. The article *a* is always followed by a noun or an adjective, and by the time a reader gets to the middle of a sentence, he or she can predict fairly well how the sentence will end. This kind of redundancy gives the language organization and patterning.

If language were 100% redundant, there would be no flexibility in how it could be used. Once the first letter was written, everything would follow automatically with complete predictability. It is clear, then, that language and other codes (including computer codes) should have some entropy and some redundancy. English, for example, has an average of about 50% relative entropy. Linguists and code breakers first look for the redundancy in the code to begin to decipher it.

Information and redundancy are very useful in designing transmission systems. Information theory does not address the meaning of a message, but it does provide equations that help engineers figure out how to get signals efficiently from one place to another. The basic model of information transmission appeared in 1949 in the classic text *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver. This simple model depicts a communication process of eight parts: (1) source, (2) message, (3) transmitter, (4) signal, (5) channel, (6) receiver, (7) destination, and (8) noise. The source sends a set of signals from a transmitter through a channel to a destination through a receiver. Noise is interference that can disrupt this process. The goal is for the message to get to the destination efficiently and accurately: The signal should arrive with sufficient fidelity to be deciphered.

In live human interaction, one person (the source) sends a set of oral signals (sounds) through the airwaves (channel) to the second person (destination) via that person's ears (receiver). If there is a lot of physical noise, this oral message may not get through. In terms of electronic communication, a

message may go through several links of signals and channels before reaching a final destination. Noise can occur anywhere in this complex transmission system, which is why the signal must have a certain amount of redundancy, which, indeed, does counteract noise. Further, the channel must have a certain capacity to carry the signal efficiently. *Channel capacity* is technically defined as the maximum amount of information that can be sent over a channel in a particular amount of time. The increasing demands on broadband systems to carry large amounts of information through the Internet suggest the importance of channel capacity. Transmission is considered efficient if the amount of information does not exceed channel capacity and there is enough redundancy in the signal to counteract the noise the signal may encounter in route.

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See also Cybernetics; System Theory

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INFORMATIZATION

Informatization, first coined in Japan in the late 1960s as *johoka*, is now used with at least the following three meanings: (1) intentional policies or strategies using information technologies to promote socioeconomic development; (2) the penetration of modern information and communication technologies into government, industry, and the home, in the broadest sense; and (3) the development of communication technologies, the increase of information flows, and the diffusion

of mass media and education among the general public.

Informatization Policies

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, futurology was popular, especially in the United States and Japan, and many social scientists and engineers attempted to predict the future based on some scientific or pseudoscientific methods. The important outcome of this intellectual fad was the birth of many new future-oriented concepts rather than futurology itself. Daniel Bell's "post-industrial society," Alvin Toffler's "third wave," Fritz Machlup's "knowledge economy," Tadao Umesao's "information industries," and Yoneji Masuda's "information society" are good examples.

If the information society is the society of the future and the information industry is the industry of the future, it would behoove us to promote *informatization*. Based on this idea, the Industrial Structure Council of the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry started informatization policies in 1965 as the Industrial Structure Reform Policy. The Japanese government not only provided measures to help computer and telecommunication industries but also conducted many social experiments using new information and communication machines such as videotext, high-speed facsimile, and TV telephone.

These attempts had a significant impact on neighboring countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. As the effects of informatization policies in these countries became obvious in the 1990s, similar policies were also adopted in Malaysia, Thailand, mainland China, and India.

In contrast, the Latin American and Eastern European countries, whose industrial levels were about the same as the East Asian countries mentioned above, were under the strong influence of neo-Marxist "dependency" theories; as a result, the idea of informatization was rejected for being too ideological. It was seen as a plot to accelerate efficiency, control labor, and maximize profits for the ruling classes. No matter which class informatization benefits, it seems that, just as industrialization in the 19th century caused industrial gaps, the acceptance or rejection of informatization in the 20th century causes a "digital gap" among different areas of the world.

What Caused Informatization?

There are contrasting views regarding the nature of technology. One is that new technologies emerge almost accidentally, as in the case of a genius's intuition. The other is that new technologies "are developed," reflecting the needs of the time. Actually, both of these views are true. It is well known that electromagnetism, which made the telegraph possible, was discovered accidentally when a magnetic coil dropped from Hans Christian Oersted's desk near a compass on the floor. As developed by Samuel Morse, however, this technology solved many serious problems of long distance international trade such as that between Europe and East Asia. In other words, this kind of technology was urgently needed by international traders of that time.

As another example, the idea of electronic digital computers (ENIAC) was born during World War II, and its purpose was to calculate trajectories and raise the hit rate of cannons. After the war, computers were first used in data processing in large organizations. This was followed by the penetration of computers into a variety of areas that the original developers had never imagined. When the transistor was invented at Bell Laboratories in the United States, the inventors had no idea how it could be used because it was very large and expensive. It was the Japanese Sony engineers who gave them an answer by making it smaller and inexpensive.

As these examples indicate, basic technologies that promoted informatization were not born out of carefully laid plans. These technologies, however, were refined and applied to many areas where they were potentially needed. But why informatization now? Abraham Maslow's "hierarchy of human needs" and Ronald Inglehart's "post-industrial values" are often referred to as having a possible answer to this question. According to these theories, human interests and concerns shift from basic needs such as food and security, once those needs are met, to "higher needs," including those of entertainment, news, information, and knowledge.

James Beniger offered an answer to the same question from a different perspective. According to Beniger, technologies are roughly divided into two categories: (1) technology to accelerate speed and enhance efficiency and (2) technology to control machines. Computers and information technologies

belong to the second category, and they were needed to control the former type of technologies that had developed to a dangerous level.

A Driving Force of Social Change

Informatization, in its broadest definition, refers to the development of, increase in, and diffusion of information throughout society. Informatization processes cannot help but impact society in a variety of ways, and scholars of informatization study the effects of informatization processes on social change. Many historical changes—from the decline of religion to the rise of nationalism, capitalism, and rationalism—have been linked to informatization. The degree to which newspapers promoted democracy and the mechanisms by which the diffusion of popular novels, television, and the telephone promoted individualism are some of the phenomena studied by scholars, across disciplines, who research informatization processes.

The study of informatization also involves potentially negative social impacts. Some modern information and telecommunication technologies, including the Internet, rental videos, on-demand TV services, and the mobile telephone, have been accused of splitting up the family, creating “excessive individualism,” and causing increases in divorce, crime, and mental illness. Whether the Internet promotes or hinders democracy is an important subject of informatization research.

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See also Asian Communication Theory; New Media Theory

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INOCULATION THEORY

Persuasion research in the 1950s found that providing two sides of an issue seemed to create greater resistance to later arguments. To explain this phenomenon, William McGuire and his colleagues a decade later began to explore ways in which messages might inoculate recipients against belief attacks. By 1964, he proposed the original inoculation theory. This theory says that persuasive message recipients become resistant to attitudinal attacks in the same way that bodies become immunized from viral attacks. A weak dose of the virus activates the immune system. Likewise, challenges to attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors make them more resistant to change if the exposure to counterarguments is given in weakened, small doses. The theory is relevant because unchallenged beliefs can be swayed if the holder is not used to defending them. A weak dose of a counterargument will cause the belief to become more resistant. In the medical venue, the approach has been more effective than the supportive treatment in producing resistance. In the persuasive venue, presenting arguments supporting beliefs is less effective than exposing the receiver to a weak attack on the belief.

In his first experiments, McGuire selected cultural truisms, or beliefs rarely challenged, such as brushing teeth. When considering expanding the boundaries of inoculation theory, he reasoned that because people tend to avoid arguments that oppose their views on controversial issues, almost all beliefs are protected from counterattack. John B. Pryor and Thomas M. Steinfatt offered an opposing view for extending inoculation's boundaries beyond cultural truisms in observing that almost no beliefs are completely protected. If one

rarely exposed one's beliefs to threats, those beliefs could be changed if attacked by a particular virus, as it were. Pryor and Steinfatt's rationale propelled the investigation of inoculation into controversial topics.

McGuire found that a passive reception of a message (requiring participants to read a section in which counterarguments were mentioned and rebuked) had a greater effect in making attitudes resistant to persuasion than did active reception (a writing assignment in which subjects explained their responses to the counterarguments). Participants in the reading conditions had more independent action in their immunizing treatments; that is, they had to work harder in the reading treatment than in the writing treatment and generate their own independent arguments in support of the original beliefs.

Subsequent research has shown that active, passive, and mixed refutational conditions can be effective in inoculation, but their effects are not necessarily the same and depend on other variables. Exposing a person to weakened, defense-stimulating forms of argument seems to be more effective in inoculation than exposing an individual to arguments supporting the individual's belief. This happens because threat provides an explicit forewarning of a challenge, enabling the recipient to prepare counterarguments. People prefer, however, to inoculate the beliefs of others by using bolstering strategies, even though these have been shown to be less effective than counterarguing strategies.

Inoculation is often used in courtrooms. An attorney says, "You're going to hear the prosecution call Mrs. Smith mean, evil, a terrible mother, and a poor member of society, but this is not true, as I will show you over the next couple of weeks." When the prosecutor stands up and states anything close to what the defense attorney has claimed he will, the jury is prepared, thinking he is acting exactly the way the defense said he would. This gives the jurors a way to ignore or even discount the prosecutor's arguments.

In the 1990s, long-distance phone service companies were hypercompetitive, trying to keep customers by inoculating them. An AT&T ad began by stressing that other companies are going to try to steal you from AT&T. An AT&T customer gets a call from "another phone company" boasting how much better its plan is over that of AT&T.

The customer is adamant about not being impressed.

Inoculation is used in political advertisements as well. Candidate A's ad might begin by saying that Candidate B is attacking him, then citing three or four things that candidate B is asserting against Candidate A, all presented in such a way as to activate the viewer's defense mechanisms for Candidate A.

The communicator with the goal to make attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors resistant to change should first warn the audience of a prevalent counterargument toward the attitude. The warning serves to activate the defense component. When individuals' beliefs are threatened, they immediately begin to generate defenses. Without this, optimal resistance will not be achieved. The next step is to make a weak attack. The communicator must remember that too strong a dose would overwhelm the audience member's immune system, as it were. The final step in the inoculation process is to encourage passive defense by generating a defensive response. The recipient's belief becomes strong only by doing the defensive work. In theory, when the message recipient listens to the weak attack, he or she will think of refutations for the attack. Like antibodies against a disease, the refutations form the foundation for attacking stronger arguments in the future.

Joshua A. Compton and Michael W. Pfau have pointed out that inoculation research proliferated in the 21st century. The role of threat, counterarguments in tandem with other theoretical concepts, involvement (the salience of an attitude to a subject), and the role of time in resistance are being explored. Research findings are leading to a keener awareness of how inoculation operates and to practical uses in public relations, marketing, and other realms.

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See also Attitude Theory; Learning and Communication; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories

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INQUIRY PROCESSES

Inquiry is a process of developing knowledge through research and theory building. A theory results from an ongoing process involving research and the refinement of theory. The general process of inquiry, branches of inquiry, the research and publication work that scholars undertake, communities of scholarship, and the process of theory development all contribute to an understanding of the nature of inquiry.

Nature of Inquiry

When scholars attempt to answer questions in a systematic way, they are engaged in inquiry. Many variations of inquiry exist, but all follow three sets of related activities—asking questions, making observations, and forming theories.

At base, all inquiry begins with interesting *questions*. What do we want to find out? *Questions of definition* seek clarification on concepts that delineate one thing from another—what something is and what it is not. *Questions of fact* ask about properties, connections, and characteristics. These questions form the basis for observations of how things appear in our experience. *Questions of value* look at the beauty, utility, or ethics of a set of ideas, experiences, or practices.

Questions determine what kind of *observations* to undertake, and there are many variations of observation. Some researchers look at behavior, some at self-reported feelings and thoughts, and some at records and discourse. Researchers may conduct observations firsthand, by doing experiments, by using instruments, by talking to people, or by careful reading and analysis.

The third part of inquiry is forming answers to questions, which is really the process of *theorizing*. Scholars carefully analyze their observations, interpret what they mean, and describe or explain what they saw in answer to their questions. Once patterns become apparent across situations, tentative theories can be created.

The three parts of inquiry—questions, observations, and theories—are intimately tied to one another in a circular way. Questions guide observations, observations form the basis of theories, theories help structure observations, and theories and observations suggest new questions.

Science, Humanities, Social Science

Three branches of scholarship primarily contribute to communication theory. These are science, humanities, and social science. *Science* is that branch of knowledge that relies mostly on objectivity, standardization, and quantification. Scientific research must be replicable, meaning that all observers using the same methods should come up with the same results. Scientists assume the world has a potentially observable structure and rely on methods of discovering this structure. Science is therefore mostly interested in nature.

Humanities is the branch of knowledge associated with subjectivity, or individual interpretation. Events may be understood in a number of ways, and scholars try to establish interpretations that make sense or are useful in answering certain kinds of questions. While science concentrates on what is “out there” in the world, humanities emphasizes what is “in here” within the interpreter. The humanities also are associated with human experience and human products such as literature, history, and philosophy, in which art, experience, and values are at stake.

Although often considered science, in reality the *social sciences* blend aspects of science and humanities. Because human social life is the object of social science, both objectivity and subjectivity are included. Social scientists who believe that social behavior can be observed objectively emphasize the scientific aspects of this branch; those who believe that individual subjective response is key emphasize humanistic methods. In fact, much of social science combines both—objective observation of patterns, followed by subjective interpretation of these patterns.

Some scholars study natural, biological, and behavioral aspects of communication, and they use scientific methods to do so. These researchers would feel quite comfortable characterizing themselves as “scientists.” Other researchers are more interested in discourse and media and look at these much as literature scholars or art critics analyze written artifacts. This group would feel quite comfortable in the world of humanities. Recognizing that the discipline of communication benefits from a *mélange* of approaches, most scholars in the field are most comfortable referring to communication as a social science.

Research and Publication

Inquiry follows a standard path across academic disciplines. Beginning from a point of curiosity, the scholar pursues inquiry into something significant in his or her own life, something previously studied in the literature, a topic of conversation within a group of scholars, or questions raised by students. Since most scholars have advanced degrees, they may begin a line of work with the dissertation or other work started in graduate school. Once established, a professional scholar must continue a research program in order to get pay raises, tenure, and promotion. As well, grant money, travel funds, and recognitions and awards are incentives for ongoing inquiry.

Inquiry is never a solitary process but relies heavily on interaction within the scholarly community. Often professors work on ideas with students in the classroom or with graduate students interested in similar subject matters. Scholars frequently refine their ideas in convention papers presented to groups of colleagues at meetings and later submitted for publication, usually in academic journals. Peer reviewers provide additional input that can help refine questions, observations, and theories. Indeed, the peer-review process is vital to the advancement of inquiry in all fields. Often papers are critiqued publicly by convention panel respondents and later by journal commentators who read and critique the manuscript for possible publication.

In the world of research and theory, two forms of publication are valued most—the journal article and the scholarly book. A journal article can appear in any of a number of peer-reviewed national and regional journals. Many journals

publish articles relevant to communication inquiry, including the prestigious *Communication Theory*, published by the International Communication Association. Within the long list of highly regarded journals are, for example, *Human Communication Research*, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, and *Communication Monographs*. Since only the best articles are published in journals of this stature, these outlets showcase leading research and theory at any given moment in the field. Scholars subscribe to paper or online versions of the journals most relevant to their own work and rely on these to provide information about the latest advancements in their areas of interest.

No substitute for rigorous peer review exists. The evaluation of inquiry is subjective, and consensus is still the primary gauge of quality in a field of study. Scholars do disagree about whether a particular line of research and theory building is worthy, so, at least in the social sciences, the establishment of universal consensus is impossible. It is possible and appropriate, however, to ask whether a line of work has credibility within a particular community of scholars. Lines of inquiry and resulting theories judged generally interesting, useful, or valid over time become the standards for scholars engaged in those areas of work.

Much scholarly work is published in larger monograph form, usually in academic books published by university and academic presses. Indeed, many important theories of communication have come out in this form. Another common and helpful kind of book consists of edited volumes of several chapters related to a topic. The book editor invites various well-known scholars to write chapters on their own work, and these summaries can be helpful for students and researchers to get a sense of the state of the art in regard to the subjects covered by the book.

Communities of Scholarship

Although the processes outlined in the previous sections are nearly universal, they belie the complexity and variation of work within a field like communication. The details of inquiry vary significantly from one group of scholars to another. In this section, three lines of difference that distinguish among traditions of inquiry in communication are examined.

Differences of Focus

The first line of difference deals with objects on which the researcher–theorist chooses to focus. Typically, there are three—individuals, social relations, and texts. A scholar’s focus determines in large measure what he or she observes, and this is primarily determined by the kinds of things the scholar finds most fascinating.

Some are intrigued by *individual human behavior* and focus on the individual communicator. These scholars are curious about why people behave as they do; how people think; and how thoughts, feelings, and emotions relate to actions. This kind of inquiry consists largely of research based on observation and measurement of behavior. Individually oriented communication scholars spend a lot of time classifying behavior into types and establishing causal links between various antecedents and behavioral outcomes. Trait theories that provide typologies of individual behavior provide a good example of this kind of work.

Some scholars are more interested in *interpersonal patterns of interaction* and relationships among individuals. Here the focus is on connections between individuals, not so much on individual behavior itself. Such work often observes dyads, groups, organizations, and communities. These scholars notice different types of relationships, observe patterns of mutual behavior, and look for system connections. Indeed, a body of work in relational theories illustrates this focus.

A third focus in communication inquiry is *text or discourse*. Although nonverbal forms can be a kind of text, this focus usually consists of language and messages. Such scholars look at what people say and how messages are used in practical situations. Many theories of communication result from this focus. One example is conversation analysis, which explains how people organize their talk through a series of turns.

Differences of Method

Inquiry also differs in terms of how observations are made. For some, observation is a matter of objective measurement, and for others it is subjective interpretation. This difference reflects the distinction made earlier in this entry between science and humanities. This is a difference in how scholars

work and what counts as data in their research. Should data be quantitative and objective, or should it be a qualitative reading or judgment of a situation or text? Does the scholar rely on an instrument that detects some quality, or is the scholar himself or herself the instrument? All researchers acknowledge that some interpretation is necessary, but they disagree on how primary the interpretation is to the inquiry process. Interviews are often used as a source of data in communication research. Here the researcher asks subjects questions about their experience and then interprets their qualitative (not quantitative) responses.

For example, much inquiry into interpersonal communication relies on experiments in which test conditions are set up in a laboratory and outcome measurements taken to identify causal patterns in various interpersonal situations. On the other hand, much media research relies on careful examination and interpretation of the media environment.

Differences of Value

Inquiry divides along a third line as well—the degree to which scholars express their values in their work. Two general schools capture this fracture point. The first is a generally *descriptive* approach, in which the scholar aims to describe and explain what is observed without evaluative comment; the second is *critical* in stating what is good and/or bad about what is observed. The descriptive approach sees itself as neutral in observation, while the critical approach projects an expressly political perspective. Most academics today would not claim that some work is objectively neutral and other work is value-laden, but instead acknowledge that not all scholars acknowledge their values explicitly. Notice the difference, for example, between ethnography, which aims to describe cultural patterns, and critical ethnography, which aims to cast light on the oppressive structures within certain cultural patterns.

Inquiry Over Time

Inquiry is a process, meaning that it is dynamic. Scholars do not just conduct one inquiry or single study to discover the truth of a matter and then move to a new subject. Instead, they continually evolve their work through ongoing inquiry that

refines questions, observations, and theoretical statements. You can see this clearly in the research/theory literature in any aspect of the field. Ideas change, which leads to fresh research and new ways of thinking about the subject. Thus, knowledge within a topical area grows and changes through ongoing inquiry. This change occurs in several ways.

The first is *incremental growth*. Here knowledge is added piece by piece. Over time, more questions are asked, more observations are made, and theories expand in number, each helping to explain a different aspect of the process. These theories are not really competitive, but each offers a different bit that adds to how we can understand a topic. In incremental growth, knowledge expands piece by piece. Attitude theory is a good example of incremental growth. From the 1940s through the 1970s, understandings of attitude and attitude change grew incrementally as scholars understood more and more about attitudes.

The second way in which the knowledge base changes is through *developmental growth*. Here individual theories become increasingly refined and exacting. They improve over time in their power, validity, and utility. A theory that began as a simple idea expands and grows to explain more variables and provide a more complete picture of the topic. The theory of the coordinated management of meaning is a good example. Beginning with a relatively small set of concepts, the theory has developed over the years to include a wide variety of ideas that expand the theory's usefulness for explaining many communication phenomena.

The third means of change is *canonical development*. The canon consists of the predominant lines of work and resulting theories at a given time. The canon, or set of theories in vogue, expresses the state of knowledge during this period in the history of the field. But the canon changes as new theories are admitted and old ones decline. Thus knowledge changes as the canon changes. Media effects studies offer a perfect example of canonical development. Once restricted to theories of how media affect audiences, the canon has shifted a number of times over the years to (a) how audiences use and affect media, (b) how media create communities, and (c) how media become personal and social tools.

Of course, knowledge typically changes in all three ways simultaneously. These three processes taken together characterize the normal course of

events, but sometimes a new discovery upsets this normal course of change by shifting the entire perspective on how we view the subject matter. This is change by *revolution*. After a period of stability in which knowledge grew incrementally, developmentally, and canonically, this entire course of events is called into question, perhaps by a new line of inquiry, that requires a complete transformation in thinking. This happened in critical theory. During much of the 20th century, critical theory was based on Marxist ideas, which posited preexisting oppressive social structures tied intimately to class and economics. However, toward the end of the century, cultural studies began to look more closely at how oppressive structures change and evolve in a dynamic power struggle among communities, which transformed the nature of social critique.

Stephen W. Littlejohn

See also Metatheory; Theory; Traditions of Communication Theory

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INSTITUTIONAL THEORIES OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Institutions are socially constructed frameworks composed of conventions that prescribe behavior, cognition, and communication in given contexts.

Institutions are maintained or changed by people who act and interact with each other. Examples of institutions include long-established organizations such as universities or hospitals but also include widespread practices such as marriage or voting and ways of working and interacting, such as markets, governments, and the professions. Institutions are important to organizations because they become taken for granted, transcend and penetrate particular organizations, and are constituted by normative systems and cognitive understandings that give enduring meaning to social exchange, thus enabling a self-reproducing social order. Thus, institutions may be thought of as the foundations of organizations. This entry explores the history of the institutional approach to organizational communication, the communicative nature of institutions, and the key concepts used in institutional theory and analysis. The process of institutionalization is also discussed.

History of the Institutional Approach

The institutional school of thought has its roots in the work of the 19th-century German sociologist Max Weber, who compared and contrasted historical modes of organization in China, Rome, and Germany. Weber defined institutions as involuntary membership associations, such as the church or the state, to which individuals were permanently attached by virtue of their birth.

The thread of the institutional school was picked up in the 1940s by Philip Selznick, whose studies of leadership and administration in the Tennessee Valley Authority and local communities showed how organized efforts were constrained by local, stronger forces. *Co-optation* is the term Selznick used to describe how local community institutions found ways to express themselves in spite of the power and resources of the federal government. In the 1950s, Peter Berger picked up the concept in his work outlining how social change had eroded traditional institutions and left the modern person with a seemingly rudderless existence. Berger drew on the work of the German philosopher Arnold Gehlen, who viewed institutions as a human extension of *instincts* and was concerned with *deinstitutionalization* and the consequent drift of modern people away from tradition.

The institutional school of organizational sociology arose in the late 1970s, led by John Meyer and Brian Rowan's observation that much of an organization's structure was a symbolic reflection of external forces such as markets and laws governing hiring practices. They coined the term *rational myth* to describe an untested shared belief about the rational functioning of organizations. Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell supplemented this perspective on organizations with their observation that organizations were constrained by the fieldwide forces of *coercive*, *mimetic*, and *normative isomorphism*. These are structural parallels (isomorphism) based on force (coercion), imitation (mimetic), and rules and conventions (norms), which resulted in recognizable similarities in fields of organizations. DiMaggio and Powell offered a hook for communication scholars in their recognition of the role of increasing information requirements as a force shaping organizations. Ultimately, the institutional approach to organizational communication emphasizes the role of messages external to organizations as impinging on the intentions and behaviors of actors within organizations.

Distinctiveness of the Institutional Approach

An institutional approach to organizational communication emphasizes several aspects in contrast to micro, intraorganizational approaches. First, an institutional approach directs attention to formal communication, defined as the media of written codes. These include laws at district, regional, local, state, federal, and international levels of jurisdiction. Formal codes also include lawlike policies enacted by nongovernmental associations that establish procedures and unquestioned practices. Although not enforceable as government policies, the codes of professional and business associations have weight that can sometimes be the basis of governmental policies. Formal media also include contracts that stipulate the activities of parties that include corporate entities and their members. Such contracts may be explicit agreements between legal entities, such as those that stipulate products or services to be provided to or delivered according to certain terms and in exchange for certain considerations. The contracts may also stipulate how individuals shall perform services. In both cases it is the legal codes that give organizations

their lives well independent of their members. Rule-guided behavior may be taken for granted and may not be available as explicit messages or even as social objects that managers can isolate.

An institutional approach also requires attention to the boundaries of organizations. One reason that interest in organizational identity and identification runs so high in the early 21st century is that individuals move quite freely across organizational boundaries. Thus, their attachment to organizations is problematic. An institutional view observes that specific organizations' boundaries may well be defined better by external (macro) rather than internal (micro) forces. Nominally boundaries are defined by membership, activity, and space. However, the activities of many organizations, especially service and knowledge-based organizations, appear to be losing their distinctiveness. Moreover, with the digital revolution, space is hardly a boundary for many organizations. Thus, industry-wide norms and regulations may be better clues to what bounds particular organizations and the careers of their members.

An institutional perspective on organizations also directs attention to new levels of analysis. In addition to the traditional individual, group, and organizational levels of analysis, the institutional perspective identifies industry, sector, region, and national levels. The institutional perspective observes many commonalities among organizations within sectors. In addition to aggregated levels of organization such as the aforementioned, the institutional point of view identifies professions, trade associations, unions, and accrediting agencies as having influence across whole sectors of organizations. The institutional perspective therefore sees opportunities to identify patterns and trends across organizations that would be unapparent when studied on an organization-by-organization basis.

In addition, an institutional perspective offers an opportunity to understand the role of history, change, and time in the life of organizations. Many studies of organizations are based on observations of a very short duration in the lives of organizations. Responses to single surveys or observations of events over the period of as long as a year still remain a very short period in terms of the duration of institutions. The institutional view emphasizes the role that slow change plays in the lives of organizations and

their members. Even the interpretation of time within organizations, though realized in the interaction of individuals, would find replication in other similar organizations.

An institutional approach may seem to be one that would neglect or lack focus for individual behavior. But by contrast, such a view also offers a greater understanding of agency. By observing behavior in multiple organizations, one gains a new view of individual behavior, its patterns, causes, and consequences. If persons in apparently separate organizational locations are simultaneously communicating in similar ways, for similar purposes, we may find common causes for that behavior. On the other hand, if individuals behave differently across similar organizations, we can isolate the circumstances that make agency and creativity unique. Thus, the focus of the institutional lens is organizational but not on individual organizations.

Finally, an institutional view offers an opportunity to study the way cultures external to organizations are manifest within organizations. While the vast majority of communication studies are based in North America, few control for the effects of culture external to the organization. Although valid arguments can be made for the creation of culture in the very micro processes of organizational life, we know also that beliefs have lives of their own well beyond an organization, and that these also have an influence on what happens within an organization.

One critique of an institutional view is that it cannot be distinguished from a *cultural* approach, also emphasizing commonly held beliefs and values. But the institutional lens recognizes and attends to a particular type of constellation of values and beliefs—those that contribute to the creation of cultural schemes defining means–ends relationships and standardizing systems of control over activities and people. Thus we might say that the institutional approach is consistent with a cultural approach but in particular is focused on rational beliefs and rules about means and ends.

Key Concepts in the Institutional Approach

The implication of this emphasis on rational rules for organizational communication scholarship is that it identifies a particular kind of message. The relationship of any particular organization to

institutions in its environment has been described as a particular type of *message flow*. Organizations are characterized by interactive flows of messages that allow them to manage their members, to structure themselves, and to coordinate their activities. The process of managing an organization's relationship with its external environment of other organizations, regulators, competitors, customers, and diffuse media may be thought of as *institutional positioning* via the use of *institutional rhetoric*, or messages that offer specific interpretations of social issues of importance to the organization's survival and success. Examples of institutional rhetoric include corporate statements of social responsibility, policies on the environment, or other broad, often indirect marketing campaigns aimed at diffuse audiences.

The institutional view results in several propositions that may guide organizational communication research. First, communication processes like the message flows mentioned above sustain institutions. That is, organizational practices reinforce institutions. Second, communication aligns organizations with institutions. Organizations can choose to align themselves with certain institutions via media relations, hiring practices, or employment policies. Third, institutions operate in organizing through formal communication. Fourth, the success of boundary-spanning communication between organizations depends in part on the presence of shared institutions, such as trade associations, markets, or professions. Fifth, institutional hierarchy, that is, the pattern of values and priorities in a particular organizational field, is manifested in the organizing behaviors of managers and participants in particular organizations.

Institutionalization

Communication scholars have also developed contributions to understanding how institutions arise. The prevailing view is that institutions arise through a recursive process very similar to *structuration*, which is the accumulation of past practices and previous understandings that set conditions for future action. Thus one way of thinking about institutional creation is as *sedimented* social habits. Once formed, the habits guide future social action without the conscious intent of actors.

A more detailed view involves a four-stage process model of institutionalization. *Encoding* involves individuals' internalizing rules and interpretations of behavior appropriate for particular settings, which can occur through simple socialization but might also involve learning formal rules or customary work procedures. The second moment involves *enacting* the coded script for behavior. Importantly, the actors may or may not be conscious of the reasoning behind the action, for they may be simply following a customary way of doing business. In the third moment in institutionalization, scripts may be *revised* or *replicated* as individuals reenact previously learned routines or resist a routine and revise action. Without considerable external support or pressure, revision is typically less likely than replication. The fourth and final moment of institutionalization involves *objectification* and *externalization* of the patterned behaviors and interactions produced, wherein particular actions are disassociated from particular historical circumstances. The patterned behaviors, or what we refer to as institutions, acquire a normative, unchanging quality, and their relationship to the interests of specific actors becomes obscured. In this way, institutions become an important but hidden context for organizational communication.

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See also Actor–Network Theory; Community of Practice; Corporate Colonization Theory; Critical Theory; Group and Organizational Structuration Theory; Organizational Communication Theories; Structuration Theory; System Theory

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INTEGRATED THREAT THEORY

See Conflict Communication Theories

INTERACTION ADAPTATION THEORY

Interaction adaptation theory (IAT) was developed by Judee Burgoon, Lesa Stern, and Leesa Dillman. Interested in the ways in which people adapt to one another in dyads, the research team, led by Burgoon, realized that many of the theories in this area did not attend to a broad array of communication behaviors and functions, and the theories often undervalued the effect of one person's behavior on another person during everyday encounters. To address these concerns, Burgoon, Stern, and Dillman developed IAT and formally introduced their theory in 1995. IAT built on previous theoretical work on interpersonal adaptation and dyadic interaction processes, particularly expanding Burgoon's expectancy violations theory, and provided a more comprehensive explanation of interpersonal adaptation by incorporating a stronger emphasis on biological and sociological influences. IAT is predicated on nine guiding principles and five fundamental concepts.

Guiding Principles

The first principle of IAT is that people are innately predisposed to adapt and adjust their interaction patterns to each other. For example, if one person turns slightly toward the other person, the second

individual may turn slightly away in response. This inclination to adjust one's behavior fulfills a variety of purposes, including survival, communication, and coordination needs. The second principle of IAT is that people biologically move toward synchronicity with each other. In other words, there is biological pressure for interaction behaviors to mesh together and match each other at particular moments in time, as happens, for example, when parent and infant sounds and movements become coordinated with each other. The only exception to this principle is when physical safety or comfort is in question. The third principle of IAT is that one's needs for closeness (need to approach and be approached) and avoidance (or separation) are cyclical and dialectical rather than uniformly fixed. When approach needs are met, then the pull of avoidance needs becomes stronger and vice versa. You might see this principle in action when, for example, two people stand close together at a crowded party, but as soon as there is a little more room in the area, they step or lean away from each other.

The fourth principle of IAT is that in a social situation, people tend to reciprocate and match each other's behaviors. This is especially true in socially polite, normative, and routine communicative interactions and less true when communicators have a structural relationship such as mutual role expectations. Smiling is a good example. Two strangers meeting at a party will probably exchange smiles, but you might not see the same behavior in a routine task interaction at the workplace. The fifth principle of IAT is that when communicating with each other, people exhibit both reciprocal and compensatory behaviors. To build rapport, an employee might exhibit reciprocity, through behaviors that function similarly, such as laughing and showing pleasant facial expressions whenever the boss does the same. A librarian might show compensatory behaviors that function in opposing ways, such as lowering one's voice when a patron is talking loudly. The sixth principle of IAT is that, although people have biological and sociological pressures to adapt to one another, the degree of strategic adaptation will vary depending on several factors, such as the consistency of an individual's behavior, an individual's awareness of himself or herself and of the other person, the ability to adjust behavior in response to others, and cultural differences.

The seventh principle of IAT is that there are limits to the prevailing interaction patterns. That is, biological, psychological, and social needs combine to limit how much individuals will tend to adapt. Outside these parameters, nonaccommodation and compensation are likely to occur. For example, individuals with a low need for social interaction with others may adapt less than individuals with a high need for interaction. The eighth principle of IAT is that there are many factors outside and inside the dyad that can moderate the pattern of adaptation in an interaction, such as nature of the relationship, location of the interaction, physical attractiveness, age, and gender. The ninth principle of IAT is that communicative functions of behaviors are crucial for understanding interpersonal adaptation rather than individual behaviors isolated from their functions. A clear example of this is that behaving dominantly can be done in a variety of ways (e.g., scowling, pointing a finger, placing the arms akimbo, and yelling). Given that communicative functions can be fulfilled with multiple behaviors, examining adaptation by comparing only a single behavior may lead to inaccurate conclusions.

Fundamental Concepts

In any interaction, there are three classes of interrelated factors that are taken into account by individuals in their interpersonal adaptation behavior. *Required factors* are those that are biological in origin and pertain to basic human survival and safety needs. For example, if one person swings a fist at another person, the second individual would probably turn and move away to protect more vulnerable parts of his or her body. *Expected factors* are those that are sociological in origin, stemming from social norms, cultural norms, communicative goals, and general knowledge of an interaction partner's behavior. For example, when one person greets another, the other person is obligated to respond similarly. This is a cultural norm. *Desired factors* are individualized and idiosyncratic to a person's specific preferences and goals. Close friends, for instance, may have a specialized greeting ritual that involves punching each other on the arm. These three sets of factors—required, expected, and desired—are the first three fundamental concepts of the theory. The fourth relates to interactional position.

The *interactional position* represents the likely interaction behavior of an individual or the likely projected interaction behavior of another person based on the hierarchical combination of the required (needed), expected (anticipated), and desired (preferred) classes of factors. That is, what is required is more heavily weighted in importance than what is expected and desired; what is expected is more heavily weighted in importance than what is desired. In the case of greeting another person, an interactional position may be the pooled assessment of the need to show no ill intentions (required factors); sociocultural expectations for enacting a greeting, as in shaking hands, kissing, or bowing toward each other (expected factors); and the unique greeting preferences of the individuals, such as mock fighting or a fraternity handshake (desired factors). If safety is in question, then the interactional position will likely be based on behaviors that show no harm, rather than expected and desired factors. When safety is not an issue, then expected and desired factors play a more significant role, respectively. For instance, if a person from Japan greets an American, the Japanese person may extend his or her hand instead of bowing (expected taking precedence over desired factors). If these people from Japan and the United States are old friends from school, then they may prefer their unique college greeting by hugging each other, slapping each other on the back twice, and doing three fist bumps (emphasizing desired factors when required and expected factors are not pressing).

The fifth basic concept, *actual behavior*, is a person's behavior in an interaction. Both interactional position and actual behavior lie on a continuum from positively valenced, meaning liked, to negatively valenced, or unliked. According to IAT, dyadic interaction patterns are determined by comparing each person's interactional position with the partner's actual behavior. When there is no discrepancy between the interactional position and actual behavior, they are congruent, and the interaction patterns of matching and reciprocity will be evident in the communicative encounter. For instance, suppose a husband and wife are having a disagreement; if the interactional position is to be moderately involved in the discussion by the husband, and the husband's actual behavior exhibits this moderate involvement, then according to

IAT, the wife will reciprocate with comparable involvement behaviors. Similarly, when there is a slight discrepancy between the interactional position and actual behavior, this discrepancy will likely go unnoticed and will result in the same pattern as when there was no discrepancy.

When there is a large enough discrepancy between the interactional position and a partner's actual behavior, people will adapt toward whichever is more positively valenced, the interactional position or the partner's actual behavior. If the actual behavior is more positively valenced than the interactional position, then convergence, matching, and reciprocity are the predicted interaction patterns. Continuing with the disagreeing-couple example, if the interactional position is moderate conversational involvement by the husband, and the husband actually behaves in a more highly involved manner (which is welcomed), then the wife will respond with more conversational involvement too. If the interactional position is more positively valenced than the actual behavior, then divergence, compensation, and maintenance are the predicted interaction patterns. If the interactional position is a moderate level of involvement by the husband, and the husband's actual behavior is highly involved (but it is unwelcome and disliked), then IAT predicts that the wife will maintain her own level of involvement or will show reduced involvement behaviors in the interaction.

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See also Accommodation Theory; Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory; Expectancy Violations Theory; Immediacy; Nonverbal Communication Theories

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INTERACTION INVOLVEMENT

Interaction involvement is defined as the extent to which an individual participates in a social environment. This entails the individual's being aware of his or her own thoughts/feelings about messages from others, as well as attending to the likely meanings other people intend for their messages. It also means responding to those messages in an effective, appropriate manner. As such, interaction involvement is a fundamental element of competent interpersonal communication. This entry describes the components of interaction involvement and how these relate to interpersonal communication.

The concept of interaction involvement is grounded in the early work of Erving Goffman. Among other important ideas, Goffman observed that interpersonal society is governed by the meanings and interpretations people attribute to social acts, the pattern of verbal and nonverbal behavior that expresses one's view of the situation and evaluation of the participants, including self. Such a view of communication underscores the realities of interpersonal society as extremely fragile, whereby the slightest untoward act can potentially tear a delicately woven social fabric and significantly affect how one sees the relationships among participants and the reality of what is going on at a particular moment. Thus, the collective sense of social reality based on interaction is sustained by each person's assumed responsibility for regulating the flow of communicative events.

Consistent with most contemporary views of interpersonal communication competence, the central idea of interaction involvement is individuals' ability to regulate the flow of communicative events. Based on Goffman, interaction involvement consists of three related components, attentiveness, perceptiveness, and responsiveness.

Attentiveness is the most basic component of interaction involvement. It is concerned with an individual's attention to visual and auditory sources of information in the immediate social environment. For example, attentiveness includes listening carefully to what others say, taking note of what appear to be significant nonverbal cues, and keeping focused on the social events as they evolve. Goffman notes several ways in which individuals may become inattentive during social interaction. For example, one of the most common ways is to become preoccupied with something unrelated to the present conversation; another is to overly focus on some aspect of the conversation to the point that other important matters are missed or only partially processed.

Attentiveness to the flow of communicative events is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for adequate monitoring of the expressive order. One must also demonstrate *perceptiveness*, in other words, awareness of the meanings/interpretations others have placed on one's behavior and what meanings/interpretations one should perhaps place on their behavior. Basically, perceptiveness is one's ability to determine and integrate meanings associated with self and other(s) and generally understand what is going on in a particular social encounter. Examples of perceptiveness include suspecting that a person is lying, understanding what another's emotional needs are, and realizing that one has behaved inappropriately or at least may have been seen as such by others.

The first two components of interaction involvement—attentiveness and perceptiveness—reside in the cognitive/affective domain. The third component, *responsiveness*, lies in the behavioral domain. It is concerned with an individual's ability to adapt to the immediate social environment by knowing what to say and when to say it. As such, responsiveness is important to Goffman's notion of social acts, the pattern of verbal and nonverbal behavior that constitutes the expressive order.

The research on interaction involvement has generally taken two paths. One set of studies has examined various cognitive/affective aspects of people who are high and low in interaction involvement, while another set of studies has examined the verbal and nonverbal behavior of communicators who vary in their interaction involvement. Among other things, it has been

reported that high-involved people, in comparison with low-involved individuals, have higher self-esteem, are more emotionally stable, generally experience more positive and less negative moods, and have higher self-reported communication competence. The second line of research has revealed several observable differences between high- and low-involved individuals. One study found that high-involved communicators are better able to obtain sensitive information from another with minimal face loss (e.g., embarrassment). Another study showed that high-involved people use more immediate language, speak with greater certainty, and use more relational pronoun references in their interpersonal communication than their low-involved counterparts do. Other studies reveal that low-involved communicators often respond to their conversation partner's utterances at a surface text level, which implies that their responses are less complex, less elaborate, and less likely to extend the topic of conversation in meaningful ways.

It is important to note that the research on interaction involvement has been based on a self-report trait scale. While most of the research hypotheses have been supported about interaction involvement, defining it in a traitlike fashion has restricted understanding of how involvement influences communication in an ongoing, dynamic manner. For example, the trait approach emphasizes how people who are characteristically high or low in interaction involvement tend to behave, but it is not particularly informative about individuals who are less extreme or how or why individuals' interaction involvement varies over the course of a given conversation. Such online monitoring of individuals' interaction involvement poses a major methodological challenge that is not likely to be solved in the near future.

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See also Face Negotiation Theory; Facework Theories; Impression Management; Politeness Theory; Social Interaction Theories; Trait Theory

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INTERACTION PROCESS ANALYSIS

Robert F. Bales was among the first to investigate communication processes in small decision-making groups. He developed the interaction process analysis (IPA), a tool for coding contributions to discussion. The IPA is a category-based system, and as is often the case with such systems, the distinctions among the categories reflect assumptions regarding characteristics of discussion; it is a deductive taxonomy. Bales assumed that contributions to discussion were purposeful in the sense that they advanced the group toward a desired or optimal outcome and that the purposes or functions of the contributions influence what is said and to whom. Having first appeared in 1950 in his book *Interaction Process Analysis: A Method for the Study of Small Groups*, the IPA, including its theoretical underpinnings, has been reframed and revised through the years, most notably by Bales himself. A consistent feature of the IPA is a systems approach, with *equilibrium* a key concept; group members endeavor to maintain a balance between focusing on the task and interpersonal relationships within the group. The IPA reflects this assumption, most notably in framing contributions to discussion as either task or socioemotional (i.e., relational) in nature.

Features of Group Discussion

Groups as Systems

Bales's model of group interaction is based on the system metaphor. The elements of a system, in this case the group members, are interdependent; each member's actions affect and are affected by

those of other members. For example, the extent to which a given member participates during discussion is directly related to the participation of the other members. Systems have an optimal operating state, and members are compelled to behave in ways that maintain that state. Systems, however, do not operate in a vacuum; environmental pressures (e.g., a new task, new members, changes in political structure) influence the working atmosphere of the group. When such changes occur, members work to return the group to its optimal state (or, perhaps, evaluate and accept the new state when it is advantageous to do so).

Functions of Group Discussion

People join (or are assigned to work in) groups because of the assumption that the outputs of groups are superior to those of individuals. Yet group work often involves disagreement, give-and-take, and compromise, which often leaves some members unhappy with or dispirited about the process and its outcomes. For example, a member's suggestion might be disregarded in favor of one proposed by another member. The disaffected member may become reticent to contribute further or may behave passive-aggressively, neither of which is desirable because of its potential negative effect on outcomes. It is in the group's interest to prevent such situations from occurring.

There will be times when task concerns dominate discussion and other times when relational issues will, but overemphasizing one means that important issues related to the other go unaddressed. Bales argued that groups need to balance their focus on task and socioemotional concerns in order to succeed. Bales (with Fred L. Strodbeck) opined that discussion is characterized by phases—periods when groups naturally focus on task or relational problems. In his initial treatment, Bales (and Strodbeck) argued that groups, at various times, focus on *orientation*, *evaluation*, and *control*. Orientation is the development of familiarity with a problem (or the reduction of uncertainty about it), evaluation the assessment of possible solutions, and control the exertion of pressure on members to adopt a particular position advocated by others. These task-based phases are complemented by relationship-based phases: *solidarity*, *tension reduction*, and *group identification*.

Successful groups tend to display these cycles, whereas unsuccessful groups do not.

Leadership

Most groups have leaders, some of whom are designated by the organization or institution (e.g., a jury foreperson) and others who emerge in initially leaderless groups (and in some cases, leaders emerge in groups with a designated leader). In either case, leaders in successful groups encourage groups to focus on task or relational concerns when appropriate. It is not always the case, however, that one leader can successfully focus the group task or relationship issues. Research has also documented cases in which two types of leaders emerge, one whose focus is on task issues (and is often the most frequent participator) and another who emphasizes relational concerns (typically not the most frequent participator). Groups tend to be successful if both types of leaders emerge and are less so if only one type of leader influences discussion.

The Interaction Process Analysis Categories

The IPA consists of 12 categories, with 6 that index task comments and 6 that deal with relational comments. The 6 task categories are *gives opinion*, *gives orientation/information*, *gives suggestion*, *asks for opinion*, *asks for orientation/information*, and *asks for suggestions*. (Presumably, one could ask for suggestions or opinions about how to handle relationships in the group, but such comments would not be coded as task-based contributions.) The 6 that reflect socioemotional concerns are *shows solidarity/seems friendly*, *dramatizes/releases tension*, *shows agreement*, *shows disagreement*, *shows tension*, and *shows antagonism/seems unfriendly*. Clearly, the latter three types are negatively valenced (i.e., they worsen relationships) whereas the first three are positive. Successful groups tend to emphasize the more positive relationship messages and balance those with task-related comments.

Bales's work provided a model for examining the character of discourse, as well as a basis for understanding which contributions are likely to be made and when during discussion. Not all his predictions and assumptions were supported (e.g., a predictable cycle of group phases), but perhaps his

greatest contribution was to show how and why communication matters during small-group decision making. His work still permeates communication research, most notably in the variations on the functional approach to groups.

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See also Cybernetics; Group Communication Theories; System Theory

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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

The study of intercultural communication competence is an extension of communication competence with a specific application to culture. The complexity of culture makes the study of communication competence more dynamic. The globalization of human society due to the rapid development of communication and transportation technology also makes the study of intercultural communication competence more critical and significant in promoting productive and successful communication among people from different cultural, racial, and religious backgrounds.

The three models developed by Guo-Ming Chen and his colleagues in 1987, 1996, and 2005 illustrate the content, scope, and history of the study of intercultural communication competence.

Progression of Theories

Initial Work: 1987

In 1987, based on a comprehensive literature review from a variety of disciplines, Chen defined communication competence as the individual's ability to execute certain actions in order to elicit a desired response in a specific environment. When the concept is applied to the intercultural context, culture itself should be emphasized. The model of intercultural communication competence generated from the literature was comprised of four dimensions, and each dimension contains four components. The first dimension, *personal attributes*, includes self-disclosure (the ability to self-disclose or be open to others), self-awareness (the ability to monitor or be aware of oneself), self-concept (the ability to develop a positive self-concept), and social relaxation (the ability to be relaxed in social interaction). The second dimension, *communication skills*, includes message skills (the ability to send and receive messages), social skills (the ability to demonstrate social skills), flexibility (the ability to demonstrate behavioral flexibility), and interaction management (the ability to manage interactions). The third dimension, *psychological adaptation*, includes frustration (the ability to deal with frustration), stress (the ability to deal with stress), alienation (the ability to deal with social alienation), and ambiguity (the ability to deal with ambiguous situations). The last dimension, *cultural awareness*, includes social values (the ability to understand social values), social customs (the ability to understand social customs), social norms (the ability to understand social norms), and social systems (the ability to understand social systems).

Continued Work: 1996

In 1996, Chen and William J. Starosta reexamined the four dimensions of the intercultural communication competence model and suggested that the concept could be studied from the three

aspects of human ability: cognitive, affective, and behavioral.

The *cognitive* aspect of intercultural communication competence is represented by intercultural awareness, which refers to the ability to understand cultural conventions that affect how people interact with each other. In other words, intercultural awareness is a process of attitudinally internalizing insights about the predominant values, attitudes, and beliefs of a group of people. As the ability to draw an accurate *cultural map*, to sort out the *cultural theme*, or to understand *cultural grammars*, intercultural awareness proceeds from the level of knowing superficial cultural traits to the level of knowing significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with our own to the level of how another culture feels from the insider's perspective. Moreover, intercultural awareness can be studied from culture-specific and culture-general approaches. The former approach aims to impart information about cultural guidelines in order to interact effectively and appropriately with people from a specific culture; the latter aims to understand the universal influence of culture on human behaviors through different learning methods. Cultural games, such as "baFa baFa," through which people can come to know the possible variations in and general influence of culture, is one kind of learning method available.

The *affective* aspect of intercultural communication competence is demonstrated by intercultural sensitivity. It is the ability to understand, respect, and appreciate cultural differences in an intercultural interaction. Intercultural sensitivity is demonstrated by six elements, including self-esteem, self-monitoring, open-mindedness, empathy, interaction involvement, and suspending judgment. A valid measuring instrument of intercultural sensitivity based on these elements was developed by Chen and Starosta in 2000.

The *behavioral* aspect of intercultural communication competence is displayed by intercultural effectiveness, which refers to the cultivation of communication skills in order to accomplish specific goals, such as getting relevant information about these goals, accurately predicting the responses of one's counterpart, and assessing the potential communication results. It also refers to the ability to recognize communication rules, meet the contextual requirements of those rules, and

recognize the rules in different contexts. The necessary behavioral skills for reaching intercultural effectiveness include language ability, behavioral flexibility, interaction management, identity maintenance, and relationship cultivation.

Latest Work: 2005

In order to take into account the impact of global trends on society, Chen extended the study of intercultural communication competence in 2005 to the global perspective. Chen argued that successful global citizens must foster the ability to negotiate their status in and among local, national, and global communities. In other words, on the global level, communication competence requires people to cultivate the ability to acknowledge, respect, tolerate, and integrate cultural differences in order to become enlightened global citizens. Thus, globally competent individuals need not only to recognize the necessity of developing a mind-set and skills to manage environmental trends, but also to acquire new modes of thinking, organization, and behavior by seeing through the eyes, minds, and hearts of people from different cultures. Global communication competence thus enables people to build mutual understanding and a sense of multiple identities that lead to unlocking human potential in an effort to develop a peaceful and productive society.

The four dimensions of global communication competence include (1) having a global mind-set, (2) unfolding the self, (3) mapping the culture, and (4) aligning the interaction. *Global mind-set* is the first dimension and foundation of global communication competence. It enables people to envision the global trends and change of human society and to execute communication skills appropriately and effectively to live a productive life. By broadening and expanding our thinking through the elimination of filters we possess about different cultures, a global mind-set helps to decrease ethnocentrism and parochialism.

Individuals with a global mind-set, then, are equipped with five characteristics. First, they are sensitive toward cultural diversity; they are open-minded toward cultural variety; they are knowledgeable in terms of local and global events; they are critical and holistic thinkers; and they are conceptually and behaviorally flexible. More

specifically, a global mind-set impels individuals to broaden their perspectives, respect diversity, reconcile conflict, regulate change, and orient to the globalizing process.

Unfolding the self—the second dimension of global competence—refers to the ability to expand personal identity attributes while at the same time taking into account broader intercultural, interethnic, and interreligious concerns. In other words, globalization represents the pushing and pulling and adjusting and readjusting between the two forces of personalizing and globalizing. Only through the fostering of self-identity can people avoid being lost in the process of globalization and in turn establish an integrative future of human society. Successfully unfolding the self thus requires at least five aspects of personal effort, including purifying the self, learning continuously, cultivating sensitivity, developing creativity, and fostering empathy.

Mapping the culture—the third dimension of global competence—requires the cognitive ability to acquire cultural knowledge, or to “map” a culture, if you will. The mutual awareness of one’s own and other cultures is the basis for tolerating, respecting, negotiating, and integrating cultural differences as well as reducing ambiguity and uncertainty in the process of intercultural communication. The development of cultural awareness usually undergoes four stages. The first stage is the bewilderment of differences, in which cultural differences are considered bizarre based on the knowledge of the superficial traits of the culture involved in the interaction. The second stage is frustration about the differences, in which internal conflicts and frustrations are provoked due to the awareness of the contrasting differences between the deeper cultural traits of the two cultures. The third stage is the cognitive analysis of cultural differences on a rational and intellectual basis, which leads to the gradual belief in the differences. The last stage is the empathic immersion, in which interactants can examine cultural differences from their counterparts’ perspective and begin to appreciate and accept the differences without a feeling of distress.

Aligning the interaction—the last dimension of global competence—demands a set of behavioral skills to assist in adjusting to the new patterns of global interaction embedded in the complexity and multiplicity of meanings. The ability to align

interaction effectively is thus the sine qua non necessary for global citizens to accomplish their jobs and attain communication goals in intercultural communication. Similar to the dimension of communication skills in the first model, crucial elements for aligning interaction in intercultural communication consist of language ability, behavioral flexibility, interaction management, identity maintenance, and the ability to manage change.

Training Applications

The application to training programs reflects the practical aspect of the study of intercultural communication competence. Intercultural training aims to help people interact effectively with others from different cultural backgrounds, including living and working in a new cultural environment. Through specific training techniques such as role-playing, case studies, critical incidents, and cultural simulations, trainees are equipped with the abilities of intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, and intercultural effectiveness. The theoretical pursuit and the practical need for training reflect the continuous demand of the study of intercultural communication competence in an increasingly global human society.

Guo-Ming Chen

See also Competence Theories; Culture and Communication; Intercultural Communication Theories

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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Intercultural communication refers to the process of interaction between people from different cultures. More specifically, Karlfried Knapp defines it as the interpersonal interaction between members of groups that differ from each other in respect to the knowledge shared by their members and their linguistic forms of symbolic behavior. As such, intercultural communication is affected by how people from different countries and cultures behave, communicate, and perceive the world around them. Culture affects communication in subtle and profound ways. Our cultural perceptions and experiences help determine how the world looks and how we interact in that world. Today the world has grown so small that we all depend on each other. As more immigrants move from one culture to another, the issue of cultural adaptation takes on added significance. Globalization is changing the way individuals define themselves on the basis of economics, religion, culture, customs, language, and ethnic identity.

In addition to the field of communication, the study of intercultural communication includes fields such as anthropology, cultural studies, and psychology. The main theories for intercultural communication are based on the work especially of Edward T. Hall, Richard D. Lewis, Geert Hofstede, and Fons Trompenaars. Clifford Geertz was also a contributor to this field. Intercultural theories have been applied to a variety of different communication settings, including general business and management (Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner) and marketing (Marieke de Mooij, Stephan Dahl). There have also been several successful studies that concentrate on the practical applications of these theories in cross-cultural situations.

Intercultural communication existed since the very beginning of history. Human groups embarked on long-distance travels almost as soon as *Homo sapiens* emerged as a species. Later humans had spread to almost all the earth's habitable regions. By analyzing the characteristics and distribution of language families, blood types, and material remains, scholars have been able to trace the prehistoric movements of some peoples

with remarkable precision. Although surviving evidence does not permit insights into the experiences of migrating peoples, their travels certainly led them into cross-cultural encounters even in prehistoric times. Widely spread tools, weapons, and deities in particular suggest communications across long distances by prehistoric peoples.

The influence of culture on communication is so strong that anthropologist Edward Hall virtually equated culture with communication. Differences in cultural values and perceptions can be a quiet, invisible source of great misunderstanding between people from different regions. Actually, the problem begins when our cultural verbal and nonverbal meanings are attached to the people of other cultures.

The theoretical literature on intercultural communication is large and growing, as shown by the number of entries in this encyclopedia related to this topic. This entry summarizes four prevalent themes—cultural difference, face-to-face negotiation, uncertainty and anxiety, and accommodation.

Cultural Difference

In the field of intercultural research, much work has been done on cultural differences and cultural types. One of the most significant studies of this nature was conducted by Geert Hofstede. The research identified four dimensions on which the cultures of various nations and regions differ: (1) *individualism–collectivism*; (2) *power distance*; (3) *uncertainty avoidance*; and (4) *masculinity–femininity*. Hofstede and his colleagues provided theoretical and empirical evidence that the value orientations of individualism and collectivism are pervasive in a wide range of cultures. The value orientation approach has been researched for more than 40 years in multiple academic disciplines. Primarily, *individualism* refers to the broad value tendencies of people in a culture to emphasize individual identity over group identity, individual rights over group obligations, and individual achievements over group concerns. In contrast, *collectivism* refers to the broad value tendencies of people in a culture to emphasize group identity over the individual identity, group obligations over individual rights, and in-group-oriented concerns over individual wants and desire. The degree of

individualism or collectivism of a culture has a great impact on communication behaviors.

Power distance is the degree to which less-powerful members will tolerate unequal distribution of power. Cultures vary from emphasizing low to high degrees of power distance. Low and high power distance tendencies exist in all the cultures, but one tends to predominate. Cultures in which low power distance tends to predominate include Austria, Canada, Denmark, Germany, New Zealand, and the United States. Cultures in which high power distance tends to predominate include Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela. In India, for example, hierarchies are very steep. Employees at the lower level may not have easy access to the top managers. Distance is deliberately kept between levels. Power distance is quite high. “Sir” or “Madam” is frequently used by younger employees when addressing their seniors.

Further, William Gudykunst argues that egalitarianism mediates the influence of cultural power distance on communication behavior. Egalitarianism involves treating other people as equals. Low levels of egalitarianism at the individual level would be equated with high power distance at the cultural level, and high levels of egalitarianism at the individual level would be equated with low power distance at the cultural level.

Uncertainty avoidance is the tendency to arrange things in a way that minimizes unforeseen consequences; tolerance of uncertainty results in behavior that is less concerned with unforeseen consequences. Members of high uncertainty avoidance cultures resist change more, have higher levels of anxiety, have higher levels of intolerance for ambiguity, worry about the future more, see loyalty to their employer as more of a virtue, have a lower motivation for achievement, and take fewer risks. Different degrees of uncertainty avoidance exist in every culture, but one tends to predominate. Members of low uncertainty avoidance cultures appear to engage in more vocalization of anger toward out-group members and to control their anger toward out-group members less than do members of high uncertainty avoidance cultures.

Masculinity, according to Hofstede, is a way to characterize cultures that value assertiveness, competitiveness, and material success, whereas *femininity* characterizes cultural preferences for collaboration, nurturing, and harmony. High masculinity involves a

high value placed on things, power, and assertiveness, whereas systems in which people, quality of life, and nurturance prevail are low on masculinity or high on femininity. All these dimensions have a great impact on the communication behavior of individuals. Psychological sex roles mediate the influence of cultural masculinity–femininity on communication behavior. Independent of biological sex, *feminine* individuals tend to prefer a sharing, expressive communication style, whereas *masculine* individuals are more likely to prefer a dominating, assertive communication style.

A second influential typology is that of Edward T. Hall, who observed two types of cultures, namely, *high-* and *low-context* cultures. The communication behavior of an individual is very much linked to the type of his or her culture. A high-context communication or message is one in which the most important information is embedded in the situation or internal to the person and is not directly included in the verbal message. A low-context communication or message, in contrast, is one in which the primary meaning is directly expressed in the verbal message.

Hall classified certain countries of Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand as low-context culture, whereas countries in Africa, Asia, and other non-Western areas of the world are high-context cultures. In general it has been found that members of low-context cultures tend to communicate directly, while members of high-context cultures tend to use indirect messages. People from high-context cultures are less verbal, hence more inclined to communicate nonverbally, while people from low-context cultures value verbal expressions and are more communicative. As an example of high-context communication, people in India are very context sensitive. In Indian culture, one needs to learn about the expectations regarding food and hospitality—when, where, what, and how food is prepared, presented, and eaten—and should expect to socialize and establish a relationship before one starts doing business. In many formal and informal business meetings or discussions, the context serves as a basis for expressing views and opinions. Many times, people avoid saying no or criticizing others to their face due to strong cultural norms. Indirect communication is very common, and sometimes people understand each other without uttering a word. Indian culture is very complex in nature, as

people speak different languages and have different food habits, clothes, and styles of living. In the Indian family, context has a great significance. A wife can easily decode the subtle contexts of her husband's communication. In a joint family, too, members adjust their communication patterns, promoting a congenial atmosphere in the family.

Face Negotiation

Closely related to the question of context is *face*. Most of us have the experience of blushing, feeling embarrassed, feeling awkward, feeling shame, or feeling enthusiastic. Many of these feelings are face-related issues. When our social dignity is attacked or teased, we feel the need to restore or save face. When we are being complimented or given credit in front of others for a job well done, we feel that our self-esteem is high. Losing face and saving face are some of the key concepts under this “face negotiation” umbrella. Face negotiation theory emphasizes the influence of culture on facework, and facework theory focuses on the influence of the interpersonal relationship on face.

Members of collectivistic, high-context cultures have concerns for mutual face and inclusion that lead them to manage conflict with another person by avoiding, obliging, or compromising. Because of concerns for self-face and autonomy, people from individualistic, low-context cultures manage conflict by dominating or problem solving. Whenever two people meet for the first time, there is uncertainty accompanied by feelings of uneasiness known as anxiety. These feelings are heightened whenever there is an intercultural encounter between two individuals.

Using a cultural variability approach to the study of face and facework, Stella Ting-Toomey and her colleagues propose a theoretical model—face negotiation theory. According to Ting-Toomey, face is conceptualized as an individual's claimed sense of positive image in a relational and network context. Ting-Toomey's face negotiation theory assumes that (a) people in all cultures try to maintain and negotiate face in all communication situations; (b) the concept of face is especially problematic in situations of uncertainty (such as request, embarrassment, or conflict) when the situated identities of the communicators are called into question; (c) the cultural variability dimension of

individualism–collectivism influences members' selection of one set of facework strategies over others (such as autonomy face vs. approval face, and self-oriented face-saving vs. other-oriented face-saving); and (d) individualism–collectivism in conjunction with other individual, relational, and situational variables influences the use of various facework strategies in intergroup and interpersonal encounters. Thus, Ting-Toomey's face negotiation theory emphasizes sociocultural appropriateness in the enactment of facework strategies.

Uncertainty and Anxiety

Uncertainty reduction theory has had significant influence in the field of communication. This theory was initially proposed by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese as a first effort to model the process of interaction during the initial stage of relational development. Uncertainty reduction theory suggests that when strangers meet, their primary focus is on reducing their levels of uncertainty in the situation. Their levels of uncertainty are located in both behavioral and cognitive realms. That is, they may be unsure of how to behave (or how the other person will behave), and they may also be unsure what they think of the other and what the other person thinks of them. Further, people's uncertainty occurs at both an individual and a relational level. People are highly motivated to use communication to reduce their uncertainty, according to this theory.

Berger attempted to explain why we want more certainty in an initial interaction and lays out situations in which the need to reduce anxiety is required. He considered three factors that influence the need to reduce uncertainty. The first of these is incentives. This factor suggests that we will be more likely to want to reduce uncertainty about an individual if we perceive that the individual can be helpful or rewarding to us in some way. The second factor is deviation—if people act in ways that are unexpected or that violate rules and norms of interactions. Finally, Berger proposes that need to reduce uncertainty will be enhanced by the prospect of future interaction. That is, if we know we will be talking with someone in the future (regardless of whether we want to—that is an issue of incentive), we will want to reduce uncertainty about that individual. However, if we know we

will never speak to someone again, there is little motivation to learn more about the individual.

Applying this idea to intercultural communication, William Gudykunst suggests that effective intergroup/interpersonal communication is a function of the amount of anxiety and uncertainty individuals experience when communicating with others. *Anxiety* refers to the feeling of discomfort or awkwardness when two strangers (from different cultures or the same culture) try to relate to each other. *Uncertainty* means the perceived unpredictability of the various intergroup/interpersonal situations. The concept of *management* refers to the importance of cultivating awareness or “mindfulness” in dealing with unfamiliar values and interaction scripts.

Gudykunst and his associates have been testing and refining the theories based on uncertainty and anxiety. They uncovered that greater anxiety is experienced in intergroup (i.e., interethnic and intercultural) encounters than in intrapersonal encounters. Anxiety is associated positively with the degree to which social identities (i.e., group membership identities) are activated in the interaction and the amount of uncertainty experienced. In addition, they found that there is greater uncertainty in intergroup encounters than in intragroup encounters. Uncertainty is associated negatively with positive expectations, communication satisfaction, and quality of communication. They have also observed that both anxiety and uncertainty decrease over time in intergroup encounters. However, the decrease does not fit a linear pattern (i.e., the pattern fluctuates across time). Finally, the ways that individuals gather information to reduce uncertainty differ in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Members of individualistic cultures (e.g., the United States) seek out person-based information to reduce uncertainty about strangers while members of collectivistic cultures (e.g., Japan) seek out group-based information to reduce uncertainty. In sum, Gudykunst claims that anxiety and uncertainty exist in all cultures, but how people define these two terms varies from culture to culture.

Accommodation Processes

Communication accommodation theory, originally proposed by Howard Giles and his colleagues,

emphasizes the importance of understanding speech convergence and speech divergence to increase or decrease communicative distance among members of different groups. The theory focuses on explaining the motivations, strategies, and contexts whereby group members (e.g., from different cultures, ethnic groups, or age groups) use different communication strategies to converge with or diverge from their patterns linguistically.

According to Giles and associates, speakers move through their linguistic repertoire so as to converge or diverge linguistically, based on three motivations: to gain approval from their discourse partners vis-à-vis linguistic similarity, to show distinctiveness and thus accentuate their own group membership, and to achieve clearer and smoother communication.

The most recent version of communication accommodation theory incorporates the cultural variability dimension of individualism and collectivism in its theoretical propositions. Cindy Gallois and her associates found that nonaccommodating students and faculty members were rated less favorably than accommodating ones. They further found that the multiple roles (students vs. faculty member, gender, and ethnicity) of the speakers and the judges all exerted influences on perceived interaction accommodation.

Thus, accommodation processes examine the perceived motivation and role dimensions of the intergroup speakers and how these dimensions affect interaction convergence/divergence issues. In addition, the theory probes how the interaction convergence/divergence process fosters the evaluative reactions by observers. It moves beyond survey data and actually taps into how members from different cultural or linguistic groups communicate with one another on verbal or nonverbal interactional levels.

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See also Co-Cultural Theory; Contextual Theory of Interethnic Communication; Conversational Constraints Theory; Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory; Cultural Contracts Theory; Cultural Performance Theory; Cultural Theories of Health Communication; Cultural Types Theories; Culture and Communication; Effective Intercultural Workgroup Communication Theory; Face Negotiation Theory; Intercultural Communication Competence

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INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION THEORIES

International communication is the name given to a field of inquiry that includes the study of various forms of interaction globally, including global communication via mass media, cross-cultural communication, and telecommunications policy. Therefore, by its very nature, international communication is an interdisciplinary field of study, utilizing concepts, research methods, and data from areas as diverse as political science, sociology, economics, literature, and history. The field has two broad dimensions: (1) policy studies and (2) cultural studies. Policy studies refers to the analysis of how the actions of governance entities (such as governments and intergovernmental organizations) influence the nature of international communication. The cultural studies approach to international communication examines the relationship between culture and international communication. However, finding a definition of international communication on which there has been wide agreement among academic journals and scholarly associations—the entities that usually have the most power in defining fields and disciplines—has been elusive. Indeed, the *Journal of International Communication* acknowledged in 2008 that what it considers international communication often goes by different names and that a number of academic fields study “global communication.”

This entry defines theories of international communication as macro hypotheses about how best to understand global communicative relationships. This approach includes, for example, theories of internationalism and cultural imperialism, but it would not include theories of regional media systems or models of press freedom.

All paradigms in international communication place varying degrees of emphasis on three elements: (1) actors, (2) technology, and (3) modes of production.

Elements

Theory making in international communication borrows heavily from academic disciplines outside communication. The paradigms that place greatest emphasis on actors must rely on the field of international relations for their basic ideas about what exactly constitute *the international*—the actors whose relationships are being theorized. It is on “natural” science fields, such as engineering and computer science, that technologically deterministic paradigms in international communication have relied for their assumptions about the past, present, and future. Similarly, economics and the study of political economy have had a profound impact on how scholars have theorized the configuration of international communication.

Actors

Embedded in the very term *international communication* is the assumption that the nation-state is the primary actor in global interactions. This is derived from the fact that the Westphalia states system (nation-state sovereignty) is the basis of the contemporary international political order. This system assumes that states are the primary actors and that the principle of state sovereignty is sacrosanct. The international is, therefore, an arena dominated by states that are the primary sources of agency. Less rigorous theories of international communication are built on this assumption. Therefore, theories of international communication in these paradigms are essentially theories of how states interact with each other. Even when the principle of state sovereignty and agency is complicated by the presence of significant transnational players, such as transnational corporations, these players are still assumed to be appendages of the states that are the only actors with the legitimacy to create the domestic and international laws that control the behavior of these other actors. Postmodern approaches to international communication have had a more thorough engagement with this question of what exactly constitutes the

international, and they have been less eager to use the state as the starting point for theory building in international communication.

Technology

The revolution in communication technology of the late 19th and the 20th centuries is the single most powerful factor that accounts for there even being an area of research that we can call international communication. The quest to understand the impact of new communication technologies on international relations has been one of the most powerful motivations for theorists. Advances in new international communication technologies have tended to increase the velocity of information and enhance the ability to communicate over time and space. The telegraph and the Internet are just two technologies whose inventions have been at first startling to scholars who have then tried to theorize their meaning for the nature of the international system. The trend has been to think of new telecommunication technologies in utilitarian, strategic terms—tools for the diffusion of specific kinds of ideas and to give the technologically advanced more advantages.

Modes of Production

The economic systems that produce goods and services, provide employment, configure trading relationships, and produce patterns of wealth creation and investment have been the third major element in international communication theory building. Theorists have tended to see modes of production as constitutive of patterns of international communication. This has especially been the case with the Marxist paradigm that was so popular in the early history of the field, but it has been attractive even in later years with the rise of transnational neoliberalism. Theorists have tended to see international communication as reflecting these economic relationships, for example, the tendency of news flows to mirror patterns of global trade.

Five Paradigms

International communication theories can be sorted into five paradigms: theories of internationalism, the Marxist paradigm of international

communication, theories of representation, reception theories, and theories of identity.

Theories of Internationalism

The internationalist paradigm is the most accessible and attractive of the five. It is a technologically deterministic paradigm that asserts that the more interconnected the international system becomes via the new technologies, the more democratic and peaceful the world will be. Internationalism is based on a number of key assumptions. These include the view that human beings share a number of core values that can be found throughout the world, regardless of culture and geography; the assumption that there is such an entity as an international society; the idea that increased opportunities to communicate awaken these values in people if they are dormant; the belief that public opinion is always in favor of peace; and the idea that instrumentalist international communication projects can be devised to propagate the ethics needed for a peaceful world. Although the continued improvements in telecommunication have not been accompanied by declines in transnational bellicosity, theories of internationalism still persist in various permutations. This is because the internationalist paradigm contains much variation. For example, theories of internationalism popular early in the 20th century incorporated pseudoscientific assumptions about racial difference that were discredited in the second half of the century. Internationalist theories do not necessarily begin from the position that all human beings, or their various political formations, are equal. Hence the various development communication projects sponsored by the United Nations system in the years after World War II were based on theories of how communication technologies would modernize backward societies and diffuse ideas from advanced peoples. Although such blatant prejudice was not so popular by the end of the century, the theories about how the Internet would transform international society shared the core assumptions of the internationalist paradigm. It is for this reason that we can, for example, group the ideas of Bill Gates with those of diffusion theorist Daniel Lerner, who wrote 50 years earlier—and who is also the paradigmatic bedfellow of Norman Angell, who wrote 50 years before Lerner and was among the first international communication theorists.

Perhaps the most influential of theorists in this tradition was the Canadian Harold Innis, whose theorization of time-biased and space-biased media had a profound influence on his protégé Marshall McLuhan, who developed the idea of hot and cold media according to a similar schema. Innis theorized communication technologies as being central to the formation and character of political empires. Time-biased media were those that could store information over long periods of time but were difficult to transport over long distances (such as stone tablets and parchment). Space-biased media (such as paper and papyrus) were more transportable but could not store information for long periods of time. According to the theory, empires could hope to survive only if they were based on a fine balance between time-biased and space-biased media. That is because the different types of media provoked two distinct types of political organization. Time-biased media encouraged centralized authority and hierarchy. Space-biased media favored decentralization.

Marxist Paradigm

The central proposition of Marxist theories of international communication is that the way the international system communicates is a function of the modes of economic production. In the 1960s and 1970s, the popular theories of international communication were mainly inspired by dependency theory, which theorized that there was a structure to international communication that reflected the power imbalance between “core” and “periphery” states. The whole world was envisioned as a site of global class struggle. International mass communication was dominated by transnational capitalist interests, especially corporations. Theorists such as Herbert Schiller, Armand Mattelart, and Cees Hamelink began their analyses by pointing to how the capitalist system of production grew. Imperialism was the expression of mature capitalism, and just as imperialistic relationships characterized the international division of labor, they also molded international trade and international communication.

Herbert Schiller’s writings were for many years most representative of this approach. Over several books, he set out a theory of cultural imperialism based on classic Marxist propositions. Schiller’s approach was decidedly one sided in placing the

blame for the imbalance in global communication squarely on the shoulders of the mature capitalist economy of the United States. The state is conceived as an extension of the capitalist project. It allows new technologies to be exploited for surplus value instead of the wider social good. The massive audiovisual industry is able to take advantage of economies of scale to saturate foreign markets. The military–industrial complex further facilitates this dominance by taking control of international intergovernmental organizations that regulate communication technologies and by sponsoring international propaganda. But, ironically, the theory arrives at the conclusion that this very state is the entity that should use its power to regulate communication industries for the social good, not in the interest of a minority of capitalists. This was a proposition that found its way into actual attempts at international policymaking in the early 1980s, following the release of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization’s report on international communication problems. The Marxist critique asserts the primacy of the state and wants to give it more control, not less.

The internationalist and Marxist paradigms are grand theories of international communication because they seek to describe and provide normative rules for understanding the entire international communication system. In contrast, the other three paradigms seek to provide clues to understanding international communication via specific points of intervention into the communicative process.

Theories of Representation

Theories of representation are interpretive schemes that provide tools for understanding tendencies in international communication, especially unequal international communication relationships. Some of the assumptions on which they are based include the following views: Popular culture (such as print fiction, movies, television shows, comic strips, etc.) should be taken seriously for its value in providing insights into international political relationships; techniques from linguistics and literature studies can be deployed to read international media as texts; meanings are not fixed, so there is a constant struggle to maintain dominant ideologies; and discursive tendencies in popular media often mirror international political agendas.

Therefore, theories of representation share similar preoccupations with Marxism, but whereas the Marxist paradigm is focused on the behavior of political actors, representation theorists are most concerned with what tendencies in media texts mean for international relationships. It is for this reason that Edward Said's thesis of *orientalism* is based on the same assumptions as Ruth Mayer's notion of artificial Africas.

Theories of Reception

Marxist, structuralist critiques of the international communication system inspired the call at the United Nations for a New World Information and Communication Order in the 1970s and 1980s, but these intellectual debates provoked theory building that sought explanations for international communication imbalances in places other than modes of production. Theories of reception argue that international media flows are unequal due to reasons inside their texts, not because of cultural imperialism. Therefore, they share with the representation paradigm the preoccupation with the analysis of texts.

A good illustration of one such reception theory is Scott Robert Olson's narrative transparency model, which sought to explain the phenomenal popularity of American audiovisual productions around the world. The theory asserts that U.S. movies and television shows are transparent texts because they can be easily decoded by people from different cultures. The transparent text deploys mythotypes that are present in systems of myths around the world, and these mythotypes include such emotions as purpose, awe, participation, and wonder. American producers are good at including these in their narratives, and so their works achieve popularity around the world. The theory conceives of transparent texts as apolitical, eschewing essentialist identity politics and producing an anarchic international cultural sphere. This rejects the position of the Marxist or representation paradigm that either the material structure of transnational communication systems or their texts are ideologically loaded.

Theories of Identity

The identity paradigm is the most steeped in the postmodern intellectual tradition. One of

postmodernism's key breaks with modernism is its willingness to assume that the main contours of human identity formation are not along lines of class but according to other markers of identity. These are often called new social movements, and they include identity configurations around gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, and sexual orientation. The identity paradigm represents a considerable change in how the fundamental nature of international communication is conceptualized because it does not necessarily assume the primacy of nation-states. In this paradigm the emphasis is on the element of actors. These actors are given agency that can undermine and surpass the power of states. This paradigm confronts a problem that often plagues all attempts to theorize the international—the tendency of theorists not to be able to provide an ecology of interests. For example, state-centric theories have traditionally assumed that states in the international system act relatively autonomously based on rational conceptions of self-interest. But there is no explanation of the process through which actors devise their understanding of their interests. Technological determinism pays too little attention to the mix of factors that determine how human beings eventually adopt and use new technologies.

Most illustrative of this innovation in conceptualizations of international communication is Manuel Castells's trilogy of texts, published on the eve of the new millennium, which set out a theory of the interaction between communication networks and the politics of identity. The theory is based on the fundamental premise that the search for identity is the fundamental source of social meaning. This yearning determines how individuals use communication technologies. These tools by themselves do not determine the nature of international communication, but rather the interaction between technologies and how people construct subjectivities and the interests that devolve from these understandings of identity. The networked state does not have the autonomy and sovereignty it once had because it is interconnected with other nodes of power that partake in policymaking and are influenced by the behavior of the very same networked state. Neither are transnational corporations as powerful as they once were because they are more vulnerable to the subjectivities of capital markets and other networks. The era of networks

means that people interact in networks as individuals instead of through communities. This means that there will always be clashes between individualism and communalism.

The clear trend in international communication theory has been a move away from the social sciences to the humanities. The early internationalist and Marxist theories were based on positivist approaches to the perceived realities of the international social environment. They could be supported and tested with empirical research. These were approaches that did not interrogate very carefully assumed identities and saw international communication as an arena of rational choice. The increased scholarly attention to international communication has found these assumptions from social science to be inadequate for theorizing the texture of international communicative relationships. This has meant that critical interpretive methods and theories have become more popular in the field. They make sense of the seemingly irrational. This trend also originated in the increasing popularity of postmodernist tendencies in both the social sciences and the humanities. This will mean that there will be increasingly fewer attempts to produce grand theory and more attempts to interrogate carefully the individual elements of theory building.

Mark DaCosta Alleyne

See also Cultural Studies; Culture and Communication; Diffusion of Innovations; Film Theories; Flow and Contra-Flow; Free Flow Doctrine; Globalization Theories; Identity Theories; Intercultural Communication Theories; Marxist Theory; Media Sovereignty; Medium Theory; Neocolonialism; New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO); Postcolonial Theory

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

International development theories refer to the practice of systematically applying the processes, strategies, and principles of communication to bring about positive social change. Development has been a major theme in communication literature since the 1950s. Many theories emerged in this context. Earlier development discourse focused on how the third world could become more like the first world in terms of social, economic, political, and even cultural frameworks. The concept of development was defined essentially by the first world powers to suit their so-called progressive sensibilities. These sensibilities directed attention toward rebuilding the third world sectors with first world assumptions of development. The obvious markers of development were levels of literacy, extent of industrialization, attention to medical interventions, and a working democratic system of governance. All these ideals were imposed on the third world by the first world through the rhetoric of development. There was only one way of defining development, and it was the first world's prerogative to do so.

Over time, various definitions of development communication have surfaced that provide a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. Recent

dialogue on development communication emphasizes that the objective of any communication for development has to do with privileging the voices of those for whom the process of development is critical. Hence the goal of development communication is to improve the socioeconomic existence of the people in the developing world within a framework of social justice in which their voices can be recognized and respected. In doing so, development communication will serve the people by providing them with decentered control of their communication systems, leading to effective social change.

This entry will first offer a brief history of development by discussing modernization theory and dependency theory. The second section will discuss the role of communication and participation in development theories. Finally, development will be described in colonial and postcolonial contexts.

History of Development

The 1950s provided a significant historical moment to this field as different theoretical and philosophical approaches intersected to articulate development communication studies. This intersection resulted in not only a critical dialogue but also a complex one as no single approach could offer a replacement for the earlier one but added more layers of intellectual dynamism to the discourse of development communication. This section will identify the two main approaches to development studies and provide a brief survey of their application in communication.

The first dominant approach to development communication is *modernization theory*, which evolved in three phases. The first phase emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, and this phase claimed that mass media can be used effectively to diffuse social and technical innovations. It further identified the strengths of mass media to teach messages of modernity to an unskilled audience. This vision of modernity would propose a modern lifestyle over a traditional one. The second phase of modernization can be traced to the 1970s, when the dialogue on development took a progressive turn as it criticized the influence of modern-Western society on the rest of the developing world. The last phase of modernization discourse gained momentum in the 1990s as it strategically took the middle path of

not being against or in support of Western notions of modernization processes. Instead it pointed out the defects of universalizing ideas of modernization across different communities and described the paradoxes of development in striving for modernization as defined by the Western political powers.

Modernization theory received heavy criticism from *dependency theory*, which rapidly gained popularity and became the next paradigm to approach development across the world. According to dependency theory, problems of the third world reflected development problems that were caused by Western capitalization of the world, thus creating pockets of unequal resources for the people. Dependency theorists believed that third world countries were underdeveloped, not due to lack of information, but because of socioeconomic determinants that always positioned them weaker to their first world competitors. Conditions of underdevelopment existed due to a symbiotic relationship with development. In order to address this dialectical relationship between development and underdevelopment, the third world would need to reassess its political, economic, and social conditions and reconstitute its sense of autonomy from the first world order. This would entail a major reconfiguration of media structures that traditionally have been monopolized by the first world to serve its own economic and political gains in these countries.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sponsored several conventions for developing countries to reclaim control of their media from foreign capitalists who simply wanted to create economies of self-interest. During these forums, representatives from third world countries proposed control of their own media and defined the need to form their own communication polices. While there is a need for third world countries to claim their rights in regard to their communication systems, it becomes critical to question the colonial context in which most development discourse has taken place. The next section will decolonize the Western-centered approach toward development and situate it in postcolonial sensibilities.

Postcolonialism and Development

While the possibility of producing a decolonized, postcolonial knowledge in development studies

became a subject of considerable debate in the 1990s, there has been little dialogue between postcolonialism and development. However, the need for development studies that are postcolonial in theory and practice is now increasingly acknowledged. This means recognizing the significance of language and representation and the power of development discourse and its material effects on the lives of people subject to development policies. It also means acknowledging the already postcolonial world of development in which contemporary reworkings of theory and practice, such as grassroots and participatory development, indigenous knowledges, and global resistance movements, inform postcolonial theory.

Early approaches saw development as a linear process based on the belief that central control of media can lead to mass social transformation. In this macroapproach to development, often audience reception and effectiveness of message were neglected as part of the communication process. Little effort was made to understand whether the audience understood the message and whether the message led to any social change.

In the 1970s and 1980s, development was understood not only as a function of political economies of the first world but also as a viable process of colonialism. As a component of colonial discourse, development literature started to recognize diversity as a critical factor in dialogue for change. Development communication supported diversity of cultures, classes, communication, and ideologies while defining common development goals and initiatives. This changed the vernacular of development theories and made them more inclusive.

There is an increasing involvement of local communities in defining their needs and creating their own developmental models for change. Several agencies of change started to work with local governments at the grassroots level to develop communications projects that were collaborative and dynamic in nature. The United Nations provided aid to nonprofit organizations and to government organizations to manage development projects using indigenous knowledge and expertise. Agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development, UNESCO, the United Nations Development Program, and many others provide assistance to developing countries to develop new

models for building infrastructures leading to self-reliance.

Communication and Development

Communication for development is the strategic application of communication technologies and processes to promote social change. When communication is a full partner in the development process and is executed intelligently, the process of development becomes more sustainable. Two main schools of thought have been identified for thinking about communication for development. The first is aligned with the dominant paradigm, which views social problems as stemming from a lack of information. The second, which takes a more participatory approach, sees problems as resulting from structural power inequality.

People who favor the dominant paradigm tend to believe that problems in developing countries are the result of traditional values and a general lack of information about how to modernize. Communication in this sense is generally seen as a one-way, top-down, linear process and is used to affect behavior change by altering knowledge, attitudes, and practices. The mass media then play a role by informing the population about projects, illustrating the advantage of these projects, and recommending that they be supported.

On the other end of the continuum is the participatory approach, which seeks to work with community members and empower them to have more control over issues that affect them, instead of imposing an intervention on them. The participatory approach is based on the idea that communication for development needs to be a two-way process in which information is exchanged and not forced on anyone. However, development scholars and practitioners are recognizing more and more that most initiatives cannot be classified as purely top-down or purely participatory. Instead, a theory of convergence seems to be emerging that acknowledges the fact that there are elements of both in the majority of development projects.

Another important factor that is recognized as important to communication for development is the role of interpersonal communication. Research has shown that development project outcomes depend hugely on interpersonal dialogues inspired by multimedia intervention. Regardless of the

approach or method used in an initiative, cultural sensitivity is critical to any message. A development project can be more successful by working within local contexts and cultures. Hence, a cultural perspective has become central to the debate on communication for development. Consequently, development work has moved away from a traditional approach that emphasized economic and materialistic criteria to a more multiple appreciation of holistic and complex perspectives.

Participation and Development

Recent years have witnessed a phenomenal upsurge in commitment to participatory processes in development. A widely shared view in the development community is that without commitment, creativity, energy, and involvement of the people, the pace of development will not accelerate. This is the constant tension between the two positions that communities can be built or that communities build themselves.

Community participation and organizing are being encouraged all over the world. It is the top agenda of every developed and developing nation. This, however, does not protect it from resistance. Community participation ought to be considered as a political tool to bring people together so that they may lobby the state for services. For an oppressed community, participation can also be expressed in more radical terms as a prerequisite to liberation.

The language of community participation has tended to obscure the fact that there is always an *us* and a *them*. The borderline between the two groups is not fixed. In some circumstances *us* means the governments of the handful of wealthy industrial nations and *them* is everybody else. But in other circumstances, *us* may include local field workers who are drawn from, and live in, the villages that are the target of aid. Similarly, *them* sometimes refers solely to government ministries; at other times, the term encompasses householders and sometimes more specific groups such as the lower castes in a particular village.

What makes development both an interesting and an immensely difficult field is that all facets of life are involved—economy, politics, technology, and culture. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are usually portrayed as latter-day missionaries

doing good among the poor. In reality, NGOs are established either to promote political or religious views or out of frustration of the government to meet the demands of the oppressed people. Most NGOs are not multidisciplinary and cannot cohesively analyze a situation as the team is fragmented and has little training to sustain group understanding of an issue.

There are, however, several obstacles to participation that could lead to community building from within the community. These obstacles typically do not discourage the development professionals from going into local communities and finding innovative ways to organize the disempowered into sustainable groups and helping them to be self-reliant. Robert Chambers is a follower of Paulo Freire and is inspired by the Freirian theme that poor and exploited people can and should be enabled to analyze their own realities. In the quest to empower the oppressed, Chambers's Participatory Rural Appraisal is widely used to encompass approaches and methods that have, in various ways, combined action, reflection, participation, and research in an approach in which outsiders and insiders carry equal responsibility to work together and make the interaction successful. The local people realize their potential, and the outsiders simply facilitate their discovery of themselves. The organizing takes place in an empowering way and also in a sustainable way so that when the outsider exits from the community, the community can continue on its own as it has achieved the variable of self-reliance above all other attributes.

While participation is integral to the discussion of development, it needs to be understood in non-democratic conditions where choices are imposed and enforced. In nondemocratic societies, participation can be coercive and manipulative. It is imperative to contextualize the dialogue on participation from non-Western standpoints as often ideas of participation are borrowed from a first world understanding of the third world. This colonized framework of participation is counterproductive to the process of development.

Gender and Development

Finally, there is the gender and development (GAD), or empowerment, approach, which argues that development initiatives should come from

women themselves, leading to their empowerment. This approach sees the subordination of women as the result of, not only gender relations, but the effects of colonialism and neocolonialism as well, thus challenging the entire field of development and making it unpopular with governments and agencies. The research on GAD focuses on five main points: it focuses on gender relations, not just women; it sees women as active agents who do not necessarily understand the structural inequalities that lead to their subordination; it takes a holistic approach instead of dealing with just the reproductive or productive roles of women; it takes into consideration aspects of welfare, antipoverty, and equity approaches to evaluate whether minor reform or radical change is needed; and it places less importance on economics and more focus on self-organization, especially at the local level.

In development discourse, the issue of gender is prominent. In the development literature of earlier decades, women were largely ignored, either on the assumption that gender distinctions were irrelevant or on the categorization of women as dependents in male-headed households. The surge of interest in gender and development is attributed primarily to the vigorous efforts of feminist scholars. With the exit of women from the household into the industrial labor force—and hence beyond their traditional confinement to subsistence and petty trade activities—the rupture of traditional family structures and established gender relations has become a prime topic for research.

There has always been a contingent concern with gender relations in development, and this has encouraged development practitioners to redefine development and how gender can situate itself in the center of this conversation.

Paradox of Development: An Indian Case Study

Contemporary India has become a country with disparate pockets of growth and underdevelopment. India is an example of a developing country where many areas are unaffected by the process of development and the beneficiaries of development are few. This paradox of development is reflected in India's technological advancement as it is one of the leaders in technically skilled labor. India is on the world map for computer technology and

software development. While these numbers are staggering and indicate technological progression, India continues to live under dire conditions of poverty.

While the road to development is difficult and long, the forces of industrialization offer a promising future for development and progress. This case study of India illustrates that development is not linear and simple. There is no single equation that can be applied to every development scenario. The process of development needs to emerge from the ground up and include the voices of people who thrive in it. Communication strategies for change should be sensitive to the needs of the local communities, and local media strategies should be engaged to achieve development goals.

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See also Digital Divide; Flow and Contra-Flow; Globalization Theories; Informatization; International Communication Theories; Neocolonialism; New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO); Postcolonial Feminism; Postcolonial Theory

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INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Interpersonal communication (IPC) is one of the most popular teaching subjects and research areas in communication studies. At its most basic, IPC examines how people in relationships talk to one another, why they select the messages they select, and the effect the messages have on the relationship and the individuals. This entry will first offer a brief history of the development of the IPC field. The second section is a description of the criteria used to identify communication as interpersonal. Finally, four categories of IPC theories are reviewed, and specific theories of IPC are described.

IPC is important to study for a number of reasons. First, people create meaning through communication—we learn who we are through communication with others and, more importantly, our communication with others influences how we think about and feel about ourselves. Second, IPC is important for practical reasons—we need to be able to talk to people in order to get

things done and make positive impressions. Third, IPC is important to us physically—people who have good interpersonal relationships are physically and mentally healthier. Fourth, humans are social animals, and IPC helps us fulfill our social needs—understanding the IPC process will provide insight into how relationships can be more successful and satisfying. Finally, IPC research is important because how people think they communicate in relationships and how they actually communicate in relationships are very different.

Brief History

The academic study of communication is both very old, tracing its roots back to the ancient Greek philosophers, and relatively new, with most universities recognizing communication as a separate department only within the past 40 years. The study of communication as a separate discipline was strongly influenced by researchers in psychology, sociology, anthropology, English and rhetoric, and linguistics. Much of the early work by researchers interested in communication focused on mass communication issues and attitude changes. This focus on persuasion issues eventually began to wane, and researchers started to examine other areas of research. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a social scientific approach to the study of human communication emerged as communication researchers began to investigate the interactional patterns of personal relationships.

Given the diverse influences on the development of the communication field, not surprising is that the first books written about IPC were not written by communication scholars. In the 1950s, Ray Birdwhistell and Edward T. Hall, both anthropologists, published books on the interpersonal nature of nonverbal communication. In 1958, psychologist Fritz Heider's book, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*, examined attribution theory in close relationships. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Erving Goffman, a sociologist, published books about how communication can be used to affect perceptions and manage interactions. His book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, examined how people create roles for themselves and use communication to shape impressions. The ideas in these books, combined with the social upheaval of the 1960s, had an

effect on Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin, and Don Jackson, who, as researchers at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, California, were also influenced by Gregory Bateson's interests in systems theories and his research program on understanding human nature and the role of communication in mental illness. Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson, in their 1967 book *The Pragmatics of Human Communication*, noted that relationships are systems within which people develop and adapt their interaction patterns. This book, now a classic of communication study, helped establish the study of communication in relationships as an important discipline.

In the 1970s, research and theories of IPC largely focused on attraction, with questions such as, Can we predict attraction? Can we explain why two people find each other so appealing? and What messages are more successful at gaining compliance? In the early 1980s there were some major shifts in the research emphasis. Researchers moved from simple questions of who is attracted to whom and began to focus on analyzing long-term relationships. Research investigated an increased breadth of relational topics, and a number of new theoretical perspectives emerged.

Although interpersonal research started out focused on the relationship between communication and social influence processes, this area is now so broadly defined that researchers generally study a specific area of IPC, such as why people communicate the way they do; how people produce or process messages; or how relationships are initiated, maintained, and dissolved through communication. In fact, IPC is a popular area of communication research and is the focus of approximately 40% of the publications in *Human Communication Research*, one of the top journals in the communication field.

What Is Interpersonal Communication?

Researchers agree that IPC is communication that occurs between people in relationships. To narrow down this broad definition, researchers have proposed a variety of criteria. Instead of categorizing communication as either interpersonal or not interpersonal, these criteria can be used to decide the degree to which the communication is interpersonal.

Criteria for Interpersonal Communication

Numerical—How many people are involved in the interaction? Two people is the classic number for IPC, but, depending on the situation and topic, three or four, perhaps even five people talking to each other may be interpersonal. One thing to consider is how groups larger than four or five often split into smaller sizes for conversation. So, when there are too many people to maintain one conversation in which everyone can participate, the size is too large to be classified interpersonal.

Channel—What medium is used for the communication? Most IPC needs some element of the interaction in the here and now. Face-to-face communication is the most immediate, but there are other channels, such as the telephone and e-mail, that allow partners to communicate in the moment.

Feedback—Is there any opportunity for feedback, adaptation, and responsiveness? The ability to adapt and respond to the other person enhances the communication and makes it more interpersonal.

Privacy—Is the interaction in public or private? Interactions that happen in front of many other people, or those that lots of other people are a part of, tend to be less intimate and have more superficial communication.

Goal—Are the participants focused on completing a specific task, or are they more focused on identity and relationship issues? Those situations in which people are concerned about their own and the other's identity, as well as the relationship, are more interpersonal.

Relationship type and stage—Do the communicators have a recognized and established relationship? If the people in the relationship are interchangeable (e.g., customer and clerk), the communication is less interpersonal.

Knowledge—How much do the communicators know about each other and how the other person will react? Do the communicators have expectations for each other's behavior? The more we know about the other person and the better able we are to predict that person's reactions, the more interpersonal the communication.

Mutual influence—Do one person’s actions influence the other’s subsequent actions? The more there is mutual influence, the more the communication is interpersonal.

Examining these criteria reveals that though there are some situations that can be easily classified as highly interpersonal, others may be clearly not interpersonal. However, many interactions are “fuzzy”—they meet some of the criteria but not all the criteria. Instead of categorizing communication as either IPC or not IPC, researchers usually consider the degree to which the interaction is interpersonal.

Theories of Interpersonal Communication

Though there are a number of IPC theories that provide different lenses through which to view communication in relationships, these theories fall into four categories: theories about meaning in relationships, theories about motives in relationships, theories about messages in relationships, and theories about movement in relationships.

Theories About Meaning in Relationships

Humans have created and live in a world of signs and symbols. The very relationships people need in their lives are developed and sustained through their use of symbols. The success of both personal relationships and superficial encounters requires that people negotiate the complex world of meaning and interpretation.

Constructivism is a theoretical framework that attempts to explain why people communicate the way they do and why some communicators are more successful than others. In the early 1980s, Jesse Delia and colleagues, building on psychological theories of *personal constructs*, argued that people’s communicative choices are influenced by their situational *schemas*, or mental maps, of how they should act in a given situation. People with highly developed or complex maps of a situation and other people tend to have a better understanding of others’ perspectives and goals. Those people with complex maps are called *cognitively complex*. They tend to attach more meaning to situations and others’ actions, which enables them to be more person centered in their communication and

to develop messages that are more likely to achieve their goals.

Coordinated management of meaning theorizes that communication is a process through which people make sense of their world and produce a social reality. Barnett Pearce and Vernon Cronen, who first proposed this theory in the late 1970s, argued that communication is central to being human and that people create their own conversational reality. Creating meaning in interaction is achieved by applying rules based on the content of the communication, the actions being performed, the situation, the relationship between the communicators, the individuals’ backgrounds, and the cultural patterns. According to Pearce and Cronen, the goal of communication is not necessarily for people to reach agreement but, instead, for the communicators to reach a level of coordination.

Symbolic interactionism is a foundational sociological perspective that was influenced by many theorists, notably George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer. Though originally a sociological theory, symbolic interactionism is important in communication research. The title of Mead’s book, *Mind, Self, and Society*, published in 1934, provides a glimpse of the theory. In brief, symbolic interactionism describes how people use language to construct meaning; how they create and present themselves; and how, working with others, they use symbols to create society. In the late 1960s, Herbert Blumer set out three basic premises of the perspective: (1) People’s behavior is influenced by the meanings they have about people and events; (2) interactions, specifically conversations, are important for developing and conveying meaning; and (3) a person’s meanings about events and others can change over time. The basis of this theory is that people behave based on the meanings they attach to situations.

Theories About Motives in Relationships

People have reasons for the way they behave. Operating off assumptions about others, interpretations of situations, and the desire to fulfill their own needs, people make choices about their communication.

Attribution theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals interpret their own and others’ behavior. According to attribution

theorists such as Fritz Heider, people are motivated to make sense of behavior and explain patterns. People develop personal explanations about others' motives and meaning, which, in turn, influence the person's actions toward others. After observing behavior and determining whether the action was deliberate, people tend to categorize the behavior as caused by the person (internally motivated) or caused by the situation (externally motivated).

Fundamental interpersonal relationship orientation theory, introduced by William Schutz in 1958, argues that people are motivated to satisfy three needs: inclusion, control, and affection. People begin relationships to meet these needs. Inclusion is the need people feel to belong and be included. Control refers to people's desire to shape their interactions. Affection is the need to be liked and maintain relationships. These motives can be used to explain people's communication behaviors.

Uncertainty reduction theory assumes that people want stable and predictable interactions, which lead people to reduce their uncertainty about others and events. Uncertainty stems from the number of different things that might occur in a situation. Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese's theory provides insight into how uncertainty motivates communication behaviors, specifically information seeking, reciprocity, verbal intimacy, nonverbal expressiveness, and the amount of information shared. Additionally, uncertainty reduction theory makes predications about liking and perceived similarity.

Theories About Messages in Relationships

People have a variety of communication choices. A single communication goal can be achieved through many different messages, and a single message can meet many different goals. Theories about messages in relationships attempt to explain why people say what they do during interaction and how they process messages.

Action assembly theory attempts to explain where our thoughts come from and how we translate those thoughts into verbal and nonverbal communication. John Greene, who first published this theory in 1984, proposes that people organize and store knowledge about what things mean and how to do things, and then use that knowledge in action. When people encounter similar situations,

they recall, or assemble, these memories and plan a course of action.

Communication accommodation theory is interested in how and why people modify or change their communication behavior in different situations. This theory, developed by Howard Giles and colleagues in the 1960s and 1970s, explains the ways in which people influence and are influenced by each other while they are communicating. Communication accommodation theory proposes that when communicating, people seek to reduce or increase the differences between themselves and the other. They do this either by converging, communicating more like the other, or diverging, to exaggerate their communicative differences.

Expectancy violation theory was proposed in the 1970s by Judee Burgoon and colleagues. This theory argues that interpretations of a message are not simply about what is said or even how it is said. Instead, interpretation is determined by the situation, the other's reward value (i.e., the positive and negative characteristics of the person), and how the message meets or violates one's expectations. When what you expect to happen in an interaction does not happen, you frequently note the occurrence and pay more attention to the event. Though violations result when someone breaks a verbal or nonverbal rule, such as standing too close or saying inappropriate things, violations are not necessarily negative. The violation may be perceived as positive, either because the action was welcome or because the actor has positive reward value.

Politeness theory, published in the 1980s by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, argues that people will use different messages depending on their perception of the situation and the listener. Politeness is the way through which people attempt to lessen the potential threat in certain messages. This theory was strongly influenced by Erving Goffman's notion of *face*, which is the positive social identity we claim for ourselves. Face is about the way you see yourself and want other people to see you. Politeness theory proposed that face is a multidimensional concept that includes positive face, or one's desire to be liked, respected, and included, and negative face, one's desire to be independent, autonomous, and unconstrained by others. The theory focuses on how people construct messages that address one or both aspects of face and the factors that influence message production.

Speech act theory is about how people accomplish things with words. Developed during the 1960s by John Austin and refined in the 1970s by John Searle, this theory explains how people use language as action. In other words, how can we talk things into being? Though one of the primary goals of speech act theory was to categorize speech acts, this theory also explains how speakers rely on conventional assumptions about speech to make sense of interactions.

Theories About Movement in Relationships

Relationships are always evolving. As people talk to each other and develop shared meanings, relationships are established, maintained, and sometimes even dissolved. Theories about movement in relationships describe how communication functions to move relationships along different trajectories.

Relational dialectics theory presents relationship change as the result of individuals' navigating and negotiating their internal, contradictory desires. Relational dialectics theory, presented by Leslie Baxter and her colleagues, is rooted in the historical dialectic perspective of opposing but connected forces. People in relationships often want two different things at the same time. In relationships, the three common dialectics, or simultaneous desires, are integration–separation (desire to be close and separate), stability–change (desire for predictability and spontaneity), and expression–privacy (the desire to be open and private).

Social exchange theory offers the perspective that relationships are commodities and attributes movement in relationships to people's desire to maximize their rewards while minimizing their costs. As relational partners become too costly, either through time or energy, people begin to minimize interactions. However, we maximize interactions with people perceived as rewarding. This theory, by John Thibaut and Harold Kelley, explains that perceptions of cost and rewards are not fixed but determined by one's level of comparison.

Social penetration theory, by Irving Altman and Dalmas Taylor, describes how self-disclosure moves relationships from superficial to intimate. This was one of the first theories about how changes in communication patterns can effect changes in

relationships. The theory, first published in the early 1970s, is often called “the onion model” because it portrays people as having multiple layers centered on a core. At the core are a person's deeply held beliefs, values, thoughts, and feelings. This core can be conceptualized as the “true” self that is private and protected. People's layers have both depth and breadth, so there are different topics that we can know about a person (breadth), as well as lots of detail about each topic (depth). As people get to know each other, they self-disclose and “shed” layers, which moves the relationship deeper. Relationships develop as people move from the superficial layers closer to the core layers.

The relationship development model depicts relationship movement as a series of stages through which couples may move. In the 1980s, Mark Knapp presented a 10-stage model of relationships coming together and coming apart. Each stage is characterized by different communication patterns. Though movement through these stages is generally sequential and systematic, people may skip stages, stay in a stage, or repeat stages.

Summary

Theories about IPC have been developed to explain how people attach meaning to events, why they act the way they do, how they make decisions about messages, and the effect that communication has on relationships. Though this entry presents these theories in separate categories about meaning, motives, messages, and movement, most of the theories can be used to understand the communication processes in other categories.

Virginia M. McDermott

See also Accommodation Theory; Action Assembly Theory; Attribution Theory; Constructivism; Coordinated Management of Meaning; Expectancy Violations Theory; Politeness Theory; Relational Development; Social Exchange Theory; Social Interaction Theories; Social Penetration Theory; Speech Act Theory; Symbolic Interactionism; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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INTERPERSONAL DECEPTION THEORY

Deception refers to behavior intentionally enacted to mislead another. Interpersonal deception theory (IDT) is one contemporary communication theory intended to predict and explain deception in the context of interpersonal interactions. IDT was developed by David Buller and Judee K. Burgoon to offer an alternative perspective to prevailing psychological perspectives on deception. Growing out of several decades of research into credibility and interpersonal communication, it is an inter-related set of assumptions and propositions, or testable statements, drawing on principles of interpersonal communication to predict and explain deception in interpersonal interactions. Its scope is thus deception *during* communication, which can include face-to-face, public, computer-mediated, or virtual communication. To date, over 20 experiments have been conducted testing various aspects of IDT. Many, but not all, have received support.

IDT is not meant to focus on a single cause but instead to provide a comprehensive depiction of the communication-relevant factors in deception message production and deception detection. This

entry summarizes the assumptions of IDT and some of the key propositions of the theory that illustrate its claims.

Assumptions of Interpersonal Deception Theory

Assumptions are the “givens” in a theory that underpin it but are not tested. IDT enumerates several assumptions about the nature of interpersonal communication and the nature of deception. It assumes, first, that interpersonal interactions place all parties in the simultaneous role of sender and receiver. As senders they must mentally create messages, encode those messages into verbal and nonverbal signals, observe other communicators’ feedback and reactions as they speak, and adapt their ongoing communication to those reactions. As listeners, they must recognize and interpret another’s messages, manage their outward demeanor, send feedback, and formulate their own upcoming turn at talk. There are several implications of this general depiction of the process of interpersonal communication. One is that it *is* a process, a continually changing stream of verbal and nonverbal signals that cannot be captured by a single snapshot. Another is that both sender and receiver are active, not passive, goal-oriented participants who anticipate, plan, and adapt as the interaction unfolds. Yet another is that sender and receiver perform several different communication functions at once, including generating and processing verbal messages, presenting self favorably, regulating turn taking, and managing emotional displays, among others. Yet another implication is that sender and receiver are interdependent. Each person’s actions influence the other and cannot be understood without taking account of what the other is doing.

A central assumption regarding deception is that sizing up the credibility of other communicators is an inherent part of all interactions. Even though it typically occurs at a subconscious level, gauging another’s truthfulness is an implicit part of all human encounters.

Another key assumption is that deception entails three classes of strategic, or deliberate, activity—information, behavior, and image management. *Strategic* actions are motivated and deliberate, whether for self-benefit (such as bilking someone of their savings) or for the benefit of

another person (such as saving someone from embarrassment). However, Buller and Burgoon subscribe to the view that deception, as with other planned and overlearned behavior, can be strategic without being highly conscious. *Information management* refers to efforts to control the verbal contents of a message. *Behavior management* refers to efforts to control accompanying nonverbal behaviors to suppress any telltale signs of deceit and to appear “normal.” *Image management* refers to more general efforts to maintain credibility and to protect one’s face if caught. Handled skillfully, these three classes of strategic activity should work together to create an overall believable *communication performance*. At the same time, other *nonstrategic*, or unintentional, behaviors—such as signs of nervousness, fear, or excessive behavioral control—may also occur, producing unnatural behavior, damaging performances, and undermining credibility.

A related assumption is that deception is more cognitively demanding than truth telling. It poses more difficulty for senders to create a deceptive than a truthful version of reality because the sender must not only mentally create the truthful rendition but must also concoct the deceptive one and mentally edit its presentation so that it is plausible and consistent with prior statements.

The relevance of these various assumptions is that, in contrast to perspectives that focus primarily or exclusively on involuntary and unintentional manifestations of deceit, deception should be viewed as intentional, goal-directed activity and as a social phenomenon (i.e., something that happens between people), not just a psychological one (i.e., something that happens within people). Additionally, its assumptions draw attention to the dynamic nature of deception displays and deception detection, as well as to the influence of receiver thoughts and behavior on sender displays. For example, receiver suspicion should influence sender thoughts, feelings, verbalizations, and nonverbal displays, which in turn should affect the receiver’s subsequent level of suspicion and own verbal and nonverbal behavior.

Testable Propositions

The heart of IDT is its series of 18 interconnected and testable propositions that together

are meant to provide a more accurate depiction of how interpersonal deception is enacted and with what effects. Here are a few of the most central of these propositions related to context, relationship, interactivity, bias and suspicion, and accuracy.

Context and Relationship

Two central propositions are that (1) *deceiver and receiver thoughts, feelings, and behaviors vary systematically with (a) access to nonverbal cues and (b) conversational demands*; and (2) *deceiver and receiver thoughts, feelings, and behaviors vary systematically with (c) relational familiarity and (d) relational valence (positive to negative)*. These propositions identify the communication context and the nature of the relationship as key influences on cognition, affect, and behavior during deception. Contexts such as face-to-face interaction and videoconferencing that give communicators access to the full complexion of one another’s nonverbal cues should produce different thoughts, behavioral displays, interpretations, and detection accuracy than ones such as e-mail or phone conversations that have fewer nonverbal channels available. The type of interaction, such as a task-oriented versus a social one, should also influence how deception is enacted and detected. For instance, a business negotiation may invoke more perceptions of ulterior motives and possible deception than a chat about sports. The relationship between communicators—friendly or adversarial, family versus strangers—should also make a difference. These initial IDT propositions do not state the specific direction of these relationships. Instead, they must be combined with other propositions and with the assumptions to generate specific hypotheses.

Interactivity

One variable that can make a difference is the degree of interaction in the exchange. The proposition that *the more interactive the communication context, the more that deceivers increase strategic activity and reduce nonstrategic activity over time* draws on the factor of nonverbal-cues access and assumptions about interaction dynamics, strategic activity, and the cognitive demands of deceptive message production. Interactive

communication contexts typically include more nonverbal channels through which communicators are interdependent and will therefore motivate senders to exert more control over their verbal and nonverbal behavior so as to evade detection. Conversely, less interactive contexts, such as e-mail exchanges, will place fewer demands on senders to manage so many different facets of behavior in real time and thus may entail less motivation to manage information, behavior, and image.

Other propositions similarly predict what cognitions, emotions, and behaviors will be observed under what conditions and how accurately receivers will detect deception. Several of these propositions relate to bias, suspicion, and detection accuracy.

Bias and Suspicion

Suspicion and truth bias are expected to influence receiver judgments. For example, one proposition states that receivers will manifest their suspicions through strategic and nonstrategic behavior. They may choose a questioning style that either makes their suspicions evident or attempts to minimize any signs of skepticism. At the same time, some of their incredulity may “leak out” unintentionally in their demeanor, tipping off the sender to the presence of suspicion.

Accuracy of Judgment

Another proposition specifies what leads to inaccurate or accurate judgment: *Receivers are less accurate in detecting deception when (a) receivers hold truth biases, (b) contexts are interactive, and (c) senders are skilled encoders; they are more accurate when (d) they are familiar with the deceiver, (e) they are skilled decoders, and (f) senders deviate from expected patterns.* Put differently, if receivers are truth biased, that is, judging most senders as truthful, they will fail to detect deception (although they will be seen as accurate when judging truth because they judge most people as honest and straightforward). Interactive contexts are posited to lead to inaccuracy because senders will take better advantage of them than will receivers. Receivers will also be less accurate detecting the deception of senders who are skillful communicators than of those who are not. Factors that

should give receivers more of an edge are having familiarity with the sender’s behavioral patterns (as would be possible with exposure to baseline truthful verbal and nonverbal behavior), familiarity with other information about the sender (as would be possible when doing background checks or reading a resume), or relational familiarity (as when sender and receiver are from the same family or are close friends). Relational familiarity, however, also triggers more truth bias, so this last form of familiarity is thought to be less of a force for accuracy than the others. Receiver communication skills are posited to aid accuracy, just as they aid sender performance, but the empirical evidence has yet to confirm that receivers who are generally skillful at decoding others’ communication are skillful at decoding deception. Finally, receivers should be more accurate to the extent that sender verbal and nonverbal behavior is abnormal and violates expectations; if senders maintain a normal-appearing demeanor, receivers will not be as successful in detecting deceit.

Judee K. Burgoon

See also Expectancy Violations Theory; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Nonverbal Communication Theories

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INTERPERSONAL POWER

See Power, Interpersonal

INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITIES THEORY

The theory of interpretive communities attempts to explicate the social processes involved in interpreting cultural texts. In the communication discipline, it has been applied most often in media studies, particularly the semiotic domain of audience experience. According to the theory, the meanings ascribed to cultural texts are neither wholly subjective nor a property of material objects; rather, such texts as television programs, romance novels, and Web content become meaningful only through the interpretive strategies practiced by the memberships of communities. The *community* of the term often references a shared consciousness of core beliefs, ideals, or identity in a broad population of people. In this sense, the term is, like Benedict Anderson's concept of *imagined community*, a useful heuristic for exploring the social dimensions of interpretation. However, *community* is also sometimes used to characterize the situated sense-making practices of fan groups, subcultures, and other types of social collectivity. The question of whether the interpretive community is a metaphorical construct or an empirical description remains a source of debate in media and communication studies.

Development of Interpretive Community Theory

Interpretive community theory is of fairly recent origin, although its epistemological roots extend back more than 100 years. The basic idea of the interpretive community is foreshadowed in the work of the American pragmatist and semiotician Charles Sanders Peirce, who argued that public knowledge arises out of the discursive practices of communities of inquiry. The hermeneutics of Wilhelm Dilthey, Paul Ricoeur, and Hans-Georg Gadamer contributed a method for studying the

active, contextualized nature of textual interpretation, while the work of the linguistic theorists Valentin Volosinov and Mikhail Bakhtin stressed the polysemic (characterized by many meanings) and dialogic nature of language in social usage. Meanwhile, several strains of the constructivist movement during the mid-20th century—among them social phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, and ethnomethodology—forwarded the view that reality is a social construction that takes variable forms and is created through processes of face-to-face interaction. Toward the end of the century, belief in the stability of texts and historical metanarratives was questioned by poststructuralist philosophers who argued that knowledge is created through the contingencies of power and discourse. Similarly, in literary studies, the deconstructionist and reader-response (or reception) camps promoted the role of the reader-as-subject in bringing textual meanings to life. These latter developments set the stage for the literary theorist Stanley Fish to coin the term *interpretive community*.

In his volume of essays *Is There a Text in This Class?* Fish proposed that a text is meaningless—mere ink marks on paper—without readers to engage it. Other reader-response theorists said much the same thing, but most of them located the mechanisms for meaning making in psychological explanations. Stanley Fish's formulation was set apart by its emphasis on the social world of readers. He argued that the interpretive strategies that a reader deploys in the act of reading—indeed, the strategies for deciding what counts as a text of a certain kind—existed long before the reader encountered the text. Furthermore, these strategies are not the property of an individual but of a social community of readers. Through networks of discourse, new members are socialized into the cultural presuppositions for reading and evaluating texts, as well as the specific rules for how to read a text competently. Importantly, members also learn the rules for debating the value of an interpretation; such debates can be fruitful for signaling the core values of a community, clarifying the range of coherent readings, or indicating new ways of reading. However, any serious disagreements that emerge about what a text means—or about what constitutes a text—can be evidence of different interpretive communities. Therefore, what we conventionally think of as the act of reading a

work of literature is actually an act of “writing” it—creating and shaping its contours of meaning—and the strategies that enable these achievements are produced by the social entity called an interpretive community. A textual reading is judged right or wrong, worthy or unworthy, by the standards of this community. Other communities may have very different aesthetic or ideological commitments and thus abide by different standards for interpreting the same work.

Interpretive Community Research in Media Studies

The prototype community that Fish had in mind was literary critics, whose business it is to sharpen and refine their evaluations of a body of texts (usually works of literary art) and communicate those evaluations to other experts. This type of community is marked by an extensive period of formal training; moreover, the discursive activity of its membership can be widely dispersed in time and space. Yet it became apparent by the early 1980s that the concept could apply to more mundane settings. Spurred by new developments in British cultural studies, particularly Stuart Hall’s encoding/decoding model and David Morley’s pioneering *Nationwide* audience study, the field of media studies was undergoing a major paradigm change. The locus of meaning in the mass-communication process rapidly shifted away from the text alone and toward the text–audience relationship. Yet even as early qualitative audience studies registered patterns of text decoding, the underlying mechanisms remained unclear. The concept of interpretive community entered the lexicon of media scholarship with the 1984 publication of Janice Radway’s *Reading the Romance*. Studying a group of women readers of romance novels who frequented a bookstore, Radway found that the women had very clear, and mostly coherent, understandings of how romance stories are told. They seemed to be united in their evaluations of “good” and “bad” romances, the attributes of male and female protagonists, and other features of the genre. Importantly, Radway also inquired in the focus group interviews about the social background of romance reading, including the women’s negotiation of the novels in the context of family roles and responsibilities.

While *Reading the Romance* represented a breakthrough study in many respects, its adaptation of Fish’s interpretive community concept to everyday media reception was one of the most notable. Mass-communication theorists followed up on Radway’s study with efforts to flesh out the then-embryonic concept into a theoretic form. Klaus Bruhn Jensen, for example, conceptualized the interpretive community as an intersection of prior cultural traditions and newer media competencies. Thomas R. Lindlof proposed that interpretive communities may be identified in three ways: their consumption of specific genres, the commonalities of their media interpretations, and their performance of social actions of media use. The morphology of interpretive communities also came under scrutiny: Jensen hypothesized that interpretive communities crisscross each other in the cultural arena; Lindlof suggested that not all “communities” map neatly onto a social group but rather function as an informal social tie that lasts only for as long as the relationship endures.

Following Radway, many of the media studies of interpretive communities share an interest in popular genres and the competencies and pleasures that characterize audience reception of genre texts. Among the genre-based communities that have been studied thus far are those for science fiction, soap operas, talk shows, self-help books, and oppositional political texts. Genres have served as a focus of investigation and conceptual development for several reasons. First, media content is often designed, produced, and marketed to the public by means of genre classifications. Thus, the genre system represents an implicit contract between the media industries and the normative codes of readers (and viewers). Second, genres always exhibit some variance in the meanings of their signifiers, both synchronically and diachronically; consequently, the researcher can track the variations in audience decodings as the genre itself undergoes change. Third, from a practical standpoint, it is thought to be easier to find an interpretive community if one can make a case that a genre has a highly devoted following. By the same token, however, genres are problematic because not all consumers of a genre can be safely regarded as members of an interpretive community, and not all interpretive communities subsist on genres. In this regard, there has been, in recent years, an expansion in the types

of mediated communities under active study. The explosive growth of the Internet has led legions of scholars to study the communicative action of *virtual communities* that organize their users along the lines of an ideology, lifestyle, or another common interest. The study of *brand communities*—people who align their interpretations of a branded product with others of similarly intense affinity—has developed rapidly in the field of consumer research. Also in media studies, the concept of interpretive community has been applied to the cultural identity and collective memories of journalists and other professional communicators.

Methodological Issues

Methodologically, audience studies have largely relied on qualitative interviews to elicit discourse about the content uses, strategies, and textual discriminations of an interpretive community. The devoted users of a genre are typically recruited for these interview studies because, as mentioned earlier, many interpretive communities are defined by their affiliation with genre texts. Focus group interviews, in particular, are often used for tapping into the group context of audience interpretation, although relatively few focus group studies consider strings of dialogue as their units of analysis. Ethnography is probably most suitable for studying how interpretation and behavior are actually joined in natural settings; one example of ethnographic investigation of interpretive communities is Roger Aden, Rita Rahoi, and Christina Beck's study of visitors to the *Field of Dreams* site in Iowa. Ethnography is rarely employed in interpretive community studies, due in part to the greater demands of logistics, time, and social participation. Documentary evidence and hermeneutic methods have also been employed in studies of media production cultures and historical moments of audience reception.

Criticisms

Criticisms of the interpretive communities theory have centered on three issues: the meaning and validity of community, its ideological blind spot, and the underspecification of theoretical components. The first critique has to do with the meaning of the *community* referent. Many studies have

marshaled considerable evidence that interpretive communities either closely resemble aspects of geographically bounded communities or that they operate as part of the normal semiotic functions of real communities. Yet some also claim that people do not so much belong to mediated communities as they learn “interpretive repertoires” for use on media texts in specific situations. For these critics, the community metaphor should not be applied too literally. Second, it is often alleged that the concept's seeming emphasis on audience autonomy ignores the power of media texts (and the institutions that produce them) in determining meanings. This ideological blind spot, some believe, can be redressed only by taking account of the audience's susceptibility to hegemonic common sense as well as media manipulation, misdirection, and co-optation. Finally, the theory of interpretive communities has been amply criticized for lacking the specificity required of a theoretical account. There is little disagreement, even among its adherents, that rigorous theorizing of interpretive communities has been piecemeal at best. Achieving progress in such areas as specifying the boundary conditions for interpretive communities, verifying and describing the types of interpretive communities that exist, and modeling their evolutionary paths would help establish a firmer foundation for theory and empirical research.

Thomas R. Lindlof

See also Audience Theories; Community; Cultural Studies; Ethnography of Communication; Hermeneutics; Interpretive Theory; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Semiotics and Semiology

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INTERPRETIVE THEORY

The expression *interpretive theory* refers to a relatively large umbrella category that includes analytical perspectives and theories spanning the fields of communication, sociology, anthropology,

education, cultural studies, political science, history, and the humanities writ large. Interpretive theories, sometimes referred to as interpretivism or philosophical interpretivism, are orientations to social reality based on the goal of understanding. Thus, we can define interpretive theories as *ontological* and *epistemological* tools used in research concerned with understanding how individuals and groups create meaning in their everyday practices, communication, and lived experiences.

Loosely speaking, interpretivists are (a) scholars who are interested in the ways communities, cultures, or individuals create meaning from their own actions, rituals, interactions, and experiences; (b) scholars who wish to interpret local meanings by locating them into a broader historical, geographical, political, linguistic, ideological, economic, and cultural milieu; (c) researchers who look at the meanings of texts and the codes and rules on which they rely to convey meaning; and (d) theory- and philosophy-oriented scholars who explore ideas of meaning and interpretation in and of themselves.

To comprehend the quintessential characteristics of interpretivism and better appreciate its uniqueness and usefulness, it is useful to begin by looking at its philosophical origins and then juxtaposing interpretivist theories with interpretivism's most notable counterpart: the perspective of positivism. Subsequently, this entry explores interpretivism as it relates to social scientific communication research by examining its common ontological and epistemological characteristics.

Philosophical Background

The historical foundations of interpretivism can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries and mainly to two geographical sites: continental Europe and the United States. Philosophers commonly associated with the growth of interpretivist influence in Europe include Georg Simmel, Max Weber, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Edmund Husserl, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Wilhelm Dilthey. These philosophers are also known contributors to the development of perspectives known as hermeneutics and phenomenology. The list of American scholars and intellectuals includes William James, Charles Sanders Peirce,

John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, and Charles Cooley. These American scholars are also universally recognized to be the founding fathers of the philosophy of pragmatism. Despite the geographical, political, and philosophical distance between these two European and North American schools of thought, their intellectual origins—those of interpretivism—are generally found to be remarkably similar in both Europe and North America insofar as they constituted a strong challenge and rejection of the then absolutely dominant ontology and epistemology of positivism. But before we examine interpretivism against positivism, let us briefly outline the main principles of hermeneutics and phenomenology. The main principles of pragmatism will be the subject of exploration in a later section.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is the philosophical tradition that seeks to understand the world through directly experienced phenomena. By reflecting on such experiences, one can derive an understanding and an appreciation of the multiple, contingent, and diverse meanings of the lifeworld, rather than merely metaphysical conjecture. It follows that phenomenology does not seek to gather up and reflect on knowledge that is speculative in nature, but rather knowledge that is already present in the social world in which we live—that of immediate experience. Therefore, in social sciences such as communication studies, phenomenological theorizing and research studies seek *empirical* data gathered by using various methods in order to understand concrete social phenomena.

The philosophical tradition of phenomenology has emerged through various movements of thought that have spanned two centuries and through the contributions of key American and European thinkers who have progressively made a complex philosophy more and more useful for the practical inquiry needs of social scientists. The notion of studying phenomena rather than essences alone first appeared in the philosophical thought of Immanuel Kant, who asserted that the study of phenomena should derive from the investigation of actual objects of real or illusory experiences. This, he felt, was an activity distinguishably different from the investigation of *noumena*, or the unknowable.

Later, in a critical development of phenomenological thought, Georg Hegel asserted that the science of phenomena was the study of the mind's own knowledge and consciousness.

However, not until the work of German philosopher Edmund Husserl (by many considered the true founding father of phenomenology) did the term *phenomenology* become a distinct tradition within continental philosophy. Husserl's approach—known as *transcendental phenomenology*—has influenced many other thinkers in the phenomenological tradition. Husserlian phenomenology aims at developing a pure, rigorous science that seeks to capture “knowledge of essences” by bracketing all conditions that may make one's consciousness of something partial. Later thinkers such as Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jean-Paul Sartre moved away from Husserl's purely cognitive approach to phenomenology that—in their mind—reduced empirical knowledge to a pure realist and ahistorical essence.

In contrast to his teacher Husserl, Heidegger believed that each person can have remarkably different experiences in his or her lifeworld; therefore, bracketing and reducing phenomena to a pure objective essence is impossible and undesirable. Heidegger's rejection of Husserl's phenomenology created a new movement known today as *existential phenomenology* and also laid the foundations of interpretivism. Existential phenomenology is also closer than Husserlian phenomenology to interpretive theory because it is strongly related to and influenced by another continental philosophical tradition, called hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is the philosophy of interpretation and understanding. It examines how experience, language, and dialogue contribute to the process of interpretation. Hermeneutics began as a study of interpreting ancient religious manuscripts but eventually incorporated (through the thought of scholars such as Friedrich Schleiermacher and Hans-Georg Gadamer) the agendas of other academic traditions: Hermeneutics began to look at interpretation not only as a process of uncovering the meanings of texts, but also as a process for understanding everyday experiences and the meanings of the social world. A hermeneutic approach

to the social world pays attention to how individuals spin webs of significance—to paraphrase anthropologist Clifford Geertz—and thus create different meanings for their experiences through their own interpretive lenses and frames.

The central idea of a hermeneutic approach to reality is that of the hermeneutic circle. The *hermeneutic circle* can be explained as a dialectical process of meaning making that takes into account the meanings of an object against a context and the meanings of a context on the basis of a set of present objects. This rather convoluted idea is always best explained through a simple example. Imagine you suddenly hear a whistle. Startled by it, you immediately and quickly try to come up with possible interpretations of its meaning. Hence, you probably turn around to see where it may have come from. If you're walking nearby a soccer pitch, you may determine that the whistle was directed to soccer players by the referee, and thus you assign to the whistle the meaning of *foul*. If you are standing at an intersection and a traffic officer is standing nearby, you may instead find that the whistle was directed at a jaywalker and was meant to attract the jaywalker's attention in order to reprimand him or her. Or perhaps you may feel that the whistle was directed at you; after all, you did just get a fashionable new makeover! Regardless of what it may be, we generally interpret the meaning of an object—such as a whistle—on the basis of the context in which it is encountered. In addition, we use a multitude of social objects—such as a police or referee uniform—to grasp what makes up a social context. Interpretivist theories always utilize the hermeneutic approach and always utilize the phenomenological approach of understanding realities on the basis of people's consciousness of them.

Interpretivism Versus Positivism

A theory—according to the classical logical positivist model—should serve the purpose of explaining relations of cause and effect. In doing so, it should allow for the prediction of future phenomena and possibly allow the scientist a great degree of control over reality. The building of theory should occur by measuring variables and relations among variables, testing hypotheses that explain causal or correlational relations, and building

lawlike statements that accumulate in the shape of a formal, universally valid, objective system of propositions. Theory should constantly be subject to extension and improvement through confirmation of the *validity* of its precepts and testing of new hypotheses by way of valid and reliable research such as experiments.

The classical positivist perspective on theory outlined above is most typically associated with the natural sciences. But, interpretivists argue, natural scientists have a radically different research subject than social scientists have. Whereas a rock, for example, has no known capacity to react to the scientist's investigation, a human being does. Indeed a human being is not only reactive, but is so in relatively unpredictable ways due to the human's capacity for meaningful, reflective, intentional action. The natural sciences—or *Naturwissenschaften*, as German interpretivists notably referred to them—are therefore dramatically different from scientific investigations into the human *Geist*, or spirit. The *Geisteswissenschaften*, or social sciences, should therefore adopt an entirely different ontology and epistemology—the early interpretivists argued.

So, what should theory attempt to accomplish within a renewed social scientific project that no longer attempts to model itself after the natural sciences? First and foremost it should attempt to explain *meaning*: the meaning of human action, experience, communication, and how meaning informs people's everyday life, the things they do, what they experience, and the ways in which they relate to other people. Rather than explaining causal relations among variables, it should attempt to comprehend the meanings people give to social things. Thus, rather than focusing on prediction, control, and explanation, an interpretivist perspective focuses on *Verstehen*, that is, understanding. Because of the great diversity of ways in which people assign meanings to things, interpretive theories reject the pretension of building universalist models that are valid across time and space. People's activities are thus contingent, rather than universal.

Moreover, instead of basing their theoretical models on fundamental principles and assumptions that are the unchallengeable basis for further knowledge and inquiry, interpretivists give primacy to insights inductively gathered from observation and experience, even when those insights

contradict existing assumptions. Interpretivism is therefore antifoundationalist. Interpretive theories are also built around the idea of emergence—that things are never the same as they are constantly subject to renegotiation, novelty, and unexpected outcomes. Their theorizing, therefore, does not aim for a formalist—that is, a rigorous system of clear rules—approach to reality, but instead for one that is itself emergent and fluid. Interpretivists also generally shy away from experimental or similar kinds of research that create conditions not generally encountered within the contexts of everyday life. Even survey questionnaires—with their characteristically closely structured system of answers and scales—are generally eschewed by interpretivist researchers, who prefer instead to directly immerse themselves in “natural” social situations they wish to understand (most notably through methods such as unstructured interviewing and ethnography).

Finally, interpretive theories take into account the great multiplicity of perspectives that inform meaning and thus reject the very possibility that knowledge be built by dispossessing oneself of values, by relegating the possibility of alternative interpretations to an unlikely accident, and by embracing a form of inquiry that places the researcher/theorist outside and above the reality he or she wishes to comprehend. Rather than objectivist, bias-free, and etic (focusing on external

categories and structures), interpretivist theorists embrace a multiplicity of perspectives and possible interpretations, take into account the researcher’s own values, and aim at a form of inquiry that works from the inside. All the characteristics of interpretivism discussed above are outlined in Table 1 and juxtaposed against the characteristics of classical logical positivism.

Interpretivism: Theory or Perspective?

Interpretive theory building is so remarkably different from its positivist counterpart (at least in the mind of most interpretivists) that it might even be considered a misnomer to utilize the word *theory* to refer to the analytical practices of interpretivists. This is certainly the case among some empirical researchers, who prefer the label *perspectives*—rather than *theories*—for the sets of analytical tools that allow their generalizations and interpretations. The expression *perspective*, as opposed to *theory*, emphasizes the fact that in the end an interpretation is but an angle, a position, and ultimately a possibility that is easily contradicted by the endless availability of alternative interpretations. In light of this, interpretive perspectives are nothing but toolboxes full of concepts that sensitize inquiry to take a particular shape, emphasis, or direction. While debates over whether interpretivism is a theory or a perspective, a clearly identifiable philosophical

Table 1 Classical Logical Positivism and Interpretivism Compared

<i>Classical Logical Positivism</i>	<i>Interpretivism</i>
Focused on explanation	Focused on understanding
Universalist	Contingent
Foundationalist	Antifoundationalist
Formalist	Emergent
Experimental	Naturalistic
Objectivist	Multiperspectival
Bias-free	Reflexive on own standpoint
Etic	Emic

Source: Author.

tradition versus a mere common posture toward inquiry, abound, what matters in the end is that interpretivists share an extremely practical approach to realities that is characterized by empathic identification, intentionality, reflexivity, and nominality—the subjects of the next section.

Common Characteristics of Interpretive Theories

Interpretive theories abound. There are ethnomethodologists and social phenomenologists; there are objective and philosophical hermeneuticians; there are social semioticians and students of pragmatics; there are classical, contemporary, and critical pragmatists; there are postmodernists and social constructionists; there are symbolic interactionists of the structural and processual variety, and so forth. But regardless of these differences, it is fair to say that all interpretivists agree that their perspectives (or theories!) hinge on empathic identification, intentionality, reflexivity, and nominality. These four characteristics epitomize the pragmatist tradition mentioned earlier, but also the phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions.

By *empathic identification* interpretivists mean that in order to understand the meanings of all social action and communication, one must take the role of the people one wishes to understand. Take, for example, a wink—a famous example of this argument. Imagine one wished to understand the meaning of a particular wink as expressed at a particular point in time and space. Could a wink symbolize flirting? Or that perhaps two people are in cahoots? Or could it simply be a meaningless nervous tic? To find meaning in a wink—or in any kind of action and communication—requires reaching into the subjective consciousness of the actor. In other words, to understand meaning requires investigating what one intends by it and the response it generates—a central pragmatist tenet. Empathic identification is thus a way of getting into a communicating actor's mind, body, and soul; it is a way of experiencing the world from that actor's perspective and a way of taking his or her role. By putting himself or herself into the shoes of those he or she wishes to understand, an interpretivist can uncover motives, thoughts, ideals, desires, goals, and circumstances.

Second, interpretive theories are phenomenological and pragmatic with respect to people's intentions for action. Phenomenologists and pragmatists argue that the social world is constituted through actions and experiences. In other words, there would not be any kind of social world were it not for people's shared experiences, shared meanings, interpersonal communication, and collective action. According to this view, people are not the victims of their circumstances; while their power may differ on the basis of the situation, individual capacities, social norms, and social roles, people do have some degree of agency in shaping their social existence. Their agency or capacity for action is a direct manifestation of their *intentionality*. Intentionality is human will: the will to direct action toward an object in a way that therefore becomes meaningful to the actor.

Third, interpretive theories emphasize the importance of reflexivity. They do so in the context of their own research, as we have seen earlier, but they also do so in positing a view of humanity that is based on the reflective power of human beings. Reflexivity—or *reflectivity*, as it is sometimes spelled—refers to the human ability to imagine oneself from perspectives other than one's own. Thus, for example, a person may imagine himself or herself from the perspective of a neighbor, but also from the perspective of another culture, a different social group, or a different historical perspective. Reflexivity is a key condition for formation of a sense of self and identity, as well as for the formation of society and culture. Viewing people as reflexive beings encourages interpretivists to focus on how they construct and reproduce their social realities and how those social realities are thus continuously subject to reevaluation and reinterpretation.

Finally, interpretivists share an approach to reality that is nominal. By this, it is simply meant that human beings make their own lives meaningful by way of assigning symbols, names, categories, and rules to social objects and by way of respecting the very "game" they have created. Thus, no matter how strange it may seem that things are a certain way, those things remain consistently meaningful across situations. For example, think of how strange an infield fly rule may seem to someone who does not understand the game of baseball. And yet, think of how real and "set in stone" that rule is to baseball players and fans. It is indeed so

real in its consequences that it evokes emotions, actions, states of mind, and consequences that are virtually unchallengeable and yet so obviously dependent on a rather fragile agreement (after all, the rule could be changed by a ruling commissioner with a single stroke of a pen!).

Together, the four characteristics discussed above point to how interpretivists share a common pragmatist, phenomenological, and hermeneutic heritage and a common approach to social reality. Their approach views human interaction as meaningful and real in its consequences, views people's ideas and lifeways as worthy of respect, and—in their emphasis on human diversity—reveals how a common and intersubjectively shared understanding (however nuanced) may be achieved.

April Vannini

See also Ethnomethodology; Hermeneutics; Phenomenology; Philosophy of Communication; Postpositivism; Pragmatics; Theory

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INTERRACIAL COMMUNICATION

Interracial communication is a genre of communication study that embraces the interactions

between people representing different historical races. As such it encompasses the encounters between people in a practical sense—the ordinary engagement of human beings from various racial, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds with each other in the quite human activity of social interaction. It also entails the researching of the phenomenon of racial engagement, seeking to determine the problems and prospects of such discursive engagement with people of different racial backgrounds.

One might say that interracial communication is a variety of communication inasmuch as mass communication, interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, cyber communication, and institutional communication are all parts of the same overarching field. What distinguishes each of these discrete subdisciplines from the other represents the defining coin of that particular area. For example, in the case of interracial communication, the defining coin is racial biography itself. This does not mean that race is the only factor that enters the picture in an interpersonal interaction situation; it simply means that a major—perhaps the major—factor involved in a communication experience that is defined as *interracial* is race itself.

While almost all scientists agree that there is no singular racial worldview and that race itself as a concept has been hierarchically constructed by ruling classes for control and power, it remains a salient, although waning, idea in contemporary society. The old notion of discrete biotic entities was never based on objective variations in language, culture, or social groupings. Rather the race idea eclipsed language and culture and included superficial assessments and judgments based on phenotypes and behaviors. Interracial communication has sought to provide a canvas for themes, issues, and ideas in spite of the lingering presence of antiquated ideas of race. In the United States of America, race has played a fundamental role in shaping policy, behavior, and attitudes despite the lack of science to support race as a valid concept.

In voting for the Democratic presidential candidates during the 2008 presidential primary contests, nearly one in every five individuals who voted in the Appalachian region of the United States claimed that their vote was based on the race of the candidate. Thus, race remains socially

and politically salient in some communities although its biological basis has been in doubt scientifically since the latter part of the 20th century. The election of Barack Obama as President of the United States fueled a new discourse on race because he was biologically Black and White, according to the science of his origin, but defined socially in the United States as African American.

The practice of interracial communication emerged before the study of interracial communication in the same way that humans began to speak much earlier than anyone thought about examining the meaning of human speech. When we consider the fact that interracial communication, as a variety of the field of communication, emerged as a legitimate division of study only in the 1970s and 1980s, we are confronted with the youthfulness of this area of study.

Most of the work done in communication prior to the 1970s could be classified as either work in rhetorical communication or cybernetics, and neither of these fields imagined interracial work. One could look to the cross-cultural work done by the anthropologists and some of the early research on African and Asian cultures advanced by Edward Hall, Margaret Mead, and others.

In 1970, Andrea Rich and Arthur L. Smith (later Molefi Kete Asante) wrote an article for the *Speech Teacher*, the forerunner of the *Communication Teacher*, entitled “An Approach to Teaching Interracial Communication,” which became the initial intellectual discussion of interracial communication in the field. This publication was the first modern introduction to the field of interracial communication. During the next 3 years, Rich and Smith prepared major works on interracial communication. The publication of two books in the 1970s, Arthur L. Smith’s *Transracial Communication* in 1973 and Andrea Rich’s *Interracial Communication* in 1974, laid the foundation for the study of how people communicate across racial groupings. In fact, Smith and Rich had been students of Charles Lomas and Paul Rosenthal, two speech professors at the University of California, Los Angeles, who had explored the multidimensional nature of the communication field.

Dennis Ogawa, also a member of that early team, explored Japanese American communication styles and behaviors in an effort to enrich the discourse about race in communication. Indeed,

although Ogawa had been a student of communication, he titled his 1971 book *From Jap to Japanese: The Evolution of Japanese-American Stereotypes*. A few years later he would write the seminal essay on the studies of Japanese Americans in film and become known as the father of Japanese American film studies. While not strictly on interracial communication, Ogawa’s works must be seen as contributing to the new discourse on race in America. However, this school of thought—essentially dedicated to resolving issues related to race relations given the realities of the 1960s and the civil rights struggle—soon gave way to more robust theories around issues of culture and regionalism. Thus, the initial thrust for race analysis in communication did not bring the dynamism that was predicted in the earlier works.

In 1975 Diana Corley wrote “An Interracial Communication Course for Community Colleges,” published in *Speech Teacher*, which expanded the ideas found in the earlier foundation works of Rich and Smith. However, neither the work by the earlier scholars nor Corley’s work resonated with the editors of the top journal in the field of communication. For example, only a book review in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* in 1976 indicated that there was any interest in this area of research. Robert Oliver’s review in *QJS* in February 1976 suggested that the field might find some value in the synthesis made by Andrea Rich. This review was preceded by Jerry Burk’s review in *Speech Teacher* the year before.

There was more than a 20-year hiatus between the time Dennis Ogawa published his piece on “Identity, Dissonance, and Bilingualism: Communication Problems of Asian American Assimilation” in the *Association of Communication Administration Bulletin* in 1976 and Richard Buttny’s “Discursive Construction of Racial Boundaries and Self Segregation on Campus” in the *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* in 1999. One could reasonably say that culture trumped race as a factor for research and study during the 1980s and early 1990s. There were several articles written by Michael Hecht and Sidney Ribeau in the late 1980s dealing with interethnic communication. However, the field of communication itself did not admirably step back into the discourse on interracial communication until works by Debian Marty, Tina Harris, Marsha Houston, Leda Cooks, Mo Bahk, Fred

Jandt, and Aaron Cargile started to appear in 1999 and then into the 2000s.

Much of the work on racial codes in communication, styles of racist language, and racial concealment in communication has been left to scholars in social work, psychology, and anthropology. Wade Nobles, Na'im Akbar, Linda James Myers, and Charles White have examined the role of African American language as it relates to communication across racial lines in the field of psychology. While a few of the scholars of communication ventured into the area of human interaction between different races, the overwhelming influence of Asian cultural communication scholarship superseded the discourse on race in communication. It appeared that many researchers were eager to move away from the distress and agony of researching an area of human communication that was too close for comfort in order to seek more distant analyses of communication involving regions of possible commercial or capital interest, such as China, Japan, and Vietnam. Racial discourse was probably seen as fraught with too many domestic social problems and volatile political factors for adequate understanding.

Nevertheless there are a few scholars, such as Mark P. Orbe and Tina M. Harris, who have continued the discourse on race in America. In their book, *Interracial Communication: Theory Into Practice*, they have demonstrated that the field is as important as ever. First published in 2002, the authors' new edition was published in 2007 with a new publisher and new ideas. Their attention to issues of diversity management, media framing of race, and self-reflective experiences is extraordinary as a creative response to the contemporary society. In their writings, they have expanded the arena for interracial communication and demonstrated practical approaches to claiming territory.

One problem that remains in the field is how to deal with the question of dominance and inequality. Here the interracial communicationists can learn from some of the material on centrality found in the works of Ama Mazama, Yoshitaka Miike, and Ronald Jackson. Without an assertion of agency and an equal acceptance of another person's agency, one cannot reasonably speak of effective interracial communication; one speaks only of domination and terror in that case. What emerges in the work of these scholars and others is that the

principal concern with effectiveness, that is, the appreciation and acceptance of communication, may miss the point of power relations. In other words, how individuals relate to each other on the basis of power, hierarchy, control, and societal position might have more salience than race itself. Here we are at the most complicated juncture in interracial communication because scholars must constantly delve into the question of effectiveness, knowing that the political, social, and symbolic power of the society plays a profound role in how we interpret what occurs between individuals.

Among the issues that remain to be examined in the field of interracial communication are issues dealing with the communicating of prejudice, the use of racist signs and symbols in conversation, domestic political language and racial terror, and the elements of authentic and centered communication in which all communicators have agency. There has been a lag in comprehensive analyses of interracial communication, and there remains a significant need for further research in the area of race and communication. One could conceivably undertake a study of communication between people in the age of race as a nonessentialist element in human society. Such a study would reveal further complexities of race in a heterogeneous, pluralist, and multiethnic society.

Molefi Kete Asante

See also Afrocentricity; Co-Cultural Theory; Contextual Theory of Interethnic Communication; Critical Race Theory; Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory; Cultural Contracts Theory; Culture and Communication; Face Negotiation Theory; Intercultural Communication Competence; Intercultural Communication Theories; Intersectionality; Privilege; Racial Formation Theory; Transculturation; Whiteness Theory

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INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is the notion that one social category cannot be understood in isolation from another social category. It grew out of criticism that antiracist and feminist movements in the 1960s and 1970s homogenized categories of race and gender. While antiracist and feminist discourses were criticized for either ignoring or simply adding social categories together (race + gender + class + sexuality), intersectional scholars called for an approach that recognized that differences coincide simultaneously, multiplying social categories rather than adding them (race × gender × class × sexuality).

North American law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw was first to coin the term *intersectionality*. Joined by Black feminists, she pointed to the ways in which race and class intersect with gender as a type of crossroads or intersection where different types of dominations meet. This challenge was also made explicit in the titles of several books written throughout the 1980s and 1990s, such as *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*, edited by Gloria T. Hull, Patricia B. Scott, and Barbara Smith, as well as *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism*, written by Black feminist author bell hooks.

Intersectional theorists tend to view category formation as a social and cultural construction, and they challenge essentialist notions of identity. Social categories are not seen as merely discursive entities, however, but rather as entities that are constituted in communication and have real social consequences. Intersectional theorists are skeptical of work that seeks to deconstruct difference; instead, they choose to demonstrate how power is clustered and frequently interwoven around particular social categories such as gender, race, sexuality, and class.

Crenshaw's work on intersectionality has laid the groundwork for intersectional analyses. She has explored the notion that racism and sexism intersect in "structural," "political," and "representational" intersections. In her analysis of violence against women of color, for instance, she illustrates how women of color frequently have limited access to housing, education, employment, and wealth. Shelter policies tend to locate women's experiences

solely in light of an ideology of male domination and ignore the racial, socioeconomic, or legal realities of women of color as well as immigrant women. Consequently, women of color and immigrant women face a structural barrier when they turn to shelters for help in cases of violence, such as a lack of assistance related to employment, translations, or legal matters. Politically, women of color and immigrant women are simultaneously located within two conflicting political agendas. While feminist politics fails to successfully interrogate race, antiracist discourses perpetuate sexist thinking. As a result, the experiences of women of color and immigrant women are politically unaccounted for.

Crenshaw has widely applied her intersectional approach to other cases as well. Her work on representational intersectionality explores how sexist as well as racist stereotypes underlie the representation of Black women in musical lyrics. In her analysis of the controversy surrounding 2 Live Crew's lyrics, for instance, Crenshaw shows how the accusations made against 2 Live Crew, which appeared under the disguises of antisexism, vividly supported a racist ideology in the representation of an uncontrollable Black male sexuality. Yet, if anti-sexist rhetoric serves to perpetuate a racist ideology, so does antiracist rhetoric perpetuate a sexist ideology. The argument that any critique of 2 Live Crew is racist because the lyrics represent a unique Black mode of communication disguises misogyny as just a matter of culture. Other intersectional scholars, such as Patricia Hill Collins, have demonstrated an intersectional approach in their analyses as well. Collins argues, for instance that the politically popular concept of "family values" supports a particular (White, middle-class, heterosexual) way of thinking about race, gender, and nation.

Intersectionality operates at the methodological level of analysis as well. Focus rests with a limited number of intersections, in select contexts, such as Malaysian migrant women domestic workers in Singapore households or the communication that takes place between European American midwives and immigrant women from Mexico in California. Intersectional scholars call for a reflexive approach to research methodology. This entails critically interrogating, for instance, which research participants to include, as well as the researcher's own position as a particularly gendered, raced, classed individual.

Scholars working within the field of postcolonial theory, critical Whiteness studies, queer theory, and critical studies of masculinity also critically interrogate intersections related to nationality, race, sexuality, and masculinity. In postcolonial theory and critical Whiteness studies, the intersectional focus rests with postcolonial power relationships and Whiteness as an unmarked category. The goal here is to make the unmarked category marked. In contrast, queer scholars critically interrogate intersections between sexuality and gender to show how heterosexuality serves as a regulatory frame through which gender is understood. Australian masculinity researcher Robert W. (now Raewyn) Connell has added an intersectional approach to the study of masculinity. According to Connell, “hegemonic masculinity” works to secure the dominant position of (some) men over women and (some) other men. Blending queer and masculinity research, North American scholar Judith Halberstam similarly interrogates intersections between masculinity and gender in her work on *female* masculinity. Jointly, these scholars theorize particular lines of difference.

While intersectional analyses have come to occupy an important theoretical and methodological space, one reoccurring question is which intersection(s) to analyze? Some scholars pinpoint many lines of difference, yet others are skeptical as to the political consequences of these. Feminist scholars might question whether gender as a category, for instance, is in danger of getting overlooked in favor of other categories, such as sexuality or race. An inability to speak on behalf of women as a group may, they note, serve the perpetuation of patriarchal ideology. Others point to the notion of strategic alliances as an alternative framework. Individuals make temporary (strategic) alliances for particular purposes, and thus, an intersectional approach that recognizes strategic alliances opens up a space for collective agency, which, because it is temporary, avoids viewing social categories as either closed or static.

Intersectional perspectives have gained in popularity throughout the communication discipline because they offer a more nuanced understanding of the interplay of social categories and communication. Such perspectives have been applied to a range of communication studies, from understanding

multicultural issues to political rhetoric to considerations of gender mainstreaming.

Charlotte Kroløkke

See also Critical Race Theory; Feminist Communication Theories; Identity Theories; Postcolonial Theory; Queer Theory; Whiteness Theory

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INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION THEORIES

The fact that humans talk to themselves, especially in difficult circumstances, has been observed by scholars since the Middle Ages. Writings on self-communication have been documented in virtually every epoch of human history since that time. However, in the 20th century, psychologists such as Jean Piaget and L. S. Vygotsky have paid close attention to this mode of communication as they formulated their respective theories of human development. Vygotsky in particular assigned

intrapersonal communication (IC) special status within his developmental theory, and this perspective forms the basis of the following discussion.

According to Piaget, whose theory of human development is grounded in biological mechanisms, at around the age of 3, children begin to display what he called *egocentric speech*—speech directed at no one other than themselves—as they engage in various kinds of play activities. Piaget referred to IC as egocentric because he believed that children at this age are heavily focused on themselves as individuals and have not yet developed into social beings. As they become less egocentric and more social, this form of speech dies away, leaving social speech as the primary form of human communicative activity.

Vygotsky, on the other hand, adopted a social orientation to human thought, arguing that mental activity is derived from social, or interpersonal, interaction between children and other members of their sociocultural community. He reasoned that egocentric speech does not emerge from egocentric thinking in children but represents instead a stage in the transition from social to inner speech (i.e., speech no longer social in function that is also shed of its linguistic form, leaving a residue of pure meaning), which serves to complete the thinking process. Thus, egocentric speech is simultaneously quasi-social and quasi-psychological speech; while it may appear to be social in form, it gradually takes on psychological functions. Early in life, children frequently engage in activities more or less spontaneously, without the benefit of planning. Hence, they create drawings and, after the fact, decide what they depict. As children mature, however, they begin to use speech to plan what it is they will draw before realizing the plan in a concrete drawing. When this occurs, speech becomes fully psychological. The planning process may be carried out, in part at least, in vocalized language, or it may remain hidden from observation as inner speech.

Vygotsky proposed and tested a number of predictions to determine the adequacy of his theoretical claim regarding the development and fate of egocentric speech. He predicted that if egocentric speech is in fact social speech on the way to becoming psychological speech, it should reflect traits of social speech. Thus, in contradistinction to Piaget, he argued that if, in the early stages of development,

children perceive a circumstance as nonsocial, there should be a decline in the quantity of egocentric speech they produce. In a series of experiments in which children were placed in circumstances in which they were isolated, surrounded by loud noises, or placed in the presence of other children who did not speak their language, the incidence of egocentric speech declined when compared with other clearly social situations. He also predicted that over time egocentric speech would become less audible and understandable to others and that it would lose its linguistic structure—typical of fully social speech—and would therefore consist of linguistic fragments such as short phrases, single words, or even parts of words. Eventually, egocentric speech would become fully internalized as its linguistic form continued to fall away, resulting in inner speech—the psychological speech humans use to complete the thinking process.

Functions of Intrapersonal Communication

IC carries two fundamental psychological functions: the *internalization* of culturally organized ways of thinking and the *regulation* of one's own mental activity. Clearly, these functions are related. In ontogenetic, or individual, development, IC is the conduit through which social communicative activity is integrated into psychological processing. In social interaction, children regulate and are regulated by others primarily through the use of language. The language used during interpersonal interactions is eventually taken over by the individual and (re)deployed for intrapersonal (i.e., mental) activity. Thus, a parent interacting with a child as they jointly solve a picture puzzle might say to the child as he or she reaches for an incorrect piece, "Wait, think." The intent of the utterance is to inform the child that his or her original plan of action was incorrect and to advise him or her to reconsider the selection. The utterance is far from fully syntactic, containing only two words, but because the interlocutors share the same discursive information on what is happening, it is effective. Importantly, while the utterance is social, it also has a psychological function aimed not only at inhibiting the child's physical movement of inserting the incorrect piece but also at exhorting the child to reprocess his or her mentally organized plan of action. Should the initial

utterance fail to elicit the appropriate behavior from the child, the parent might resort to a more explicit utterance, such as “No, the red one.” This utterance, as with the first, makes little sense outside the discursive space of the interactants. On the face of it, *the red one* can refer to a wide array of entities, but in the puzzle situation, it should be quite easily and appropriately interpreted by the child.

One way of looking at the transformation from social, interpersonal communication to psychological IC is as a shift in dialogic roles. Social interaction occurs between an “I” and a “you,” as for example between the parent and the child in the puzzle activity described above. IC, on the other hand, takes place between an “I” and a “me,” where the “me” replaces the “you” of social dialogue but fulfills the same function—the function of accepting, modifying, rejecting, and so forth—decisions made by the “I.” Expanding on the above example, the child, when eventually attempting to complete the puzzle alone, might well appropriate the language used by the parent during their social interaction and say to himself or herself, “Wait, no, the red one.” Through the utterance the child instructs himself or herself (i.e., “I”) to abandon the current plan and deploy a different one, just as the parent had instructed the child to follow a similar procedure.

Interpersonal communication between individuals who share a great deal of background knowledge on a particular topic or who interact in a highly contextualized space is not likely to be linguistically explicit. The parent and the child in the puzzle example understand what they are doing. Therefore when the parent says “Wait, think” or “no, the red one,” the child recognizes what the parent is talking about despite the absence of a fully syntactic utterance. Similarly, if two strangers are standing together and looking at the same painting in an art museum and one says, “It’s beautiful,” it is quite likely that the other will have little difficulty understanding that the “it” refers to the painting. Interlocutors are able to integrate into their communicative behavior the circumstances in which they find themselves and therefore avoid the production of fully explicit utterances. Indeed, in the museum example, the utterance could easily have been reduced to a single word *beautiful* with little loss of comprehension. On the

other hand, had the same individuals encountered each other in a café where the context does not as readily lend itself to being integrated into a discussion of art, it would be necessary to rely on more explicit language in order to express the same sentiment. Thus, the speaker might produce an utterance such as “Renoir’s ‘The Country Dance’ is beautiful.”

IC, because it is derived from interpersonal communication, is subject to the same constraints that operate in social interaction. If interlocutors take account of shared information when communicating with each other, it would be expected that in IC this same process would be at work only more so, given that the “I” and “me” of IC clearly share a lot more than the “I” and “you” of social communication. Thus, we would expect IC to be even more reduced than social speech. Indeed, a child—or an adult, for that matter—assembling a picture puzzle might say only “red” to tell himself or herself that the next piece to be inserted is the red one. It would be quite odd for the individual to produce a maximally explicit utterance, such as “Next, I need to pick up the red piece and insert it into the puzzle at this location.” All the information regarding the fact that a piece must be picked up and placed in a particular location is assumed background knowledge. The fact that it is the red piece that is the relevant one, however, must be kept in focus by the speaker, and it is for this reason that it is the optimal candidate for verbalization. As the difficulty of an activity increases (and this is usually relative to the individual), the likelihood that IC will be externalized, in part, at least, increases. In this way it betrays its origins in social speech. Interestingly, in social settings, because adults, unlike young children, are able to distinguish themselves from others, they do not normally engage in “out loud” IC, and if they do, it is perceived as marked behavior, often drawing the attention of those in the vicinity.

Adults can and do make use of written forms of IC as, for instance, when we take notes in school or when we produce jottings in the margins of texts as we read, or even when we produce shopping lists. All these are instances of IC and not only may serve memory, as in the case of shopping lists, but may also function to work out problems, as when reading a difficult academic text or when

listening to a teacher explaining how to solve a math problem. Finally, adults often use IC in order to internalize new knowledge, as for example when we undertake to learn a new language. The research shows that adults in such circumstances rely on IC to work out ways of saying things in the new language, or to help them remember vocabulary. In essence, IC is an exceptionally powerful and pervasive tool for thinking.

IC can also occur in modalities other than language. For example, musicians, painters, and choreographers often work out compositions, paintings, and dance routines, respectively, in very sketchy patternings intended for no one other than their creator. People use gestures as well as a means of complementing the verbal component of their IC. Gestures are especially powerful tools for thinking because they depict in a holistic way meanings that speakers frequently have difficulties externalizing through purely verbal expression.

Multiple Intrapersonal Communication Systems

An interesting issue regarding IC is whether people who speak more than one language use more than one form of IC—one that corresponds to each of their languages—or whether they have only one version of IC that corresponds to their dominant interpersonal language. In German, for example, the expression *so* is frequently used to indicate that a particular activity has been completed and that another is about to begin. It is roughly the equivalent of English *OK* or *all right* or *done*. German speakers use *so* not only in social communication but also in IC. At issue is whether people who learn German as a second language, especially in adult life, use this particle appropriately when engaged in IC, or do they continue to rely on their native language patterns to regulate their mental and even physical activity? Although only a small amount of research has been conducted on this matter, it has shown that adults have a difficult time deploying IC in their second language and either are unable to resolve the problem they are dealing with or have to switch to IC in their native language.

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See also Cognitive Theories; Communication and Language Acquisition and Development; Language and Communication; Social Interaction Theories; Symbolic Interactionism; Visual Communication Theories

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INVITATIONAL RHETORIC

Invitational rhetoric, developed by Sonja K. Foss and Cindy L. Griffin in 1995, is an alternative to the traditional conception of rhetoric as persuasion. Invitational rhetoric is defined as an invitation to understanding as a means to create a relationship rooted in equality, immanent value, and self-determination. It constitutes an invitation to the audience to enter the rhetor's world and to see it as the rhetor does. Thus, it is a form of communication designed to generate understanding among individuals with different perspectives.

Invitational rhetoric challenges the traditional definition of rhetoric as persuasion, the conscious

intent to change others. A key assumption on which invitational rhetoric is based is that the effort to change others constitutes an attempt to gain control or power over them and is a devaluation of their lifeworlds; traditional rhetoric thus is seen as reflecting the values of competition and domination. In contrast, invitational rhetoric is rooted in the feminist principles of equality, immanent value, and self-determination. *Equality* is a commitment to replace the dominance and elitism that characterize most human relationships with intimacy, mutuality, and camaraderie. Invitational rhetors eschew a hierarchical ranking of individuals according to external criteria and instead recognize the *immanent value* of all living beings. They see every being as a unique and necessary part of the pattern of the universe and thus as valuable. Concomitant with a recognition of immanent value is a rejection of efforts to change the unique perspective that each individual holds. *Self-determination*, then, allows individuals to make their own decisions about how they wish to live their lives and accords respect to others' capacity and right to constitute their worlds as they choose.

Invitational rhetoric assumes two primary rhetorical forms: (1) offering perspectives and (2) creating external conditions that allow and encourage others to present their perspectives. In offering perspectives, rhetors tell what they currently know or understand. They present their vision of the world and show how it looks and works for them. This vision represents an initial, tentative commitment to that perspective—always one subject to revision as a result of the rhetor's interaction with the audience.

The second rhetorical act involved in invitational rhetoric is the creation of external conditions. If invitational rhetoric is to result in a mutual understanding of perspectives, it must involve not only the offering of the rhetor's perspective but the creation of an atmosphere in which audience members are willing to share their perspectives with the rhetor. To facilitate such an environment, an invitational rhetor seeks to create particular external conditions in the interaction between rhetors and audience members. These external conditions are states or prerequisites that are required if the possibility of mutual understanding is to exist.

The three external conditions the invitational rhetor seeks to create in an interaction are safety,

value, and freedom. *Safety* involves the creation of a feeling of security and freedom from danger for the audience. Rhetoric contributes to a feeling of safety when it conveys to audience members that the ideas and feelings they share with the rhetor will be received with respect and care. The condition of *value* is acknowledgment by the rhetor that audience members have intrinsic or immanent worth. It is created when rhetors approach audience members as unique individuals and avoid distancing, paternalistic, and depersonalizing attitudes. Value is also fostered when the rhetor listens carefully to the perspectives of others and tries to think from those perspectives.

The third external condition, *freedom*, or the power to choose or decide, is enacted in various ways in invitational rhetoric. Freedom is demonstrated when rhetors do not place restrictions on an interaction—when participants can bring any and all matters to the interaction for consideration. Invitational rhetors also do not privilege their ideas over those of the audience and provide opportunities for others to develop and choose options from alternatives that they themselves have created. Freedom is created as well when the audience's lack of acceptance of or adherence to the perspective articulated by the rhetor truly makes no difference to the rhetor. Either outcome—acceptance or rejection of the perspective offered by the rhetor—is seen as perfectly acceptable by the invitational rhetor, who is not disappointed or angry if audience members choose not to adopt that perspective.

Change may be an outcome of invitational rhetoric, but change is not its objective. When change occurs through the process of invitational rhetoric, it may occur in the audience or the rhetor or both. All communicators in the interaction may change as a result of new insights they gain in the exchange of ideas and perspectives.

Invitational rhetoric is not an ideal for which rhetors should strive or a type of rhetoric that should or can be used in all situations. Invitational rhetoric is one of many useful and legitimate rhetorics, including persuasion, that are available to rhetors. It is a model of rhetoric that enables rhetors to recognize situations in which they seek not to persuade others but simply to create an environment that facilitates understanding, accords value

and respect to others' perspectives, and contributes to the development of relationships of equality.

Sonja K. Foss

See also Empathy; Feminist Rhetorical Criticism; I and Thou; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Rhetorical Theory

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ISSUES LIFE-CYCLE THEORY

See Corporate Campaign Theories



JAPANESE *KUUKI* THEORY

Kuuki, the Japanese linguistic equivalent of *air*, refers to the *atmosphere of a situation* to which all those involved are expected to pay respect. At the heart of the *kuuki* process is some kind of mechanism that aggravates a situation in a way that those involved in the issue are compelled to comply with the position put forth. This idea is widely used in Japan to describe what happens in various settings, from small groups to businesses to political contexts, in which people are said to be under the influence of the *kuuki* process or spirit. *Political mood* and *political environment* are terms that get at some of what is involved in *kuuki*. It emerges in situations when a subject is of critical importance to a group. Thus, *kuuki* might emerge among members of a particular labor union but not among members of the public who do not have a vested interest in the issues. Unique terms and expressions such as *kuuki* and *K.Y.* (a recent slang word that came from *Kuuki ga Yomenai*, or *insensitive to the atmosphere of the situation*) have evolved and are used in daily conversation to reference this phenomenon.

Translations are always imprecise, but *kuuki* is often compared to *ideology*, *zeitgeist*, *climate of opinion*, and *spiral of silence*. *Kuuki* is similar to *ideology* in that it functions as a system of strong social pressure requiring compliance. In contrast to *ideology*, however, which typically refers to abstract beliefs such as socialism, capitalism, nationalism, or feminism, *kuuki* pertains to specific issues or

problems such as the dispatch of American troops to Iraq, a situation involving corporate fraud, or some kind of sexual indiscretion on the part of a political leader. In this sense, *kuuki* may be more similar to the German term *zeitgeist*, although *zeitgeist* is more abstract and closer to ideology than is *kuuki*.

Kuuki also has been compared to the notion of climate of opinion, although this concept has evolved to refer principally to distribution patterns of public opinion rather than to the opinions themselves. In the *kuuki* process, however, the opinions themselves, as well as the knowledge that one opinion is the majority opinion, are the issue and altogether exert strong political, social, and psychological pressure to comply with the group thinking or norm on something.

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, responsible for the concept of the spiral of silence, uses the concept of climate of opinion in a sense very similar to that of *kuuki*, which she acknowledges in the preface of the Japanese language version of her book.

The mass media play a crucial role in creating and sustaining *kuuki* because they, at least to some degree, can affect opinions on a certain issue being considered by the general public as well as political leaders. For example, Newspaper A, which opposes a particular bill, may carry more nonsupportive opinions about it than Newspaper B, which supports the bill. In addition to or instead of directly speaking against the bill in its editorial, Newspaper A can give its readers an impression that the majority of people oppose the bill by simply reporting more nonsupportive opinions than supportive

opinions. In this sense, Newspaper A contributes to, if not creates, a *kuuki* effect, causing readers to go along with its stance.

The mass media, however, cannot completely control *kuuki* because the mass media, at least in capitalist economies, are subject to the forces of market mechanisms. The media must be sensitive to some degree to what their audiences want to see and hear. Similarly, important members of a culture can use the media to create their own *kuuki* effects. When a top political leader is exceptionally good at attracting television camera crews' attention and provides interesting "news stories" for newspaper and television news editors, the mass media are "used" by said top political leader to help create and sustain a *kuuki* that is to his or her advantage. Junichiro Koizumi, who served as Japanese prime minister from 2001 to 2006, the third-longest-serving prime minister since the end of World War II, offers a typical example of a politician using *kuuki* in just this way. The mass media were fascinated by his humorous speeches, elegant performances, and the unprecedented happenings staged by him. It was said that the whole nation enjoyed the "Koizumi Theater." Top political leaders, then, as well as individuals, groups, and mass media, are all affecting and being affected by *kuuki*.

In relatively collectivistic cultures like Japan, in which harmony is privileged, those who are insensitive to *kuuki* and say or do things that create disharmony tend to be disliked by other group members and are alienated or isolated. Thus, there is a danger of group decisions made under the influence of *kuuki* because the pressure to go along is so great. The *kuuki* phenomenon at the national level, then, has political and social implications that potentially can affect state or social policies. Since September 11, 2001, the people of the United States might be said to have been engaged in a fearful *kuuki*. As another example, Matthew Crenson discussed what he called an "inarticulate ideology" operating in Gary, Indiana, home of the U.S. Steel Company, where criticism of the company was taboo because people depended on the company for employment and many fringe benefits. The Japanese would call this "kuuki in Gary" because opinions are controlled by factors in the situation itself.

The study of *kuuki* has a practical value. Compared with ideology, *kuuki* is more changeable

or fluid because it heavily depends on the situation. As a situation changes, *kuuki* should change accordingly. The study of *kuuki* facilitates an understanding of how the interaction among groups, environment, and media can create and sustain a common stance, mood, and momentum.

Youichi Ito

See also Ideology; Journalism and Theories of the Press; Media Democracy; Political Communication Theories; Public Opinion Theories; Spiral of Silence

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JOURNALISM AND THEORIES OF THE PRESS

Theories of journalism and the press span a wide range of issues, topics, and eras. Their origins are as distant as 16th-century Europe and their concerns as contemporary as blogging. What unites this disparate group of theories is their focus on either (a) describing the *functions* of journalism or (b) prescribing the proper, or normative, *roles and purposes* of the press as a primary contributor to the processes of citizenship, government, and the preservation of societal stability.

Given the intertwined processes of journalism, politics, and the maintenance of the balance of freedom and order in democracies (or the suppression of freedom and the reinforcement of order in non-democratic societies), most theories of journalism

and the press might be fairly described as theories of the press and society, the press and freedom, or the press and government. Fittingly, many of these theories—particularly the normative ones—were originated not by communication scholars but by philosophers, religious leaders, politicians, government agencies, business and academic elites, journalists, and other media practitioners. While communication scholars have had a hand, particularly since the 1950s, in the formulation, synthesis, and dissemination of journalism and press theories, scholars' role in theory development has been somewhat less prominent than it has been in other theory categories described in this encyclopedia. Still, despite the diversity of their origins, virtually all theories of the press demonstrate the crucial importance of the theoretical study of journalism to the understanding of the functioning of society and the nature of communication theory.

Functional Theories of Journalism and the Press

The functionalist approach to theories of journalism and the press views the media in the aggregate as one of many systems or institutions in a society. By working with the other systems and institutions, such as government, education, religion, business, and the family, the press is seen as making its own essential set of contributions to society's continuity and order.

One of the earliest and most influential functionalist theories was developed by Harold Lasswell, a political scientist and mass communication research pioneer. In 1948, Lasswell identified three major functions of the press:

1. Surveillance of the environment: collecting and distributing information about events in the environment; in other words, news reporting.
2. Correlation of the parts of society: explaining, interpreting, and commenting on the meaning of events (thus, editorializing, persuading, or even propagandizing by the press).
3. Transmission of the social heritage: communicating values, norms, and styles across time and among groups. Newspapers therefore function as both windows into other contemporaneous cultures and time capsules for future generations.

In 1959, communication scholar Charles Wright added entertainment to this list. Since that time,

surveillance, correlation, transmission, and entertainment have become known collectively as the “classic four” functions of the media.

However, as many communication scholars (including Wright) have pointed out, the classic four functions may well be the intended aims of media organizations but do not necessarily capture audiences' actual media *uses*. A related criticism of the functionalist approach is that in its focus on describing the supposed functions of the media, it fails to account for the *effects* or dysfunctions of those activities. For example, as sociologists Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton argued, the press does not create social change; rather, the media simply reinforce the status quo through status-conferral (legitimizing the authority of members of society), the enforcement of social norms (keeping people in line through publicizing their good or bad deeds), and the press's narcotizing dysfunction (flooding news consumers with an excess of information, which overwhelms them into apathy).

Normative Theories of Journalism and the Press

Normative theories of journalism and the press comprise a much larger and arguably more influential group of approaches to the study of the interactions of media and society than do functionalist theories. Many normative theories have historical, philosophical, and political roots that substantially predate the modern era (and the notion that journalism could be seen as a profession) and thus bring centuries of thinking to bear on the processes and problems of today's media. They inevitably theorize and prescribe the nature of the relationships between the press (and the media more generally) and society, culture, and political governance.

Theories in this category are called *normative* because rather than describing things as they are, they prescribe norms, laying out the way things *should* be if certain ideals, values, or principles are to be realized. Normative theories of journalism and the press, then, offer ideas about the way the media ought to be organized and managed in order to serve the public interest, fulfill the needs of society, and contribute to the political systems of the nations in which they operate. Such theories recognize that individual journalists and the press as an institution have broader social purposes than

merely the accumulation of wealth or the generation of profit.

Most contemporary normative theories of the press are outgrowths of the historical and political contexts of the founding and maintenance of political systems, so they assume an inextricable link between political institutions and the role of the press as a news carrier and opinion former. At the same time, they recognize that media have relationships not only with governments and citizens but also with customers, advertisers, and the many powerful organizations and societal institutions on whose dealings they report. Normative theories, then, speak to the ways the press should properly manage these relationships within the contexts of the political and socioeconomic systems in which they operate—or the ways that the press should be properly managed by those systems.

The most important historical and contemporary normative theories of journalism and the press are discussed below. They are organized by category of origin.

Philosophical and Religious Origins

One of the dominant theories/philosophies shaping contemporary normative theories of the press is the notion of *libertarianism*, which is itself a reaction to the historically dominant, long-reigning practice of *authoritarianism*. Authoritarianism was exemplified by the monarchies of medieval Europe, which placed all forms of communication under the control of a governing elite—usually, a king—or a body of authorities who justified such control as necessary to protect a divinely ordained social order. Under authoritarian regimes, government control over press content is often meted out arbitrarily and erratically but often includes a requirement that publishers be officially licensed by the state.

Libertarianism was an outgrowth of social unrest and rebellion—the idea that if people could be freed from arbitrary authoritarian constraint, they would “naturally” seek truth, engage in public debate, and, as a result, better society. One of the earliest published arguments for this libertarian approach to communication was John Milton’s *Areopagitica*. In this 1644 tract, Milton asserted that in a fair, open, and unregulated debate, good and truthful arguments would win out over lies

and deceit through what he called the self-righting principle. The libertarian view holds, then, that the press should not be licensed, controlled, or overseen by the government, but should rather be free and independent.

Political Origins

Libertarianism in the Anglo-American world inspired *theories of press freedom*, as seen in the political writings of Thomas Jefferson, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Paine, and Alexis de Tocqueville. In the United States, libertarianism is enshrined in the Constitution’s First Amendment, which promises that “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press.” Thus, a core normative theory of how the press is to be controlled or not controlled by government was made an explicit, foundational tenet of democracy. Many subsequent U.S. Supreme Court decisions have defended press freedom from government regulation, although others have offered specific normative conditions or exceptions. The government forbids the press from publishing information that threatens national security or reveals troop movements during times of war, for example.

One theoretical outgrowth of libertarianism—dating to the 18th century but still very much alive today—is the notion of the press as the *fourth estate*. Fourth-estate theories differ in their identifications of the first, second, and third estates; in some versions, the *fourth-estate* label indicates that the press serves almost as a fourth branch of the U.S. government (after the executive, legislative, and judicial branches). In other versions, the press is fourth after the three estates of power that operated in 18th-century England (Lords, Church, and Commons). In either case, fourth-estate notions speak to the power of the press in a democracy, particularly the idea that the press’s role is to serve as an advocate for the people as well as a watchdog, maintaining an eye on governmental and societal institutions so as to keep leaders honest, warning the citizenry in case of political corruption, and thereby empowering citizens by providing them information they need to protect themselves. Framing the press as the fourth estate posits an explicitly proactive role for the press, an idea recently called *journalism’s theory of democracy*.

This normative view claims that journalists are expected to inform citizens, that citizens are assumed to be informed if they pay attention to the news, that better-informed citizens are more likely to participate in politics, and that more citizen participation will improve democracy.

In the early 20th century, a libertarianism-based theory known as the *free marketplace of ideas* took hold in the United States, suggesting that ideas should be able to compete with each other, unburdened by government regulation, like products in a free consumer marketplace, with the notion that the “best” ideas will win out “naturally.” (This echoes both Milton’s self-righting principle and 18th-century economist Adam Smith’s notion of an “invisible hand” guiding free consumer markets.) While this notion has been appealing, as it places trust in the people to wisely choose among competing ideas, it has been criticized for simultaneously putting too much trust in commercial media companies that must answer not only to the public but also to advertisers, shareholders, and corporate owners when determining which ideas to “sell.” Another frequently criticized unintended effect of the popularity of the theory of free marketplace of ideas is the tendency on the part of newspaper owners (and media corporations more generally) to interpret the notion to mean freedom to compete in the business market without restrictions rather than freedom to disseminate ideas without limits or regulations.

Professional Origins

One subset of normative theories of the press has its roots in journalism’s early attempts to define and “professionalize” itself. After decades of social criticism and threats of government regulation of the journalism industry, the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1923 published its own set of professional standards, called *The Canons of Journalism*. The Canons represented the first of many attempts by the industry, in the United States and elsewhere, to develop codes of ethics. While ethical codes differ from country to country, most share a commitment to truthfulness, clarity of information, responsibilities in forming public opinion, ethical standards in newsgathering, and respect for the integrity of sources. Journalistic codes in the United States, in particular, also stress “objectivity”

in reporting, a clear delineation between news and opinion, and a “wall” separating a newspaper’s editorial and business functions.

Critics both within and outside the institutions of journalism have regularly questioned whether objectivity is desirable or even possible to achieve and have pointed out how damaged the editorial/business wall has become in practice. Others decry journalism’s failure to play a broader fourth-estate role, questioning how journalists can serve as investigators or advocates when pressured to be “objective.” Nevertheless, professional codes serve as the industry’s own normative theories concerning the operations and conduct of the press.

Conjoined Professional and Academic Roots

Perhaps the most influential contribution to contemporary normative theories of journalism was *social responsibility theory*, a framework that grew out of the work of the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press. This independent commission was established in 1942 in response to growing sentiment that journalism was incapable of regulating itself. The Hutchins Commission included among its members academic, political, and social group leaders, as well as media-industry titans. The group studied the role of the press in American society, publishing its findings in 1947 as *A Free and Responsible Press*. This book-length publication promulgated a new normative theory that moved away from the libertarian ideal.

Social responsibility theory struck a compromise between extreme libertarianism and government paternalism. While acknowledging the First Amendment’s promise of press freedom from government control, the theory asserts that journalists have obligations to society, employers, and the market—among them, setting high professional standards of truth and balance; avoiding publication of material that would lead to crime; and refraining from causing offense to minority groups. Social responsibility theory also posits that the media should reflect the diversity of society and grant access to various points of view. Finally, while championing self-regulation, social responsibility theory acknowledges that government regulation may be necessary to rein in libertarianism’s dangerous impulses.

Scholarly Normative Theories

Since the publication of the Hutchins Commission's findings, communication scholars have developed their own normative press theories, including models that identify varieties of normative models operating around the world. One of the earliest such models was published as the 1956 book *Four Theories of the Press*. The models identified by coauthors Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm—libertarian, authoritarian, social responsibility, and Soviet Communist—represented a continuum. Societies using the libertarian model were posited to be the freest (or, at least, to have the least governmental press control), while nations operating under the Soviet Communist theory were those in which the media existed solely as state propaganda organs. Since the Soviet Union's collapse, communication theorists have tended to refer to this as the totalitarian model, identifying it with nations such as North Korea, Myanmar, and Iraq under Saddam Hussein.

In the post-Cold War era, new ways of categorizing the world's media systems have emerged. Mass communication theorist Denis McQuail has proposed a slightly different four-member group of normative theories to describe current press/politics arrangements: the liberal-pluralist model (based on libertarianism); the public interest model (based on social responsibility theory); the professional model (which places regulatory responsibility on the press itself), and the alternative media model (which addresses nonmainstream and digital media). A similar update by William Hachten identifies five "concepts" in operation throughout the world: Western, development, revolutionary, authoritarian, and communism. Countries using the Western concept (e.g., the United States and the United Kingdom) combine aspects of libertarianism and social responsibility theory. The development concept prevails in the industrializing nations of Africa, Asia, the former Soviet bloc, and Latin America, where government officials collaborate with media to meet societal and cultural needs. The revolutionary concept describes systems in which media are used in the service of revolution. The authoritarian and communism concepts are typically discussed as one because so few communist nations survive in the 21st century; countries in

which such models are in place advocate the complete government domination of the media.

Contemporary Issues in Journalism and Theories of the Press

As social changes and digital media technologies have rapidly changed the face of journalism, the operations of the press, and the experience of being a news consumer in the 21st century, a number of new developments—and theories about those developments—have arisen. Two of these are discussed here.

Civic Journalism

In the United States, and to a far lesser extent in western Europe, many media outlets, especially newspapers, have begun practicing *civic journalism* (sometimes called *public journalism*). This practice actively engages members of local communities in the processes of reporting on important civic issues and is thus a form of interactive journalism. Civic journalism theory holds that journalism has a purpose: to try to improve the quality of civic life by fostering participation and debate. Civic journalism is inherently normative, as its practitioners and theorists hold that journalists should provide news according to what they believe citizens need to know—and that citizens should also have a say in the gatekeeping process. In this regard, civic journalism represents a contemporary refashioning of social responsibility theory and, at the same time, a repudiation of the normative "professionalism"-based claim that objectivity should be prioritized above other news-gathering values.

New-Media Theories

As new forms of digital media—including news media—continue to enter the market, diffuse throughout society, and evolve, media theorists appear to be divided on the question of whether existing communication theories can simply be extended to new media or whether the differences between 20th- and 21st-century communication forms require an entirely new wave of theorizing. Some communication scholars focusing on the contrasts between "old" and "new" media draw

attention to the qualitative and quantitative differences between the two categories in terms of their degree of interactivity, nature of ownership, synchronicity between message sending and receiving, consumption patterns, tendencies toward convergence, and power balances between message producers and consumers. Others argue for the building of a new paradigm. Still, while there has been a good deal of theorizing about the new media and their social, cultural, and individual impacts, few if any of the theories offered to date focus specifically on new media as forms of journalism.

Because the long-standing distinction between publisher and audience is called into question by the democratic nature of the Internet—that is to say, it is relatively easy and inexpensive to disseminate one’s own news or views via a blog or other Web site, whereas it is difficult if not impossible for average citizens to disseminate their views via traditional newspapers or broadcast outlets—normative theories of new journalistic media will be needed, although few if any have yet been published. Still, informal, “everyday” forms of normative theorizing about new media effects can be observed in the commercial press and other popular media outlets. The relative lack (or, in most cases, complete absence) of governmental regulation of the Internet in most Western democracies suggests a *de facto* libertarian approach, certainly more than a social-responsibility approach, whereas the authoritarian model can be seen to apply in nations such as China and Myanmar, countries whose governmental bodies restrict citizens’ access to external news sources that appear to pose a threat to their authority. Westerners’ criticisms of such policies reveal a normative assumption that all nation-states should adopt a libertarian orientation toward their oversight of new media.

David Weiss

See also Agenda-Setting Theory; Framing Theory; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Media Democracy; Media Effects Theories; Media Ethics Theories; Public Sphere

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K

KINESICS

Kinesics is the study and interpretation of human body movements that can be taken as symbolic or metaphorical in social interaction. According to anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell, who coined this term in 1952, kinesics encompasses facial expression, gestures, posture and gait, and visible arm and body movements. Expressive movements taken as symbolic actions display or emphasize thoughts, feelings, moods, intentions, and/or attitudes and may be used in combination with, or instead of, verbal communication. In order to have a shared communicative value, bodily activity must become conventionalized, or widely understood. Theories on kinesics have been included consistently in the canon of communication theory, especially within the study of nonverbal communication, since the 1950s.

The study of gesture started in ancient times. The Greeks and Romans considered gestures to be a persuasive accompaniment to rhetorical discourses, where the use of gesturing was studied intensively at drama schools in order to improve acting. In the Middle Ages, since most people could not read or write, documents were often ratified through the use of specific gestures: The illuminations of a medieval manuscript, the *Sachsenspiegel*, illustrate the conventional gestures used at that time in legal and political spheres. The use of gesture in dance and the theatre was studied by Natya Shastra in India about 200 BCE. This work addressed how emotions can be performed

and inspired in the audience through appropriate kinesic movements.

In 1644 John Bulwer analyzed a great number of hand gestures and offered a guide for their effective use in public speaking, and in 1872 Charles Darwin wrote *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*, posing for the first time the nature–nurture question. In 1882 Garrick Mallery made a comparison among North American Plains Indian sign language gestures and those of other people, including the deaf, offering detailed structural descriptions and modern theoretical insights.

In 1921 the German psychologist Wilhelm Wundt conceived gestural communication as a kind of universal language, asserting that universal meanings enable people to understand one another when they use gestures. Paul Ekman later supported this opinion, but Birdwhistell rejected it. More recent cross-cultural research indicates that perhaps eight emotions can be universally communicated through facial expressions: happiness, surprise, fear, anger, sadness, disgust, contempt, and interest.

In 1941 David Efron investigated the influence of race and environment on behavior, using systematic sociolinguistic methods. He showed that race has no influence on the repertory and use of gestures, whereas sociological processes could have. Other comparisons between different cultures were made by the ethologists Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt and Desmond Morris in the 1970s.

The research of anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell conceived of kinesics as a complex structure of body movements, which can be seen as a formalized

language code. Birdwhistell conducted his study using the methods and concepts of American descriptive linguistics of the late 1940s; indeed the influence of linguistics in his study can clearly be seen in the process and method he used and the terms he coined. For instance, Birdwhistell considered kinesics to be as systemic and socially learned as verbal language: There are no universals in kinesics, he stated, because the information conveyed by gesture and movement is coded differently in various cultures. Moreover, he affirmed that the rules of nonverbal signs and language are learned, although people may be only partially aware of the process. Finally, he claimed that the structure of kinesics is very similar to that of verbal language. For this reason, he asserted that body motion, as well as verbal language, could be broken down into an ordered system of elements that can be isolated and are comparable to those of verbal language.

Therefore, since the basic units of verbal language were called phones, phonemes, and morphemes, Birdwhistell called the basic units of body movements *kines*, *kinemes*, and *kinemorphs*. Although he sometimes used the terms *kine* and *kineme* interchangeably, usually he identified a kine as the smallest identifiable unit found in a stream of body movements. A kineme is a group of movements that, though not identical, may be used interchangeably without affecting social meaning. A simple kinemorph is an assemblage of kines that functions like a word part, and a complex kinemorph is a group of kines that function like a word.

In 1969 Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen shifted the emphasis to the psychological basis of gesture and facial expression. They singled out five categories of nonverbal behavior:

1. *Affect displays* (called *emotional expressions* in Ekman's later work) occur mainly on the face and unconsciously display and represent feelings and emotions.
2. *Regulators* maintain and organize the flow interaction between communication partners. For instance, approval can be expressed through head nods, disbelief through leaning back.
3. *Adaptors* help to manage tension or stress. *Object adaptors* involve fiddling with objects such as a pencil, *alter-adaptors* are used in interpersonal contacts such as touching others,

and *self-adaptors* can include such behavior as nail biting, rubbing the eyes, scratching an itch, and so forth.

4. *Illustrators* accompany verbal language and show visually what is being described. Illustrators include batons (which are used for emphasis), pictographs (which resemble their referents), kinetographs (which resemble bodily actions), ideographs (which portray the course of thought), deictics (pointing gestures), and spatials (which depict spatial relationships). In 1999 Ekman added the category of rhythmic movements, which depict the rhythm of an event.
5. *Emblems* substitute for words and therefore have conventionalized meaning. Different from other categories of nonverbal behavior, emblems have a direct verbal translation such as the OK sign or the V for victory gesture.

Since 1981, Adam Kendon investigated many aspects of gestures, including conventionalization, integration between gestures and speech, and the role of gesture in communication.

Birdwhistell's research was continued in the United States by Adam Kendon, among others. Christine Kühn did similar work in Germany. In Japan Toshiki Shioiri, Toshiyuki Someya, Daiga Helmeste, and Siu Wa Tang conducted such research. In the 1990s this Japanese group supported the concept that there are significant cultural differences in the judgment of emotions. At the beginning of the 21st century, Kühn added oculusics (eye behavior), haptics (touch), and proxemics (use of space) into a system constituted by the following displays:

1. motorics (movement)
 - mimics: movements of the face
 - pantomimics: movements and positions of the whole body
 - gesture: movements of the arms and hands
2. orientation reaction
 - orientation of the gaze
 - orientation of the head
 - orientation of the torso
3. haptics (touch)
 - self-tactile contact (tactile contact with oneself)
 - sociotactile contact (tactile contact with others)

- objecttactile contact (tactile contact with objects)
 - fictivetactile contact (imaginative contact with others and/or objects)
4. locomotion (place change)
- proxemics

Alessandra Padula

See also Interpersonal Communication Theories; Language and Communication; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Proxemics; Semiotics and Semiology

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KNOWLEDGE GAP THEORY

See Public Opinion Theories

L

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

See Communication and Language
Acquisition and Development

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Although people use a variety of code systems to create and express meaning, language is obviously central to the communication process, as the extensive theoretical literature so amply demonstrates. Many fields of study have contributed to this literature, including most centrally linguistics and its offshoots in psychology, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. As an introductory overview, this entry begins with basic ideas from classical linguistics and moves to outline a few important applications of language theory in communication.

Modern Linguistics

Although the study of language has ancient roots in both Asia and Europe, the beginnings of modern linguistics in the 20th century are usually attributed to the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, whose influential *Course in General Linguistics* was published posthumously by his students in Switzerland in 1916. Saussure called attention to the structure

of language, particularly speech sounds, words, and grammar. The structure of the language system is based on *difference*, as one element is distinguished from others. Thus, a speech sound is distinguished by virtue of its difference from other speech sounds, words are distinguishable because of their phonetic (sound) difference from other words, and grammatical structures vary too in ways that differ from other structures. For Saussure, language does not reflect reality, but actually creates the world of experience for the language user. This has been an extremely important idea in the contemporary study of language, and we return to it later in this entry. Still, Saussure emphasized the study of the structure of language rather than its practical use. The former he called *langue*, which is the relatively stable structure of language over time amenable to formal analysis. Language as spoken in its various rich forms in actual communicative situations Saussure referred to as *parole*, and he was much less optimistic about our ability to theorize this linguistic context, an assumption later called into serious question in the communication discipline.

Following Saussure's early efforts to theorize language, the study of language evolved into three primary branches, which Charles Morris, an influential 20th-century semiotician, named semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics.

Semantics

Semantics is the study of the relationship between words and their referents, or the things

designated. The central question of semantics is the meaning of words and other signs. Dictionaries are essentially semantic catalogues, though meaning is never limited to a simple one-to-one relationship between a word (or other sign) and its referents, as dictionaries may imply. Instead, there is at least a triadic relationship among the sign, the signified object, and the person who is the interpreter and bridge between sign and object. Thus, the meaning of a word is always determined by a person. When the range of meanings for a word is relatively fixed and widely shared, the meaning is said to be a *denotation*, as the term denotes a particular object. (A chair is a piece of furniture used to sit on.) A host of more personal, emotionally laden meanings may also arise for particular persons and groups, and these are referred to as *connotations*. (That chair has been in my family for three generations.)

As Saussure taught, however, people are not free to use words however they wish. The society, culture, and tradition limit what meanings might be inferred from a term. Meanings are not fixed, however, and do migrate as groups, cultures, and traditions change in how they use various words.

Syntactics

Syntactics is the study of relationships among signs, which in language involves a focus on how speech sounds, words, and structures are organized into larger segments of meaning. In classical linguistics, syntax refers to grammar, particularly the organization of sentences based on rules. Syntactic rules are powerful because they both limit the meanings that can be ascribed to a particular grammatical construction, yet allow people to express an infinite variety of meanings. Grammar takes meaning to higher levels, from words to phrases to clauses and sentences. These higher-order structures can express more complex meaning than any one word can do alone.

Early studies in grammar, between about 1930 and 1950, were strictly structural in orientation and came to parse sentences into segments according to a standard model of sentence structure. For example, in English a typical sentence was found to consist of a subject and a predicate. The subject was further subdivided into a noun part and modifiers; the predicate was divided into a verb part,

objects, and modifiers. By rearranging these parts according to rules, one could change a sentence from active to passive form or from declarative to interrogative. Throughout much of the 20th century, school children learned to diagram sentences according to this model in order to learn the theoretical rules of their language, purportedly to help them write and read more effectively.

However, the structural approach to language left many questions unanswered. For one, psychologists and linguists wondered how a small number of rules can both limit meaning and permit infinite variety of expression and how a child can learn these rules and produce novel sentences so quickly in life. Noam Chomsky was the leader of a movement in linguistics that tackled these difficult questions. A young linguist at MIT in the 1950s, Chomsky came to believe that classical structural linguistics told only part of the story of syntax and was by itself misleading at best. In his most famous work on linguistics, *Syntactic Structures*, he introduced the field to *generative grammar*, which explained how novel sentences can be generated from a small set of transformation rules embedded in human cognition.

Pragmatics

Morris's third category, pragmatics, moves beyond meaning to investigate how language is actually used in human interaction. Pragmatics looks at even larger levels of meaning—not just the meaning of words and sentences, but the intentions and goals that lie behind a message and the attributions given to others' intentions. Although most communication theorists would acknowledge the importance of semantics and syntactics, it is the study of pragmatics, or language-in-use, that opens avenues for advanced applications in communication. Pragmatics makes the study of communication possible because it deals with more than words and sentence structure and introduces discourse as the highest level of meaning in language.

Discourse and Communication

Discourse is normally defined as language used to express a purpose or intent beyond mere utterance. Since language is almost always used with intent, all forms of talk and writing are in fact discursive,

so the study of discourse is not so much a shift in the object of study, but in how language is viewed. Any level of language use, including words and sentences, can be studied as discourse, though most discourse studies look at larger segments of writing or talk. Because discourse is intentional expression of meaning or action, it always occurs in an actual situation. Therefore, another way to define discourse is language used within a social and cultural context. Because discourse is always understood within the context or situation within which it is used, the study of discourse often extends beyond single messages to look at conversations, or the back-and-forth flow of messages, and how this interaction is organized to accomplish various social functions. The relationship of messages to one another, particularly the ways in which discourse entails or involves other discourse, is especially interesting in the communication field.

Scott Jacobs identifies three problems that communicators face in their use of language, and theories of discourse must attempt to explain these. The first is the problem of meaning. By what rules do communicators know how to structure a message so as to express a certain intent, and conversely, how do they read the intentions of others? How, for example, does one know that the sentence, "I'm hungry," is really a request for dinner to be served? The second problem is the problem of action. How do people know how and when to use language in a certain way to accomplish a goal? Why, for example, would most communicators not walk up to a stranger in a public place to introduce themselves? What makes this an inappropriate use of discourse in this situation? The third is the problem of coherence. What makes a particular piece of discourse, or string of interactions, hang together as a coherent whole? What overall features signal coherence in a message or series of messages?

According to Jacobs, people are able to manage these problems by applying certain kinds of knowledge. These include, first, shared principles for making inferences about the meaning of a message beyond the literal expression. A communicator must know how to hear the statement, "I wonder if you would have time to talk to me about my paper," as a request, not a statement of one's internal state. Second, communicators must have certain shared principles for creative use of language.

For instance, one can make a request, even a demand, in a polite way by changing the language from direct form to an indirect one. Third, communicators must have knowledge of contexts and situations and the demands and requirements of these. For example, in certain cultures it would be considered disrespectful for a lower-status person to make a direct request to a higher-status one and would require a more polite and indirect form. Fourth, people need to know how to link the structure and function of their utterances. In other words, they need to know how to put together, or design, a message in order to achieve a certain outcome such as making a polite request. Finally, Jacobs identifies the ability to assess the multiple demands of a situation and to adapt discourse to meet several situational requirements simultaneously as important. One may need time with a professor to figure out the next steps on a paper, but also need to project a certain amount of deference to this higher-status individual.

Discourse theories attempt to explain how these kinds of knowledge are employed in communication. The following section summarizes a theory that provides a foundation for much of the theorizing in this area.

Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory is part of the larger study of language-in-use, which is usually traced to ordinary language philosophy associated primarily with Ludwig Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein's 1953 *Philosophical Investigations* introduced the idea that the meaning of language is not to be found in words and grammar, but in how language is actually used in context. He likened the use of language to a game in which rules are used to accomplish goals. Each language game has its own rules so that, for example, one would know how to use language to apologize, to request, or to assert. J. L. Austin referred to the use of language in these ways as speech acts, defined as using language to perform an action. Thus, the expression, "I'm sorry I said mean things to you," is more than a reference to one's state of mind. It is the performance of an action called an apology.

Today, speech act theory is most notably associated with John Searle, who has identified various types of speech acts and the structural rules used to

form and to understand these. A speech act, for example, may be an assertive designed to advocate a position (“Obama is strong on the economy”), a directive designed to elicit certain behavior from the listener (“Vote for Obama”), or a commissive designed to commit oneself to a future action (“I promise to vote for him”). Each type of speech act has certain structural rules that determine what it should be taken to mean and how it should be structured. We know a promise, a request, or an account when we hear it because it conforms to these rules. The important distinction is that when a communicator makes a statement, he or she is doing something with the words, and both the speaker and listener come to understand what this is by knowing the rules of the game.

Speech act theory is foundational in discourse studies because it establishes a way to understand the function of speech and writing in context. One of the most popular applications of this theory to communication occurs in the study of conversation.

Conversation Analysis

Most theories of conversation begin by adopting the thesis that people are using discourse to accomplish various social, communicative functions. They do more than identify the functions of individual messages, however; they understand that discursive accomplishments are collaborative acts. Functions are accomplished jointly through coherent, or organized, interaction among participants. Indeed, a common aim of these theories is to explain how conversational partners jointly construct various coherent patterns that make meaning beyond what any one participant could do alone. H. Paul Grice asserted that conversational coherence relies on a cooperative principle in which each person’s contribution must be appropriate for the ongoing flow of interaction at the moment. This means that each interactional episode must be just right in length, it must be truthful, it must be relevant, and it must be organized.

There are two approaches to understanding how communicators achieve coherent conversations by organizing speech acts into a flow of interaction. The first, most notably associated with Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson, is to look at the actual structure or sequence of the interactional string. What messages come before, which follow,

and which come later in an interaction? For example, to have coherent conversation, adjacent (or nearly adjacent) turns must be connected as would be the case with a question followed by an answer. The second approach, notably associated with Sally Jackson, Scott Jacobs, and their colleagues, takes a more global approach. Although there can be a logic in the local organization of adjacent comments, the overall coherence of a conversation is achieved by global rules that provide general rationality to what is being done. What might look terribly disorganized to the outsider may actually be quite coherent to participants who know what they are doing over the entire episode.

Constitutive View of Language

The idea that meaning is created in language opens a new way of understanding the role of language in society. In opposition to the transmissional view that language is primarily an inert vehicle for transmitting meaning, the constitutive view acknowledges that language constitutes reality. Indeed, language does not reflect reality, but makes it. The constitutive view arises from a confluence among several scholarly traditions, including pragmatics, discourse analysis, ordinary language philosophy, second-order cybernetics, symbolic interactionism, and the sociology of language, particularly Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s work on the social construction of reality, among others.

John Stewart identifies five ways in which the traditional view of language differs from the constitutive. First, the former assumes the existence of two worlds—the world of reality and the world of language—while the second asserts that humans can only live in one world, the world of language. Second, the traditional view analyzes language into parts or structures, while the constitutive view is more holistic and uses a global interpretive approach to identify how discourse shapes our understanding of experience. Third, the traditional view believes that words represent things, that language is a surrogate for reality. In contrast, the constitutive view sees language as generative, as making things rather than representing those things. Fourth, traditional approaches view language as a system in and of itself that can be studied from outside, while the latter sees language as

always in use within specific situations. In other words, language is more an event than a thing. Fifth, the transmissional view sees language as a vehicle or tool for people to use to accomplish their goals, while the constitutive view asserts that language and goals are intertwined so that language often, sometimes retrospectively, defines goals.

The Critical Turn

Many scholars using the constitutive view are not satisfied to interpret and describe how language impacts the experience of reality. Observing that language use can create shared meanings that perpetuate oppressive power arrangements in society, critical scholars move beyond interpretation to critique. Although they often use particular cases and texts in their research, most critical discourse scholars acknowledge that powerful ideologies are created in the interrelationships among texts, a phenomenon identified as *intertextuality*. Critical scholars are especially interested in how discourse—more accurately, multiple discourses—depict the world. What large meaning structures are created in the use of discourse within a community or across communities?

Critical cultural studies, strongly identified with this work, looks at the ways in which culture is produced in discourse. More importantly, scholars in this tradition are interested in how more powerful cultural forms come to dominate less powerful ones. The clash of ideologies occurs in discourse in what Stuart Hall called a *theatre of struggle*, where groups compete to have their interests met. For example, feminist critical scholars have examined how a masculine bias in language affects human relationships, how masculine forms of discourse subvert the feminine, and how women's discourse has both accommodated and resisted this bias. Emancipatory in orientation, cultural studies identifies discourses that provide opportunities to build and rebuild otherwise marginalized ideologies.

Stephen W. Littlejohn

See also Constitutive View of Communication; Conversation Analysis; Critical Discourse Analysis; Critical Theory; Cultural Studies; Cybernetics; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Ethnomethodology; Pragmatics; Semiotics and Semiology; Social Construction of Reality; Speech Act Theory

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LATINO PERSPECTIVES

Latino perspectives to communication theory have evolved from perspectives that considered the role of racism in the cultural, social, and political marginalization of Latinas/os in the United States to perspectives emphasizing the complexity of identity formation, in particular the roles of border culture, immigration, and transnationalism. In this, Latino perspectives evolve in parallel theoretical and historical axes. In terms of theory, Latino work evolves alongside critical race theory in the United States and accordingly, begins with sociological concerns about marginalization and pays increasing attention to poststructuralist concerns with identity theory. The theoretical broadening echoes the evolution of Latino social movements, which gained strength in the public sphere and academia during the 1960s and 1970s, and have since multiplied in goals, identity perspectives, and social-justice claims. Because theoretical broadening is parallel to social movements and activism and because of its commitment to articulating through theory social-justice claims,

the evolution of Latino perspectives is a good example of critical communication theory.

Evolving Perspectives, Evolving Histories

Latino perspectives on communication are engendered by the social situations of the theorists and the social location of Latinas/os at any given time. Early 20th-century work borrowed from the modernist projects of progress hegemonic in the United States. For instance, Emma Tenayuca, an activist and theorist writing during the 1930s and 1940s, put forward an eminently American take on Marxism and culture. Her work attempted to understand the intrinsic ambivalence of being culturally bound to Mexico and yet part of the United States. She argued that the American annexation of the Southwest could be seen as a progressive historical event if Anglo America invested in the modernization and progress of Mexican Americans.

Similar concerns are evident in the work of George I. Sánchez, perhaps the most visible of the Latino theorists of the 1950s. Sánchez was committed to understanding and subverting what he saw was the systematic disenfranchisement of Mexican Americans in the Southwest. In his liberal, modernist proposals, Sánchez argued that the potential of Mexican Americans to become part of mainstream society was tarnished by unjust cultural, educational, and political structures. A strong believer in education, Sánchez argued for equal funding in public schools and for bilingual education. He argued that with the proper schooling, Mexican Americans could become acculturated to the point of joining the rest of U.S. society without losing cultural specificity.

Both Sánchez and Tenayuca placed language and acculturation to Anglo America as central kernels of Latinas/os' prospects for equality. In the 1960s and 1970s, these issues were taken on by Latino theorists such as Américo Paredes and cultural producers like Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzáles and Luis Valdez. However, instead of imagining that equality would be the product of linguistic and cultural assimilation, these Latino intellectuals took multiculturalism and bilingualism as social facts that Anglo America would have to accept. Teatro Campesino, initiated by Valdez, was appropriately bilingual, pluri-ethnic, and assumed an audience with equal cultural capital. Paredes's

work problematized border life by highlighting the difficulties of intercultural communication because of language, ethnic, and cultural differences between Latinas/os and Anglos in the Southwest.

The Chicano civil rights movement inspired a diverse array of communication scholarship. Guillermo Hernandez explored the role of satire and comedy in Latino literature, theatre, and poetry. Also centered on fiction engendered by the Chicano movement, Ramon Saldivar proposed that Latino narrative constituted a dialectics of difference that aimed to demystify social reality and present to readers their real conditions of existence. Although literature was important to link narrative to Latino identity, the rhetoric of the Chicano movement became an important area of study. John Hammerback and Richard Jensen, whose work shaped Latino rhetoric in the 1980s and 1990s, explained the eloquent power of Chicano leaders like Cesar Chávez, José Angel Gutiérrez, and González. Similarly, the work of Michael V. Sedano investigated the rhetorical themes of poetry from the Chicano movement, centering on linguistic conflicts and assimilation pressures. More recently, the work of Fernando Delgado explores the relationship of Chicano subjectivity and political rhetoric in different venues including documents central (e.g., El Plan de Santa Barbara) to the Chicano civil rights movement. In a similar vein, though more attentive to women, Lisa Flores finds inspiration in civil rights narrative and rhetoric to theorize Chicana subjectivity, radical difference, and cultures of legality.

It is also during the civil rights movement that Latinas/os began to organize against mainstream media stereotypes, a cultural movement that became the basis for important contributions in media studies. Although concern about negative stereotypes had existed for a long time, the *Kerner Commission Report*, issued in 1968, gave these concerns political credibility. The report concluded that mainstream news media practices were partly to blame for the severity of the racial riots occurring throughout the country. Since, Latino media activism has challenged negative representations of Latinas/os and the stereotypical way in which Latinas/os form part of media narratives without losing sight of media policy and broadcasting regulation.

Since then, concerns over stereotypes and misrepresentation in language and media became an

important perspective for Latino communication research. Scholars, including Rosa Linda Fregoso, Gary Keller, and Charles Ramirez Berg, have catalogued the most common stereotypes associated with Latinas/os (e.g., el bandito, the dark lady, the greaser, etc.); they have theorized the reasons why specific stereotypes, such as those involving violence, are used at specific historical times; they have used these catalogues and historical explanations to understand the social location of Latinas/os at any given time; finally, they have critically explored these social and cultural phenomena and compared them with the experiences of other ethnic and racial groups including African Americans and Irish Americans.

Although work on stereotypes and (mis)representation continues, other perspectives have become more central to Latino communication studies. Paralleling the work of rhetoricians exploring Chicano activism and influenced by feminism, poststructuralism, postcolonial theory, and cultural studies, postcivil rights Latino scholarship have widened and deepened our understanding of the relationship of communication, discourse, rhetoric, and media to Latinas/os. Following Paredes, a generation of scholars growing up on the border with Mexico confronted the intrinsic cultural duality of Latino identity and proposed new ways of imagining Latino subjectivity as a political tool. After Gloria Anzaldúa's influential *Borderlands/La Frontera*, published in 1987, the metaphor of the border became the basis for a Latino-style postcolonial perspective rooted in the United States' colonial relationships to Latinas/os in the Southwest and Puerto Rico. Like other postcolonialisms, Border theories emphasize ambivalence, undecidability, duality, and multiplicity. Border theories have been useful at illuminating, among other things, cultural geography, the hybridity of culture, systematic social marginalization of Latinos, the complexity of Latino performance, bilingualism, and Latino subjectivity.

The theoretical potential of the border metaphor and its ability to call attention to marginality and hybridity have been used to great success by performance scholars and practitioners, including Coco Fusco, Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez, José Esteban Muñoz, Guillermo Gómez Peña, Diana Taylor, and Bernadette Calafell. Overall, Latino performance scholarship understands that everyday symbolic

practices exist in contested spaces, prone to instabilities, fluidity, and ambivalence. Identity, defined partly as a symbolic and partly as a social practice, becomes then a space for contestation and revelation. This same stance on identity is at the root of theoretical contestations on performance and autoethnography, including the work of Sara Amira de La Garza and Jacqueline Martinez. De la Garza weaves autoethnography, cultural analysis, and folklore (Mexican and Latina mothering mythologies) to create the epistemological ground from which Chicana identity can be explored. Martinez uses phenomenology and semiotics to challenge intercultural communication and to explore the border culture, race, and sexuality.

Since the 1990s, the social locations of Latinas/os in the United States have changed, as have Latino perspectives on communication theory. Demography explains some of these changes. Latinas/os have grown in numbers much faster than any other ethnicity, surpassing African Americans as the largest ethno-racial minority. In 1980, there were 14 million Latinas/os. By 1990, there were more than 22 million. In 2006, Latinas/os surpassed the 45 million mark and constituted 15% of the population. This growth has also been economic with Latino wealth in the United States currently constituting roughly one trillion dollars. Geography explains the rest. Although most Latinas/os used to live in states bordering Mexico, recent waves of Latin American immigrants have also settled in the Midwest, the Northeast, and the South. This change has given way to the need to broaden Latino perspectives to include new geographies, new social and cultural challenges, and new ways of problematizing place of origin and immigration. The results are the popularization of regional Latino research and the recentering of transnational and diasporic approaches.

Regional Latino research is more attentive to the multiplicity of locations where Latinas/os exist, to the diversity of Latino experiences due to place of origin, to the ethnic and racial composition of Latinos, and to the ways in which Latino culture is now part and parcel of mainstream America. This research has brought significant contributions from the experiences of Salvadorans in Washington (e.g., the work of José Luis Benítez), Puerto Ricans in New York (e.g., the work of Darrel Enck-Wanzer), or Mexicans in Chicago (e.g., the work

of Jillian Baez) and have expanded the Latino communication studies canon. Because of this emphasis on regionalism, it is increasingly hard to use a geographical metaphor such as the border to illustrate the progressive potential of Latinidad. Instead, today's work increasingly emphasizes locality and community, bringing attention to the communicative, performative, and rhetorical challenges of being a specific type of Latino in a specific social and geographical space.

The demographic changes mentioned above are due to large waves of immigration after the 1965 Immigration Act eliminated national quotas. Today, the majority of Latinas/os are Latin American immigrants. This fact has made urgent the redefinition of Latino identity from an ethnic identity structurally defined in relation to other U.S. ethnicities to a transnational and/or diasporic identity. Thus defined, Latino identity becomes always already linked to more than one nation, augmenting its cultural and subjective complexity. As Juan Flores has noted, in a time of globalization and massive northern Latin American migrations, any rigorous Latino perspectives must address transnationalism. Increasingly, this means redefining Latin America as a cultural geographical space that includes Latinas/os in the United States. Thus defined, Latinas/os are not emigrating away from Latin America, but within a cultural geographical landscape that allows for the flow of peoples and cultural forms, albeit while facing particular challenges due to local racisms and stratifications. Cultural forms such as music can thus exist in multiple registers, for instance, as hegemonic (e.g., rumba in Cuba) and as marginal (rumba in Iowa City).

Redefining Latino identity as transnational has the additional advantage of challenging the normalization of panlatinidad. Too often discussions about Latinas/os mostly described stereotypical characteristics that could, at best, be roughly aligned to Mexican American, Cuban American, and/or Puerto Rican racializations. Often rooted on commercial identities created by marketers interested in presenting a large and homogenous Latino community to advertisers, panlatinidad normalized some communication and cultural practices (e.g., Latinas/os speak Spanish; Latinas/os are family oriented), while marginalizing others (e.g., Latino political speech; lesbian Latino performance). Attention to transnationalism and

diasporas helps avoid panlatinidad because it adds layers of specificity in regard to country of origin, reasons for immigration, and the different sociohistorical frameworks before and after migration. For instance, studies of Argentinean and Brazilian diasporas in the United States suggest the need to critically examine the particular experiences of immigrants coming from Latin American nations with severe internal racisms (Argentina) and class problems (Brazil). Arguments about Latino citizenship problematize it as transnational and reframe it in terms of U.S. legal systems and the colonial annexation of Puerto Rico and Mexico.

Old and new Latino perspectives to communication theory have been concerned with racism and transculturation; however, contemporary theoretical tools and research traditions are better at explaining Latinas/os multiplicity. Latinas/os do not have one history, but many; Latinas/os are not one people, but many. The term *Latino* is a heuristic device, and it is up to researchers to operationalize it in a socially responsible way that accounts for the specific needs of communities, which may require an emphasis on difference, and their political needs.

Hector Amaya

See also Chicana Feminism; Citizenship; Critical Race Theory; Cultural Studies; Culture and Communication; Identity Theories; Marxist Theory; Postcolonial Theory; Poststructuralism

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LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Leadership has been studied from a wide variety of perspectives including psychology, political science, business, sociology, history, philosophy, and public administration. Though numerous definitions for leadership exist, leadership is commonly viewed as a form of social influence. A communication perspective theorizes leadership as a contextual process involving the performance of talk and/or action that other people see as moving toward progress on certain important tasks. As such, leadership is cocreated among people. It is grounded in the performance of people within interaction, it is appropriate and effective, and it is contextual, which means the communicative patterns need to fit with the situation in order for people to see these patterns as leadership.

This definition of leadership does not explicitly address the notion of what counts as communication. Gail Fairhurst, in her book *Discursive Leadership* makes an important distinction between the two dominant ways that leadership scholars have conceptualized communication—*leadership*

psychology and *discursive leadership*. Leadership psychology has approached communication as a form of information transfer, where leaders need to appropriately encode messages and deliver them to audiences in order to provide information and persuade them to move in a particular direction. Leadership psychology tends to focus on personality, social, and structural variables that drive communicative behavior; it views context as a relatively stable entity.

Robert House's leadership path-goal theory is a good example of how leadership psychology approaches communication. Within House's framework, the situation may be defined in terms of task structure, the clarity or ambiguity of the goals that people are attempting to achieve, and the means through which they may achieve them. The situation drives the communicative behavior. Because goals and means are quite clear, highly structured situations require relationally oriented behavior that supports individuals. In contrast, highly unstructured situations require task-oriented behavior that can clarify the path individuals need to take in order to accomplish their goals.

The second approach, discursive leadership, treats communication as an active creative force that socially constructs personal and professional identities, relationships, groups, organizations, and societies. A discursive leadership approach acknowledges the importance of both "big-D" Discourse and "little-d" discourse. Big D Discourse refers to the larger social construction of world views, perspectives, and ideologies that are created within social institutions. For example, a Discourse of capitalism emphasizes the importance of people behaving in a rational manner within a competitive environment, attempting to maximize their resources and minimize their costs. Given the intersection of the Discourses of capitalism and of individualism within Western society, not surprising is that early leadership research explored "Great Man" theories of leadership, which focused on the individual personality, physical, and social traits that allowed people to create leadership positions.

Little d discourse focuses on the situated and local interaction of individuals—what people say or do in local interactions. Both Discourse and discourse are intertwined because big D Discourses can serve as important resources for communication and the local discourses can confirm, challenge,

or modify Discourses. A discursive view emphasizes the social construction of social realities, whereas leadership psychology emphasizes the transmission of information.

Individuals, Situations, and Leadership

All leadership theories make assumptions about the ways individuals and contexts fit together. Keith Grint argues in his seminal book *The Arts of Leadership* that leadership theory and approaches can be distinguished according to the assumptions they make regarding individuals and contexts. He argues that individuals and situations can be arrayed along an essentialist-nonessentialist continuum. The essentialist end of the continuum articulates the core nature of people and situations that direct theoretical attention to certain individual and contextual characteristics. The nonessentialist anchor emphasizes the idea that we cannot come to know the essences of individuals or situations, and it is not critical to do so. By viewing individuals and situations as either essentialist or nonessentialist, Grint highlights four important approaches to leadership study that carry with them important implications for the way communication is conceptualized.

Trait theory adopts an essentialist view toward people and a nonessentialist view toward context. Trait theory assumes that individual personality traits can be identified that allow individuals to create and sustain leadership positions; these traits are universal and are not bound by context. For example, in the leadership literature, a number of personality traits such as self-monitoring, extraversion, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness have been used to characterize the essence of successful leaders. Given the unchanging nature of leader personality, this model emphasizes the appropriate selection of leaders for groups, organizations, and societies rather than for their development. The focus on inner personality traits also suggests that communication is treated as a secondary process that translates inner personality characteristics into outwardly expressed forms of communication. Communication is treated as an overt expression of who we truly are in terms of our traits.

Contingency theory adopts an essentialist view of persons and context. We can identify core characteristics and elements that comprise people and

situations. Contingency theory seeks to determine the core elements that characterize people and situations and the needed alignment between the essences of people and context. Fred Fiedler's contingency theory offers a particularly clear example of this approach. Fiedler argues that the essence of leadership situations can be reduced to three factors: (1) leader-member relations, (2) the nature of the task, and (3) leader power. The essence of leadership can be measured through a psychological test called the Least Preferred Co-Worker Scale, which determines whether a leader is either task- or relationally oriented. Leaders are assumed to remain constant in their task or relational orientation, while situations are presumed to change. The result is that the personality profile of the leader must match the situation to be effective. In those instances where there is not a leader match, leaders are advised to find ways to change the situation so their personalities can fit within the situation. Communication is treated as a form of information transfer—leaders are expected to communicate in ways that accurately reflect their personality type and to use communication to adapt the situation to fit their personalities.

Situational leadership theory assumes that individuals can be characterized as nonessentialist and contexts as essentialist. This means there is not an essence to individuals' leadership performances, and they may adapt or alter their behaviors according to the situation by drawing on a repertoire of styles and behaviors. Clear dimensions or elements of situations, however, can be identified, and the unique configurations of these dimensions create clear contexts to which leaders must respond. Numerous examples of situational leadership theory exist including House's path-goal theory, Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard's life-cycle theory, and James Hunt's contextual theory. Though these approaches vary in the specific contextual elements they identify and the range of styles constituting a leader's behavioral repertoire, they share a common emphasis on leaders being able to accurately read a situation and in light of an accurate reading, select a leadership style that fits with the situation. Communication is about creating messages that enact the appropriate style and fit with the demands of the context.

Constitutive approaches take a nonessentialist view toward individuals and contexts. There are no

discernible essences that characterize individuals and contexts. The idea of what counts as appropriate leadership and what the important features are that comprise a situation are constituted through communication. Through our communicative acts, we construct interpretations of situations and begin to articulate what counts as appropriate leadership within situations. For example, Grint argues that the situational leadership theory approach assumes that the context exists apart from our communication. However, he points out that leaders often engage in activities aimed at creating and framing the context in order to legitimate certain patterns of leadership activity. When leaders create a shared frame of understanding that the problem people face is a crisis, the frame of crisis creates the space for leaders to create a command presence where they take charge and dictate what needs to happen in order to solve the problem. A command presence is typically equated with one-way communication from leaders to followers; the leaders set out the plans for solving the problem, and these plans are accepted by followers. On the other hand, if a problem is framed as wicked, with numerous issues and concerns that intertwine, the messiness of the situation creates a space where leadership behavior that emphasizes inquiry is viewed as legitimate. This necessitates partnering with followers in order to create a collective way forward. Depending on how successful leaders are in helping frame contexts, they can legitimize certain forms of behavior and not others.

The constitutive approach is directly related to a social constructionist view of communication. Individuals and contexts are not given; rather, they are constructed through communication with others. The interpretations we have about contexts, goals, tasks, and methods of leadership are constructed through communication. Leadership becomes an inventional activity in which individuals create patterns of communication with others to determine the meaning of leadership within specific settings.

This typology of leadership theory provides a useful framework for discerning among different approaches to theorizing and roughly parallels the evolution of leadership theory. It began by searching for the traits of leadership, then moved on to focus on the behavioral styles or traits of leadership and their fit with situations, and most

recently, has focused on discursive approaches to the constitution of leadership. Each evolutionary period has been marked by a particular style toward theorizing leadership. However, an emerging trend is to incorporate the different foci provided by competing leadership approaches into an integrated theoretical framework. For example, in the 1980s, the new paradigm emerged, referring to visionary, charismatic, or transformational leadership. Beginning with the work of James McGregor Burns, a number of leadership researchers such as Bernard Bass and Jay Conger have become interested in articulating the way leaders can harness their charisma to bring about transformational change within organizations, particularly during crisis and change. The new paradigm is unique in that it is not tied to a specific type of theorizing to explain visionary or transformational leadership. It reflects a hybrid approach to theorizing that uses a mixture of trait, behavioral, and situational variables to explain the processes of visionary or transformational leadership and its effects.

Emerging Directions

Constitutive approaches to leadership have emerged within the last 10 years and are of great interest to many communication theorists given their social constructionist leanings. Constitutive approaches are relatively new, but promise to augment existing research that attempts to identify the traits that facilitate the communication competence of leaders, search for the communication styles of leadership that permit human systems to address issues and concerns, and explore the fit for particular leadership traits and situations with contexts. The constitutive turn in leadership opens up several possibilities for future theory and research:

Followership: Most research has focused on the leader as an individual and has not focused on leadership in relational terms. It is important to explore the role that followers play in leadership processes and to address questions of what counts as good or appropriate followership.

Presence: Presence may be viewed as both a noun referring to style of interaction—our presence in the situation—as well as a verb, *presencing*, which refers to the way we become tuned in to the unique aspects

of the situation. Little research has focused on how leaders create a sense of deep connection with the unique qualities of the situation that they have had a role in creating. It becomes important to articulate the practices that leaders need to develop to make sense of and act into the unfolding moment.

Scaling: Although leadership is a local phenomenon grounded in interaction, leadership also exists as a set of social and cultural discourses. Future studies need to explore the way that Discourses and discourse are connected and mutually influence each other.

Practice: A constitutive approach emphasizes the importance of articulating the construction of leadership, or what it is leaders and followers do together. Articulating the practices of leadership requires turning to a number of methodologies such as conversation analysis, discourse analysis, and narrative analysis that permit detailed examination of the unfolding practices that constitute leadership.

J. Kevin Barge

See also Discourse Theory and Analysis; Group Communication Theories; Organizational Communication Theories

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have not been prominent in formulating theories of learning. Nevertheless, any theory of learning contains an implicit theory of communication, and many communication theories are relevant to learning. In this entry, the intersection of theories of learning and communication will be explored. Readers interested in more detailed explanations of theories of learning should turn to sources from psychology, education, and allied fields.

Classical Approaches to Learning

In ancient Greece, a method of teaching and learning was formalized, which is now known as the Socratic method. Named after Socrates, this method was transmitted to us in the dialogues of Plato. Focused mainly on a dialectical approach to communication, the teacher would pose questions to the student to determine whether the student agreed with a given proposition. The teacher would then use a series of such questions and answers to guide the student toward an answer that might not have been initially foreseen. In one of the Platonic dialogues most relevant to communication theory (the *Gorgias*), Plato questioned the Sophists (rhetoricians of ancient Greece) on their ability to teach speech without any knowledge of the subject matter being taught. In the dialogue, they are forced to agree with a series of propositions that shows that they cannot in fact do what they claim to be able to. Thus, the pattern of communication involved in this form of learning is dialogic (there is a two-way interchange between teacher and student), but the teacher controls the questions. Socratic method is still used in education today; for instance, it is often used in law school. The approach is dialectical in that it uses arguments and counterarguments.

However, other Greek schools incorporated different theories of communication in their educational approaches. The Sophists were more relativist, seeing humans as the measure of all things in opposition to Plato's point of view that dialectic could be used to uncover the underlying structure of reality. Although Plato was opposed to rhetoric, Aristotle thought that different forms of persuasion were useful. His division of rhetoric into three argument-types (logos, i.e., reason; pathos, i.e., emotion; and ethos, i.e., character) reflected recognition that humans do communicate

LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION

It is a truism that learning cannot occur without communication. However, communication theorists

in different ways and that education, learning, and persuasion could not be reduced to a single preferred method.

Universities were established in Europe beginning in the 11th century and flourished from the later Middle Ages onward. Instruction was given in grammar, logic, and rhetoric, reflecting the importance of various types of communication that were transmitted from Classical times. Most often the curriculum was based on classical texts, usually interpreted through the lens of the theology of the Roman Catholic Church. Learning in this environment was based on the book. Indeed, especially from the invention of the printing press onward, the importance of the book and the text in learning grew enormously. Thus, even today, an implicit theory of communication in almost all forms of modern learning is that the important information is contained within a book, usually written by an authoritative source. The job of the teacher is to provide commentary on the book and to guide the student in his or her understanding of it. The job of the student is to demonstrate mastery. At education's highest level, the job of the student is to demonstrate the ability to produce knowledge through the writing of a dissertation or thesis. The enshrinement of the book as the primary means of storing and transmitting led to the development of a canon, which is the body of textual knowledge that a student would be expected to master in a particular discipline. This had the effect of reifying certain types of knowledge. But book production also led to the development of the Enlightenment and the Scientific Revolution, which in turn led to the production of new forms of knowledge that would eventually challenge the church as the establishment for education. Thus, the book—as a communication technology—proved to be a two-edged sword, at first in establishing a curriculum that was slow to change, but then in facilitating an enormous expansion of knowledge that could overturn previously held theories and dogma.

Modern Theories of Learning

With the development of modern psychology, social scientists began to advance formal theories of learning. The first influential theory was known as behaviorism. B. F. Skinner and others

propounded a theory that stated that people learned in response to stimuli. In behaviorism, all human behavior can be considered as responses to external stimuli. When a person is exposed to an external stimulus, such as reward or punishment, the person becomes conditioned to behave in ways that will maximize reward and minimize punishment. Another method of learning occurs when stimuli are present in close proximity to events that are desired or feared (operant conditioning). In this theory, it is not necessary to know the internal mental states of individuals to explain or predict their behavior. Thus, communication functions mainly as a means of transmitting stimuli.

In this respect, behaviorism is similar to transmission theories of communication, which mainly focused on the successful transmission of a message from sender to receiver. Early models of communication, such as the information model of Claude Shannon and Harold Lasswell's model of media effects were similar to stimulus-response models in that they focused mainly on the one-way transmission of messages from sender to receiver. The models were designed to measure communication success as the fidelity with which the message was received. In the case of media effects, success was measured as a change in attitude or behavior.

Skinner's behaviorism was soon criticized, and eventually a cognitive school of learning emerged. In this theory, the individual mental state was seen as an important factor in explaining how people would react to stimuli. This model allowed for more active processing and storing of information, with individual cognitions seen as important factors in how people would respond to new information, make sense of it, and process it for future use. Thus, more activity was assigned to the individual in this model. Moving beyond behaviorism, cognitive approaches have become extremely important in psychology. As we will see below, many theories of persuasion (and learning) have relied on a variety of cognitive-based models to explain how information is processed, retained, and used in persuasion and learning situations.

A third alternative theory of learning is known as constructivism. In this approach, individuals are seen as actively constructing knowledge in an interactive process between teacher and learner. In this theory, the learner is much more active than in behaviorism (the individual just responds) and

cognitivism (the individual cognitively processes, stores, and reacts). In constructivism, the communication process inherent in learning is given primacy. Thus, the learner is no longer a simple repository for information from an expert; rather, communication is the fundamental process through which learning is created. Learning may occur both for teacher and student. This theory recognizes the primacy of communication as the process through which learning occurs. The approach allows for consideration of different modes of communication as appropriate to different styles of learning. Whereas behaviorism reduces communication to simple stimulus-response and cognitivism sees communication as the transfer of mental contents between individuals, constructivism argues that no reality can emerge without a communication process; the process is fundamental to what is learned. Thus, in behaviorism, the only content that is transferred in communication is the reward or punishment; conditioning is all that matters. In cognitivism, the range of content is greatly expanded; individuals are seen as having complex abilities to store, process, and use information. However, communication is seen primarily as the process of transferring mental content between individuals. In constructivism, the content is inseparable from communication; reality is constructed through communication. Constructivist theories of learning thus bear a great resemblance to sociological notions such as the social construction of reality.

Theories of Persuasion, Attitude Change, and Learning

Persuasion is not the same thing as learning, but communication theories of persuasion and attitude change are undoubtedly relevant to learning. Persuasion is normally characterized by the desire to get a respondent to reach a particular conclusion; education is less characterized by the sender's vested interest. Nevertheless, the two forms of communication share many similarities; theories of persuasion and attitude change can shed much light on learning.

An attitude is a learned predisposition to react to objects favorably or negatively. Attitude is seen as having both a rational (cognitive) and emotional component. Normally, attitude change has been seen as the precursor to behavioral change. Thus,

theories of persuasion and attitude change have been very important to educators who seek to promote behavioral change. Early studies sought to comprehend the process by which attitudes could be affected using variable-analytic methods to isolate the different factors that would affect a message's acceptance. Carl Hovland studied persuasive messages and identified four factors influencing message acceptance: attention, comprehension, anticipation, and evaluation. Additionally, research within this school sought to identify factors that would make people more or less persuadable. Finally, and most directly related to communication, this approach focused on a variety of communication-related variables: source, message, medium, and receiver. This model had many of the characteristics of the linear transmission models mentioned above, but it did not assume simple stimulus-response, as in behaviorism. In fact, results from this research are seen as part of the limited effects paradigm, especially when applied to mass media messages. The results from this research did not reveal a single, unified theory of persuasion; at best, results tended toward the middle range of explanation, with different factors explaining persuasion and learning to differing degrees under differing conditions.

Another approach to attitude change, known as social learning theory (also social cognitive theory), argued that individuals learn by observing. People are seen as goal driven, and they observe others to determine what actions would be of benefit to them. Albert Bandura thought that people gather information about the environment and behavior to serve as guides for action—and observation could occur in a variety of contexts. Most famously, he conducted experiments to show that individuals could learn vicariously through observational learning; his work was one of the early touchstones of work on television violence. Bandura's concept of communication and learning moved beyond simple stimulus-response models; although modeling of reward and punishment were important, individuals were seen as active gatherers of information, gathering feedback about their actions to restructure their goals and actions in order to maximize reward and benefit.

Moving into more modern theories, cognitive psychology and persuasion theory have yielded more complex versions of how individuals receive

and process information. Such theories often move beyond simple notions of learning toward dual-process explanations. The classic dual-process explanation of persuasion is known as the elaboration likelihood model (ELM). In ELM, individuals are seen as either motivated to process messages or not; also, they are seen as having different abilities to process messages. When motivation and ability are high, individuals will use a central route for processing messages, giving carefully considered cognitive effort to the message. Under this condition elaboration is high; the information is considered cognitively and rationally. Attitude change and learning under such conditions are predicted to be enduring. When motivation and/or ability are not present, individuals will process the information heuristically using other nonrational cues. Under such conditions, elaboration is low, and any attitude change or learning from such persuasion is considered to be less enduring. A similar dual-process model of persuasion and learning is known as the heuristic-systematic model of persuasion.

Another social scientific approach to persuasion and learning is known as the theory of reasoned action. This theory postulates that attitude, perceptions of social norms, and perceived behavioral control interact to affect a person's behavioral intention, which in turn affects actual behavior. Persuasion and learning, under this condition, must consider all three variables. Attitude is seen as a combination of beliefs about objects and associated feelings (positive or negative) about those objects. Summed and weighted, these variables combine to form an attitude. To change an attitude, one must change beliefs and/or the emotional valences attached to them. At this level, the theory is a basic theory of learning, which says that new information can affect cognitive structure. At the same time, social and normative pressures affect the likelihood that information will be learned or that attitude will be changed.

Sociological Theories of Learning and Other Philosophies

Although psychologists and social psychologists have done much of the work that is relevant to communication and learning, sociologists and philosophers have also made important contributions. Symbolic interactionism was developed as a

response to behaviorism. The theory argues that people develop conceptions of self within and through communicative interaction. An individual is not simply the sum of mental contents; we develop our self-perception through communication. Charles Horton Cooley coined the term *looking glass self* to denote part of this process; he also argued that the self and society are twinborn. George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer were other important figures in this movement. From the perspective of communication, the main point is that communication is fundamental to any social or psychological process. As argued at the outset of this entry, learning cannot occur without communication (although the behaviorists came closest to making this argument); moreover, communication is both sufficient and necessary for learning to take place. Without communication, we will not develop even the most basic skills that would allow more sophisticated learning to take place.

Mead was a student of John Dewey, often identified as one of the major practitioners of American Pragmatism. Dewey wrote copiously on both education and communication. He saw both as vital to the development and maintenance of a strong democracy. Education was seen simply as a process of learning conducted through communication; communication itself is the process of sharing experiences until they become common. He likened education through communication to nutrition and reproduction for the human body. Dewey also carried on a famous debate with Walter Lippmann. Lippmann felt that the new mass media—and their potential for presenting a distorted picture or reality to the public—meant that a specialized social scientific elite would be necessary to assure the accurate transmission of information. Dewey was more optimistic; he felt that education and communication in sufficient quality and quantity would help democracy remain strong and guard against its cooptation by special interests.

Finally, we should consider some alternative theories of education and how they involve communication. Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator who argued that the banking concept of education (the student is an empty slate to be written upon) was not useful. He argued essentially for the elimination of the distinction between student and teacher, allowing for more reciprocity and interchange between learners. His arguments were strongly

informed by Marxist theories, and this school came to be known as critical pedagogy. Although it may not be widely practiced, it is the most radical in terms of insisting on absolutely equal opportunities between communicating and learning partners.

Another critical scholar, Pierre Bourdieu, thought that education was one of a number of means used by privileged classes to acquire social and cultural capital. These forms of capital, along with traditional economic capital, combine to preserve class differences.

All in all, learning and education, as practiced, have been based on a variety of theories. Within these theories are usually imbued an implicit theory of communication. Howard Gardner has recently argued that there are multiple intelligences, as opposed to a single, unitary intelligence that might be measured by an IQ test. Forms of intelligence can range from linguistic to mathematical (those traditionally measured in a standard curriculum) to spatial, musical, and other less traditionally measured forms of intelligence. Needless to say, such an expansive view of intelligence also opens up the possibility for considering how different forms of communication—involving all of the senses in different permutations and combination—might be used to facilitate learning. Although education as practiced still relies heavily on the book and print, new media developments certainly augur new possibilities for education, learning, and communication. The theoretical vistas opened up by these new technologies are only just beginning to be seen.

James Shanahan

See also Attitude Theory; Classical Rhetorical Theory; Cognitive Theories; Constructivism; Critical Communication Pedagogy; Elaboration Likelihood Theory; Heuristic-Systematic Model; Marxist Theory; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Reasoned Action Theory; Rhetorical Theory; Symbolic Interactionism

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LEGAL COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Legal communication is a context-driven body of theory that explains how legal practitioners use communication to achieve goals in legal forums. These theories both inform and are informed by legal and communication practices. As such, theorizing is pragmatic because it emphasizes consequences resulting from the public's participation in and understanding of legal practices and outcomes. This body of theory has strong roots in the traditions of forensic genres, practical persuasion, language, discourse, and narrative.

Forensic Genres

Greek and Roman treatises categorized the forensic genre as the kind of speaking appropriate for public legal proceedings. As part of adversarial trial proceedings, prosecutors supported the legal interests of the state, and defense advocates represented the accused by presenting evidence and calling witnesses. The forensic genre concentrated on how advocates successfully resolved legal issues in civil and criminal disputes. Specifically, legal advocates needed to convince large groups of citizen-jurors to make judgments about issues in favor of one rather than another side of a case. The content of forensic speaking centered on reasoning from facts and testimonial

evidence, attorneys' inferences and justifications derived from that evidence, and the connections that attorneys made between the evidence and issues of a legal dispute. Advocates speaking at public trials in the ancient world also recognized the importance of selecting compelling language and developing their own ethos-character by referring to their knowledge and demonstrating their good will.

Aristotle first equated legal speaking within the forensic genre to provide advice to legal practitioners about how to win cases in Greek legal forums. The goal of forensic speaking was to persuade adjudicators (jurors) about the likelihood of the guilt, innocence, responsibility, or negligence of defendants accused of unlawful behavior. To accomplish this goal, legal advocates needed to define the issues of criminal or civil actions, ascertain the motives and states of minds of defendants, and discern the character of accused persons or parties. Legal practitioners, representing both the state and defendants, utilized *topoi*, topics related to motives, states of mind, situational factors prompting the illegal action, conditions influencing the illegal act, and details concerning the seriousness of a violation. In addition to these topics, legal speakers emphasized nonartistic proofs derived from eyewitness testimony, stipulations of contracts, and real evidence, such as weapons or forged documents. Advocates also used artistic proof to connect legal issues to character (*ethos*), emotion (*pathos*), and reasoning patterns (*logos*). The Greek forensic genre emphasized the substance of speaking rather than specific legal rules or procedures.

Roman legal practitioners appropriated and modified the forensic genre by enunciating specific structural, substantive, and performative features of legal speaking for use in Roman legal proceedings. Marcus Tullius Cicero, a Roman procurator (prosecutor), expanded the genre to accommodate forensic speaking content and style to the Roman legal code—Twelve Tables. Cicero and other Roman practitioners elevated concepts of character and performance to a central position and relegated logic to a secondary role. The most important Roman contribution was the concept of *stasis*, types of issues that today still influence legal communication processes and practices. The various types of *stasis* include conjectural issues about

whether or not a legal action occurred, such as fraud, conspiracy, or murder; definitional issues specifying how an action fits with the specifications of statutes, indictments, civil complaints, or judicial precedents; general issues concerning whether the quality of an act was intentional or the result of self-defense, deception, negligence, or conspiracy; and translation issues identifying which court or tribunal held jurisdiction for a case. The Romans expanded the forensic genre to include categories for developing issues, establishing jurisdictions, and choosing appropriate speaking style and delivery.

Practical Persuasion

Traces of the forensic tradition appear in contemporary theories of trial practice conceptualized both by legal practitioners and communication theorists. These remnants of the forensic genre evolved as part of how-to theories based on successful trial practices, such as how attorneys should construct and present opening statements, conduct direct and cross examination, and conceptualize and deliver summations-closing arguments. How-to theories adapt ideas about persuasive communication strategies to the formal legal rules and procedures mandated by different forums and jurisdictions.

Rules limit communication in every part of the trial. For example, legal rules constrain the scope and content of trial summations although they allow attorneys to put their evidence in the best possible persuasive form to influence judges and jurors. Specifically, rules for summation permit attorneys to reiterate and emphasize a theme of the case, organize and emphasize favorable evidence, present the specific position toward issues they want jurors to adopt, refute the allegations of the opposition, suggest ways that jurors should resolve conflicting evidence, explain the law, and demonstrate how their interpretations of the evidence mandate a favorable verdict from judges or jurors for their side of the case. To retain an emphasis on reasoning and evidence, legal rules prohibit attorneys from appealing directly to jurors' sympathies or playing on their emotions and prejudices, putting themselves in the victim's or the defendant's position, basing their decisions on broad social issues, and addressing a single juror by name. Although the legal rules prohibit overt appeals to emotion,

they do allow attorneys in all parts of the trial to engage in strategic persuasion and present dynamic performances in line with concepts inherited from the Roman tradition of forensic speaking.

How-to theorizing also incorporates laboratory-generated concepts of message production and impression management derived from theories of persuasion. For example, the primacy-recency concept, placing the strongest arguments at the beginning and end and putting the less potent reasons in the middle of a discourse, is a commonly accepted strategy applied to opening statements, witness examination, and summations. How-to theories utilize the concept of inoculation—providing jurors with a weak dose of their adversaries' arguments in order to soften the impact of negative information presented against their case later on in a trial. During examination of witnesses, attorneys try to avoid verbal excess and confused reasoning that creates a boomerang effect so as to ensure that their messages do not produce an opposite effect on judges or jurors from what they intended. Additionally, concepts about message order suggest that attorneys sequence their questions to witnesses using a coherent and efficient organizational pattern to add to jurors' comprehension of their testimony. Moreover, enacting social norms of efficiency and politeness help attorneys create the impression that they are not wasting judges' or jurors' time or badgering witnesses. Legal rules also enhance the formality and seriousness of the courtroom climate by allowing witnesses to give their testimony in everyday language, while prohibiting them from talking about personal or social matters unrelated to legal issues.

Language

Law and language exist in a symbiotic relationship. John Boyd White emphasizes that law is language because it is a resource for expressing and enacting discursive statements that state what principles and conduct people in a community should follow. Laws take the form of simple statements, such as pay a fee to park or pay the fine for speeding. Laws also consist of complex and technical statements about conduct by specifying the conditions of a contractual agreement, declaring procedures for sentencing a criminal, or asserting what constitutes disorderly conduct. In ways similar to other language use, no direct correspondence exists between the words in

legal language and the events or actions to which the words refer. To explain how language influences legal practice, communication theorists examine language units of words, phrases, sentences, and reasons as well as identify how these units are packaged into legal discourses.

Law is a specialized, technical language that relies on rule-governed forms and structures that try to convey the impression that the law is authoritative and impersonal. Legal language exerts power by forcing people to conform to its prescriptive stipulations, conditions for compliance, and specific sanctions. To accomplish these goals, law relies on action language that asserts, alleges, builds records, renders judgment, issues summonses, overrules, sustains, enforces, remands, nullifies, and punishes. Legal practitioners configure legal language first into speech acts and then convert these acts into more general pronouncements related to specific legal goals, such as issuing indictments or filing complaints.

In some legal communication theories, language is a common focus for explicating the construction, meaning, and effects of judicial opinions. For example, both Haig Bosmajian and David S. Birdsell explain the tropology of judicial opinions based on metaphors, synecdoche, and personification. Theorists also rely on language concepts when they specify the uses and the effects of the rhetorical devices—direct address, irony, satire, ideographs, allegory, and rhetorical questions—in legal discourses.

Discourses

Legal discourses consist of written, spoken, and mediated accounts of laws and actions that show connections between issues, themes, and patterns in a discursive form. These discourses explain what the law is and identify the preferred procedures for legal actions and practices. Elite discourses are designed primarily for professionals who understand the technical language of the law. These elite-professional discourses include statutes, ordinances, decisions of appellate courts, and official rulings. Both Dale Herbeck and Marouf Hasain explain how elite-professional discourses can marginalize the powerless, silence the voices of those adversely affected by the law, and reify the power of the courts and legal professionals rather than serve the interests of people. Critiques of this

sort raise public consciousness about the power of legal discourse to control and subjugate people rather than to do justice for them.

Representational discourses significantly impact public perceptions and understanding of the law and legal practices. Popular culture creates many representations of law through novels (e.g., those by John Grisham), fictionalized television dramas (e.g., *Law & Order*), and reality television (*Cold Case Files*) that have significant influence on public understanding of legal communication practices. Because these representations often mix fact with fiction, confuse information with entertainment, and create public misconceptions about the legal communication, they can adversely distort public knowledge of legal practices. For example, when attorneys conduct voir dire (i.e., jury selection), they routinely ask potential jurors if they watch *CSI*. If jurors acknowledge their belief in these televised representations of crime-scene investigative practices, then the trial judge and/or attorneys likely will exclude them from jury service because they understand that media discourses can adversely affect jurors' judgments about the quality of evidence and limit their ability to evaluate it as a jury member.

Agenda-setting theory explains how media discourses frame information so that it impacts public thinking about legal issues and practices. For this reason, communication consultants take seriously the consequences of media agenda setting when they advise attorneys about designing questionnaires for potential jurors to detect media-generated biases. Understanding agenda setting also helps consultants when they make recommendations to attorneys about writing motions for a change of venue-location based on the likelihood that adverse media publicity will jeopardize a defendant's chances for a fair trial.

Prosaic discourse, the way people talk in legal settings, also influences the public's understanding of the law and their ability to participate effectively in legal forums. People freely talk about the law as if they had directly experienced it. As a result, they develop strong opinions about the law, such as the importance of wealth in buying justice, the racism of police, the frivolous nature of lawsuits, and the likelihood that legal proceedings are tainted by judicial and attorney biases. Socially constructed understandings and misunderstandings about legal processes and practices

may discourage citizens from serving on juries, filing a complaint, or appearing in court.

William O'Barr identifies some consequences of prosaic language patterns that witnesses use in courtroom settings. Powerful speech—direct, assertive, and precise responses to questions—improves the credibility of witnesses, but powerless speech—hedges (it is sort of), tag questions (John did it, didn't he?), direct quotations from others rather than paraphrases, and empty adjectives (charming, sweet)—reduces witnesses' credibility. Narrative responses—long, organized, and internally coherent answers to attorneys' questions—enhance witnesses' believability, whereas fragmented responses—short, disorganized, and inconclusive answers to attorneys' questions—impede the believability of testimony.

Many discourse-oriented theories are critical: They examine the ideology of legal discourses, look for patterns of influence rather than causality, consider the polysemic and hidden meanings, and look at the political posturing and power moves of legal practitioners. Critical approaches to legal discourse identify the social consequences of the elite-professional discourses for the people that law is expected to serve rather than conceptualize the content, form, or persuasive elements of these discourses. One example of this kind of theorizing is identifying the underlying racism of a judicial opinion—*Plessy v. Ferguson*, the 19th-century decision justifying segregation— or explicating the ideology of sexism in 20th-century decisions prohibiting women's access to birth control information.

Narratives

Legal communication theories utilize narrative constructs to understand legal counseling and interviewing, trial speeches, witnesses' depositions and testimony, and juror decision making. Narrative has a prominent role in legal contexts just as it does in other professional settings because both legal practitioners and lay people use stories to interpret actions and discourses, assign meaning to symbolic actions concerned with people's rights and responsibilities, understand the motives and intentions of those participating in legal forums, and recognize the importance of attorney-witness interactions. By bringing together the fragments of a story into a unified whole, attorneys construct a theme based on one-sided narratives to persuade judges and jurors that their story of a criminal

legal dispute proves guilt beyond a reasonable doubt or that their story of a civil dispute demonstrates that the preponderance of evidence supports their side of a case.

Lance W. Bennett concentrates on how attorneys tell stories in criminal trials by structuring trial discourse according to contexts, actions, and characters familiar to jurors. Putting facts and evidence into stories enhances jurors' social judgments about excusable and inexcusable behavior and connects the language and action embedded in case stories to jurors' emotions and experiences.

Legal narratives are containers for attorneys' argumentation. Each trial consists of multiple stories generated as narrative fragments in witnesses' testimony. Attorneys fit together the fragments of these stories and integrate them into a reasonable composite story that they adapt to the constraints of legal rules and procedures. By responding to open-ended questions in direct examination, witnesses collaborate in telling stories that reinforce the narratives presented by attorneys representing their side of the case. During cross-examination, opposing attorneys challenge the coherence, consistency, and the factual basis of the witnesses' stories presented during direct examination. Most witnesses' narratives reflect their sincere interpretations of a particular dispute rendered from their personal standpoints. Some witnesses, however, knowingly contrive insincere and distorted narratives that violate their oath "to tell the truth and the whole truth." They do so for a variety of reasons—to mock the legal system, to challenge the evidence, or to help the victims or the perpetrators. Some other witnesses lack the cognitive and language skills necessary for telling coherent and relevant stories. For these reasons, the process of constructing believable, thematic, and composite stories pieced together from many different witnesses is a challenge for attorneys.

Judicial opinions also are composite narratives constructed from story fragments; they contain evidence and reasoning that fit with rules for judicial appeals and statutory interpretation. For example, the controversial judicial opinion, *Roe v. Wade* (the abortion rights opinion), embraces many different stories: the civil trial story of Jane Roe, a fictionally named stand-in representative for pregnant women, who could not get an abortion because it was forbidden at that time by Texas state law; the story of appeal attorneys' cleverness

in creating a case to test the legality of Texas law after soliciting clients using a newspaper advertisement; the story of the tedious and costly process used by appellant attorneys to select and argue the legal precedents that they believed would overturn restrictive state abortion laws; the story of how appellees (advocates for the State of Texas) appropriated narratives as their main source of evidence from certain biology textbooks that showed that life begins at conception; and the story of Justice Harry Blackmun, the author of the majority opinion, who pondered stories of infanticide and abortion in American history prior to crafting his opinion. Judicial opinions also compile and reconfigure story fragments and frame them as reasonable justifications for the overturning or upholding of the decisions of lower courts. In these opinions, appellate judges remold facts and evidence extracted from others' stories and from past actions into the arguments of their composite story. Concepts of narrative theory help explain the constructions and presentations of legal content in pretrial and trial processes as well as in judicial opinions and other professional discourses.

Conclusion

Theorizing about legal argumentation began centuries ago in explanations of the forensic genre of trial speaking in Greece and Rome. These genres expanded to include practical, how-to advice appropriated from persuasion theories that could be used to explain various legal discourses and practices. However, traces of the explanations of the forensic genre remained important to legal communication theorists who selected old and new concepts from other bodies of theory and reformulated them so they could explicate the processes and practices found in present-day legal contexts. Theories about language, discourse, and narratives extended legal communication theory by promoting new applications of previous communication constructs to legal processes and practices.

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See also Agenda-Setting Theory; Argumentation Theories; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Language and Communication; Narrative and Narratology; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Rhetorical Theory; Rules Theories

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LEGITIMATION GAP THEORY

See Corporate Campaign Theories

LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY

Linguistic relativity, also referred to as the Whorfian hypothesis or the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, suggests that one's conceptions of reality, and possibly thought itself, are affected by the first learned language. It holds that people perceive the world

through the language used first in thinking and communicating. This entry considers the historical development of the concept and the controversy surrounding it.

Initial Development

Beginning with Aristotle, classic Western philosophy held the nominalist position that the language in which philosophy was created was immaterial to its outcome: Thought was not affected by language, and translating between thought and language was not a fundamental problem. Ernst Cassirer's work in philosophy in the early 20th century ran counter to this doctrine, suggesting that humans create their own universe of symbolic meaning that structures and shapes their perceptions of reality. Edward Sapir's work in linguistic anthropology furthered the notion, suggesting that thought and language were intertwined though not causally related. Benjamin Lee Whorf, an inspector for the Hartford Fire Insurance Company and expert linguist, developed his initial ideas concerning the relationship of language and thought independently, lecturing on these ideas and other topics throughout the 1920s. In 1928 Whorf met Sapir, who read one of Whorf's papers in 1930 and suggested it should be published. Whorf began attending Sapir's classes in Anthropology at Yale in 1931, entering the doctoral program later that year. Whorf never finished doctoral work though he became the central figure in the program after Sapir became ill. He taught at Yale only briefly, preferring to support himself from his business activities while studying and writing after hours.

Both Sapir and Whorf were intrigued by Albert Einstein's concept of relativity and considered applying it to the relationship of thought and language. Throughout the 1930s, Whorf produced a series of papers detailing his ideas, many of which were not published until 1956, well after his early death in 1941. *Linguistic relativity*, the term initially coined by Sapir who died in 1939, denotes one portion of the set of twelve theoretical positions relating language and thought in Whorf's writings. Once published, the ideas were met with enthusiasm and with harsh criticism. As a result, two distinct notions of linguistic relativity exist, that proposed by Whorf and Sapir, and that criticized by their detractors.

Whorf's Version of Linguistic Relativity

Whorf's principal goal was to explore the nature of consciousness and the human mind through studying language. He was among the first to argue that communication, in the form of speaking in a language, makes humans human. Regarding the mind as capable of nonlinguistic thought, he saw the majority of human thought and its most important features as linguistic in character. His concerns were with the relationship of language to experience and particularly with linguistic versus nonlinguistic interpretations of experience. Whorf recognized language and thought as separate, but saw their various manifestations as interrelated. His writings on linguistic relativity hold that our *weltanschauung* or worldview is related to the structure of our native language rather than being organized solely by observable properties of the world. Like Sapir, Whorf argued that people organize their experience of events in certain ways not because of some intrinsic order of events in the world, but because language provides a kind of agreement about how the world should be understood. He believed that structural differences between different language systems are associated with parallel nonlinguistic cognitive differences in the native speakers of the language, the form of which he left unspecified. Thus, he held that the world is experienced and conceived differently in different language communities. This version is sometimes called the weak linguistic relativity hypothesis.

Linguistic Determinism

Attacks on the positions of Sapir and Whorf began long after their deaths with the publication of some of Whorf's papers in 1952 and others in 1956. Whorf's detractors set up a series of principles contrasting what they called weak linguistic relativity with strong linguistic determinism, the latter position inaccurately attributed to Whorf. Neither Whorf nor Sapir argued for a causal relationship between language and thought. Sapir argued against such a causal relationship, and Whorf consistently discussed the relationship between thought and language without implying causal influences. This contrast was set up in part by Chomsky's notion of generative grammar,

which led to the search for universals and, among many of Chomsky's followers, a desire to denigrate opposing viewpoints. Whorf had suggested that different grammars might be associated with different modes of thought.

Some detractors argued that Whorf's theories implied the linguistic shaping of perception and the doctrine of nontranslatability, suggesting that he also employed circular evidence to support his positions. None provided evidence from the writings of Whorf or Sapir that supported their claims, instead citing secondary sources and prior criticisms. Most such criticisms concluded that the weak or *weltanschauung* linguistic relativity position—Whorf's actual position—was at least partially supported, but that the strong hypothesis of linguistic determinism, incorrectly attributed to Whorf, was unsupported.

The most complete and accurate statements of Whorf's writings may be found in John Carroll's presentation of his papers and in Penny Lee's extensive discussion of his work.

Thomas M. Steinfatt

See also Culture and Communication; Ethnography of Communication; Language and Communication; Speech Codes Theory

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M

MARXIST THEORY

The point of departure for Marxist theory is the philosophical and political legacies of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Marxist theory provides a conceptual toolbox for understanding and explaining how humans produce and consume social wealth. As a critical approach to communication, Marxist theory participates in a political struggle against capitalism for a future beyond capitalism. As such, it investigates the myriad ways capitalism mobilizes communication through political, cultural, and economic institutions for the purpose of social control. Therefore, Marxist theory attempts to provide an alternative way of knowing, acting, and living in the world beyond the command of capitalism. Before exploring the specifics of how Marxist theory and communication have been informed by each other, it is valuable to outline the Marxist case against capitalism.

More Wealth in Fewer Hands

To explore how social wealth is produced and consumed, Marxist theory attends to the social relationships embedded within economic arrangements. Karl Marx took special care to explore the modern factory as a model for the radically new social relationships required of industrial capitalism. By investigating the modern factory, Karl Marx uncovered a peculiar contradiction: Namely, the wealth produced by industrial capitalism required more and more people to be brought into

a social relationship conducive to capitalist production, yet fewer and fewer people benefited from the wealth that was produced by capitalism. Wealth was produced by the labor of many, but was in the hands of fewer and fewer. The key to unlocking the peculiar logic of capitalism was the extraction of surplus labor from those working longer and increasingly faster in the factory. The study of industrial capitalism revealed two key antagonistic groups or classes of people: the bourgeoisie, the owners of the factory; and the proletariat, the workers brought into the factory to turn raw materials into commodities. From the standpoint of Marxist theory, the ethical and political problem of capitalism is that the bourgeoisie enriches itself at the expense of the proletariat.

Marxist theory reveals how capitalism produces social wealth through the production and consumption of commodities. The more things that can be bought and sold, the more potential there is for capitalists to generate a return on their investment. To appreciate the imbalance of power in the social relationship between capital (bourgeoisie) and labor (proletariat), Marxist theory pays close attention to how capitalism transforms labor into a commodity. This is first done by thinking of labor as an abstract capacity—what Marxist theory calls labor power, the capacity of the worker to work in a specified way and for a specified time. The capacities capitalism may need from labor are infinite, including physical capacities associated with the body, intellectual capacities associated with reasoning, cultural capacities associated with ways of living, and social capacities associated

with communication. The worker's labor power is just as much of a commodity as the commodity he or she produces in the factory. The ability of the bourgeoisie to control the social wealth produced by the factory is due to its ability to control the fruits of the worker's surplus labor. Surplus labor is the difference between the labor time it would take for the worker to earn the wages to pay for his or her daily needs and the amount of time the laborer spent producing the commodity for the owners of the factory. Since the capitalist controls the products produced by the surplus labor of the worker, it is to the advantage of capitalism to control as much surplus labor time as possible. For example, the longer the working day, the more surplus is being extracted because the worker is producing commodities that exceed what she or he can consume. Second, the faster the worker can work, the more surplus is produced because the worker is producing more commodities in the same amount of time. Ironically, as the worker becomes more productive, the factory needs fewer workers, and while the capitalist takes more social wealth, the total sum of possible workers makes less. Whether by working a longer day or by working more efficiently, surplus labor is extracted from the worker because the commodities created during this time are controlled by the owners of the factory. At the center of the working day, therefore, is a social relationship structured by exploitation. A capitalist enterprise creates an exploitive social relationship because the success of the capitalist is dependent on expanding its control over surplus labor time by limiting the cost of labor time. By focusing on surplus labor time as important to the production of social wealth, Marxist theory can begin to analyze capitalism as a global system socially organized by an international division of labor. Marxist theory was the first to provide a critique of globalization because the international division of labor revealed that the labor and resources of one part of the world (e.g., Latin America) were extracted to promote the social wealth of another part of the world (e.g., North America).

The class conflict expressed by the struggle between the proletariat and the capitalist underwrites the Marxist theory of historical materialism. Historical materialism imagines human history as a history of class struggle. The disagreements

among different schools of Marxist theory turn on the veracity of the two-class model (bourgeoisie vs. proletariat) to explain class conflict and whether the two-class model can correctly interpret the character of all political struggle. One important variation in how Marxist theory approaches class struggle has been by extending the idea of productive labor beyond the commodity production taking place behind factory walls. In particular, feminist forms of Marxist theory emphasize how the capacities associated with labor power are often nurtured by the unpaid labor of women in the home and the community. As Marxist theory enlarges the kinds of labor with which it will concern itself—for example, labor not directly governed by a wage contract—then all kinds of social relationships outside the strictly economic domain of paid labor can be included in the political and ethical judgments about how labor time contributes to the production and consumption of social wealth. Moreover, enlarging the kinds of labor necessary for producing social wealth complicates the character of classes by including new cultural, social, and economic factors fragmenting social identities and relationships. If a mother's work in caring for children can be imagined as a form of exploitation, then different forms of political resistance are required that go beyond organizing workers at the factory to resist the capitalism. Yet there is agreement among the different versions of Marxist theory that the goal of capitalism is to transform every social relationship into one that promotes the needs of capitalism.

Communication

A Marxist theory of communication insists that communication plays a key role in the production and regulation of social wealth. Two broad processes take center stage in communication scholarship: commodification and sense-making. The study of each has provided important revisions of Marxist theory by highlighting how communication affects the character of capitalist social relationships. In the first place, communication exists as a domain of commodification. Just as shirts and labor power are commodities, so too is much of what humans experience as communication. The production of communicative commodities, like all commodities, relies on a division of labor providing

another opportunity for capital to control and exploit surplus labor. For example, the production of movies needs to assemble actors, directors, script-writers, and make-up artists. Furthermore, these forms of labor need to be combined with the labor of caterers, accountants, and janitors. A blockbuster Hollywood movie is likely to extend the social relationships of production across the globe, linking London investors with Los Angeles lawyers, Australian and North American actors with digital editors in Mumbai, and Mexican directors filming on location in Sofia, with Bulgarians providing service labor to the film crew. The surplus value of all this labor is cashed out in a chain of commodity forms as the movie migrates across exhibition sites: first-run movie theatres, pay-per-view television, and DVD. By focusing on the commodification of communication at the point of production, communication scholars demonstrate how the very character of capitalism is changing due to the importance of communication as a site for producing social wealth. Marxist theory can describe more than how the commodification of communication relies on an increasingly complex international division of labor; it has also provided important insights into how labor time is harvested in the consumption of these commodities.

Participate in communicative behaviors such as reading, watching, or listening often requires one to pay for the pleasure, information, and entertainment one seeks. Even so-called free media are often made free by exposing readers to advertising, the premier genre of capitalist communication. As audiences try to avoid these advertisements, more and more advertisements are embedded in the narrative flow of the communicative commodity. The symbiotic relationship between advertising and the mass media is indicative of the ways audiences provide surplus labor in their roles as audiences. In other words, an individual not only provides surplus labor at work, but also provides surplus labor when she or he is at home consuming media products. Dallas Smythe argued that the time one spends as an audience is important to the production of social wealth because the time spent watching television, for example, was being sold to advertisers. For Smythe, an audience more often than not exists as an audience commodity, and this commodification explains how the ways people experience communication can change the temporal and spatial

coordinates of capitalism to better produce social wealth. Even when people are relaxing by watching a situation comedy, they are working for capitalism because this leisure time, time that is socially necessary to return to work the next day, is being transformed into surplus labor time for capitalism. The transformation of leisure time into surplus labor is especially beneficial to capitalism because people have to pay for the communicative commodities (television sets, cable access, movie tickets) they experience without being paid for the labor time they spend consuming these products. Thus, the idea that an audience participates in surplus labor transforms the concept of media consumption beyond merely buying communicative commodities in order to complete the circuit of market exchange. The idea of audience labor would include all the ways the audience participates in promoting the value of the media they consume, including the labor time spent with the television on, constructing fan Web sites, searching for the latest entertainment news, and trying to construct meaning out of what people watch, listen, or read.

Since a key, perhaps dominant, thread of communication theory concerns the role of communication in making the world meaningful, a process communication scholars often call sense-making, a second theme for Marxist theory is the role different ways of communicating promote capitalist social relationships. In the 21st century, it is difficult to avoid how capitalism relies on harnessing the value of communication in the workplace. The labor required to make even the most basic commodity relies on the ability of communication to promote cooperation, coordination, and command—a communicative process that increasingly stretches across the globe. Even when capitalism is not primarily concerned with the production and consumption of communicative commodities, it relies on communication to make and deliver other goods and services. For example, the coordination of mass production and mass consumption requires the communicative practices of marketing and advertising. Moreover, no firm can embrace the need for customer service without translating communication into a form of labor power, a capacity that can be integrated into the labor process so that good communication skills can support such intangible assets as the firm's reputation and the quality of its relationships. Of course, the kinds of communicative labor expressed

by advertising and customer service are likely to be distributed along an international division of labor stitched together by communication technology, language skills, communicative competencies, corporate mergers, and the costs of labor. Figuring out the best way for a firm to manage who communicates with whom in what way, at what time, and in what manner is crucial to the success of any capitalist firm. The role of communication at the very heart of any capitalist enterprise suggests a qualitative shift in the character of capitalism as different communicative technologies and purposes (mediated, interactive, affective, cultural, and rhetorical) come to determine the ability of capital to produce social wealth. As such, the capacity to communicate must be promoted and regulated inside and outside the place of work to serve the interests of capitalist social relationships. However, controlling how people communicate can be very difficult. For example, universities made tremendous capital investments in digital technologies in the hope of promoting education, but spend considerable resources trying to prevent students, faculty, and staff from using those same resources to access (legally and illegally) movies, music, and television shows.

Another way sense-making becomes an object of concern for Marxist theory concerns how social classes learn to consent or struggle against the forms of oppression and exploitation embedded in capitalist social relationships. The Marxist category of ideology provides an important conceptual lens for describing how capitalism animates the sense-making process. For example, part of the success of capitalism has been due to the ability of its advocates to frame the economic freedom of a corporation to pursue a profit as the most important precondition for democratic freedom. This ideological process of generalizing the particular interests of capitalism for the universal interests of humankind requires constant communication, debate, argument, and advocacy. How someone comes to consent to or struggle against the social relationships of capitalism is partly determined by the ability of different social classes to control the interpretations of the social world. Ideology, for Marxist theory, reveals how an important arena of the class struggle is the battle over the meaning of words, especially the meaning of such key words as democracy, freedom, equality, and liberty. The control over the

means of communication—whether those means be approached as words or as media system—is paramount to those who govern in the name of capitalism. On the other hand, any struggle against capitalism will require sensitivity to how people might wrestle communication away from serving the interests of capitalist social relationships.

As communication scholars informed by Marxist theory investigate the role of communication in the labor process of commodity production, media consumption, and sense-making, they participate in the renewal of Marxist theory as a critical tradition for understanding human experience. In the 19th century, the political slogan of Marxist theory was “Workers of the World Unite!” In the 21st century, the political slogan against the unjust character of the world economy is “Another World is Possible.” Just as communication scholars have been able to animate Marxist theory with careful attention to processes and products of communication, careful attention to communication may provide the resources for renewing a political struggle capable of providing safe passage to another world beyond capitalist control.

Ronald Walter Greene

See also Audience Theories; Critical Discourse Analysis; Critical Rhetoric; Critical Theory; Cultural Studies; Frankfurt School; Globalization Theories; Ideology; Materiality of Discourse; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Power and Power Relations; Sense-Making

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MATERIALITY OF DISCOURSE

The materiality of discourse hypothesis was put forward by Marxist rhetorical critic and theorist Dana L. Cloud in 1994 as a challenge to rhetorical theories that she believed overestimated the power of discourse to construct reality. Cloud defined the materiality of discourse as the idea that discourse itself is influenced by or even constitutes social and material reality. Cloud's critique is part of a Marxist approach to development of critical rhetoric, which deals with the ways in which rhetoric and culture enable certain groups to exert power over other groups, as represented in the work of rhetorical scholars such as Michael McGee and Raymie McKerrow. This entry summarizes variations of the materiality of discourse, Cloud's critique of the materiality of discourse, and responses to Cloud's view.

Cloud initially explored the different positions in regard to the materiality debate by positing two continua: (1) a continuum between materialism and idealism and (2) a continuum between realism and relativism. Marxists understand idealism and materialism—the first pair—as opposing views of how social stability and transformation are achieved in capitalist society. According to Marxist thought, materialism is the notion that the way in which goods are made and distributed in society, which they call modes of production, determines in large part the social relations and forms of consciousness of any given epoch. In addition, materialism assumes that concrete, sensuous human activity is the ground of consciousness, identity,

and purpose. For example, the division of work in society between labor and corporate management creates a class system that defines an individual's role, place, and purpose in society.

In contrast to materialism, idealism argues that the invention and communication of ideas determines in large part the social relations, structure, and hierarchies of power in a society. In its strongest versions, idealism argues for the discursive construction of reality, which means that reality is created in communication practices. For example, an advocate for discursive construction might argue that the labor-management division discussed above is created by the way people talk about their roles in society, not by any material conditions that exist outside of discourse.

The second continuum is that between realism and relativism. Realism is the position in which realities and truths are thought to exist independent of the individual perceiver of reality. The strongest version of a realist position states that there are universal truths across history. Relativism, on the other hand, is the idea that truth is relative to, or dependent on, human perception or construction of reality.

The Materiality of Discourse Hypothesis

The materiality of discourse hypothesis has two variations in the world of rhetoric. The first, espoused by idealist materialists, argues simply that rhetoric and ideology do mystify the world and thereby influence how people perceive events. The goal of criticism for these scholars is to demystify, or clarify, and thereby understand how systematic strategic discourse serves the identifiable interests of powerful groups against the oppressed and exploited. For example, idealist materialist critics might look at the effects of the rhetoric of politicians in rallying legislators and the public to a war cause.

The second group, the relativist idealists, promotes the materiality of discourse hypothesis by rejecting the privileged place of the critic. There is no position from which to assess the truth or falsity of a discourse or to speculate about whose interests a particular set of texts serves because everything is relative to perception and discourse. This is a form of idealism, most significantly influenced by the work of Michel Foucault,

who maintains that power in modern society does not operate through structural conditions or by the influence of individuals, which is why his ideas are thought of as poststructuralist. In this tradition, the power of discourse is to construct what people know and do.

For example, Foucault argues that Victorian edicts on sexuality did not repress sexualities, but produced a particular kind of obsession with sexuality. Likewise, the work ethic is created, in poststructuralist terms, by the technologies that produce particular kinds of people—workers, whose identities and forms of life are only possible because of certain kinds of predominant discourses within a particular historical epoch. From this perspective, then, there is no standpoint from which to judge any particular discourse as better or worse for the worker than any other. Such an exclusive emphasis on the reality building or constitutive function of discourse is entirely relativistic and opposed to materialist views.

Cloud's Critique and Method

Cloud's controversial response to the materiality of discourse aims to provide a method for critics to make judgments about one set of interests over others. She challenged critical rhetorical scholarship, which either assumes that individual rhetors possess clear intentions and free will and make history in line with their purposes (the idealist materialists) or assumes that a regime of discourse operates independent of human volition (the relativist idealists). Cloud asserts that these perspectives are aligned with philosophical relativism and more properly labeled *the discursivity of the material* rather than *the materiality of discourse*. They regard culture itself as material, paying no attention to economic and cultural matter that may actually be the true genesis of damaging structures in society. These pitfalls led Cloud to call the materiality of discourse an oxymoron, or a self-contradictory label.

In her method of criticism, Cloud adopts a Marxist position of historical materialism, which explains how common communication distorts the truth that lies within the relations of economic and political power. Material conditions are obscured or expressed selectively in popular and political discourse, which makes the oppressive nature of true

class relations hard to see. Within this tradition, such distortion is called *ideological mystification*.

Marxist historical materialist criticism would examine how ideologies of race, gender, and nation serve to universalize a ruling class's set of interests. Using this approach, for example, a critic might identify the ways in which an ideology is distorted through communication and discover alternative forms of discourse that are more congruent with the interests of ordinary people rather than their opportunistic leaders.

The Debate

The polemical character of Cloud's argument encouraged lively debate regarding the meaning of materialism for rhetorical studies. Out of this debate came a number of critiques of the Marxist perspective on rhetorical theory, criticism, and practice. The major arguments against it come from poststructuralist theory and include criticism of Marxist assumptions about truth, representation, and the relative inattention of Marxism to the ways in which social arrangements are produced in discourse and to the complexity of power relations. In the 2000s, postmodernist and poststructuralist thinkers have urged a reassessment of the Marxist approach to rhetorical theory and criticism through the concept of dialectics, which recognize the contradictory and productive interdependence of consciousness, lived experience, and structured social relations in global capitalism. With this base, then, Cloud faces two lines of critique.

The first line of critique is epistemological. It points out that traditional ideology critique, which sees rhetoric operating in the service of real interests, relies upon an overly simple representative view of truth. In other words, one cannot easily know or recognize a group's true experience or interests without using the very discourse that shapes our understanding of those features of reality. This argument rejects the idea that rhetorical acts could be divided into categories of truths and lies. Although historical materialist criticism would point to instances of propaganda and the truths that contradict them, the poststructuralist is more concerned with how the truths we think we have discovered are themselves articulated through rhetoric. A corollary of the epistemological critique is

the charge that historical-materialist scholars assume a position of privileged knowledge and moral authority—they can know better than the publics they study what is in their interests. Ronald Walter Greene called this stance that of the moral entrepreneur.

The second major objection of Cloud's position is that historical-materialist theory and ideology critique cannot account for the overdetermination of any given form of governance, which means that conditions are created by a variety of factors, including economic structure and class relations such as labor and management, rhetorical acts such as speeches promoting capitalism, and broad traditions of discourse such as the entire 20th-century history of labor-management rhetoric. The struggle for hegemony, or exercise of power, is not simply a matter of asserting one's automatic economic interest, but rather of articulating a set of ideas or conditions around points to be addressed in discourse. In later work clarifying the critique of the materiality of discourse, Cloud and other Marxist rhetoricians have called attention to how both of these critiques of her position reflect an idealist perspective and leave the theorist and critic in a relativist quandary.

Later Formulations

Since the turn of the 21st century, interest in the intersections of the material realm and rhetorical influence has grown and diversified. The field's insistence on the significance of communication as a real factor in social relations has for obvious reasons been sustained. In addition, some recent work has explored the materiality of discourse in the global capital setting, arguing that the post-modern condition of globalization has placed communication in a privileged determining position, displacing modernist concerns with economic determination. Influenced by postmodern thought (such as that of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who extend our historical understanding of empire to the new political order of globalization), a number of rhetorical theorists have explored the ways in which bodies and technologies intersect to produce new kinds of subjects-agents. Finally, psychoanalysis has influenced how rhetorical theory understands influence and power, suggesting that

symbolic and psychical structures operate in a materially forceful way in the determination of human consciousness and agency.

The historical-materialist perspective advanced by Cloud has evolved in conversation with these challenges and trends, developing and extending the idea of dialectics, or the recognition of the mutual influence and interdependence of consciousness and the material world. Advocates of this position claim that dialectics offers a nonreductive, noneconomic approach to discourse that is remarkably consonant with the rhetorical tradition's emphasis on situated, strategic political intervention into social reality. In other words, discourse is situated in and influenced and constrained by materiality rather than determining or being determined by it. A dialectical approach sustains the basic theoretical and analytical distinction between materiality and discourse, however, arguing that the very possibility of understanding human freedom depends on this distinction. No matter how complex it may be, without a dialectical distinction between lived experience and consciousness, relativism reigns, and the project of critique loses its place in a field concerned with the critique of power and the possibilities of emancipatory rhetorical and economic agency in capitalist society.

Dana L. Cloud

See also Archeology and Genealogy; Critical Rhetoric; Critical Theory; Cultural Studies; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Frankfurt School; Marxist Theory; Rhetorical Theories

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MATHEMATICAL THEORY OF COMMUNICATION

Claude Shannon's mathematical theory of communication concerns quantitative limits of mediated communication. The theory has a history in cryptography and of measuring telephone traffic. Paralleling work by U.S. cybernetician Norbert Wiener and Soviet logician Andrei N. Kolmogorov, the theory was first published after declassification in 1948. Due to Wilbur Schramm's initiative, it appeared in 1949 as a book with a brief commentary by Warren Weaver. The theory provided a scientific foundation to the emerging discipline of communication, but is now recognized as addressing only parts of the field.

For Shannon, "The fundamental problem of communication is reproducing at one point either exactly or approximately a message selected at another point" (Shannon & Weaver, 1949, p. 3). Shannon did not want to confound his theory by psychological issues and considered meanings irrelevant to the problem of using, analyzing, and designing mediated communication. The key to Shannon's theory is that messages are distinguished by selecting them from a set of possible messages—whatever criteria determine that choice. His theory has 22 theorems and seven appendices. Its basic idea is outlined as follows.

The Basic Measure

Arguably, informed choices are better than chance, and selecting a correct answer from among many

possible answers to a question is more difficult and requires more information than selecting one from among few. For example, guessing the name of a person is more difficult than guessing his or her gender. So his or her name would provide more information than his or her gender, the former often implying information about the latter. Intuitively, communication that eliminates all alternatives conveys more information than one that leaves some of them uncertain. Furthermore, two identical messages should provide the information of any one, and two different messages should provide more information than either by itself.

To define quantities associated with selecting messages, in his second theorem, Shannon proved that the logarithm function was the only one that conforms to the above intuitions. Logarithms increase monotonically with the number of alternatives available for selection and are additive when alternatives are multiplicative. Although the base of this logarithm is arbitrary, Shannon set it to two, thereby acknowledging that the choice among two equally likely alternatives—answering a yes or no question or turning a switch on or off—is the most elementary choice conceivable. His basic measure, called entropy H , is

$$H(X) = - \sum_{x \in X} p_x \log_2 p_x,$$

where p_x is the probability of message x occurring in the set of possible messages X . The minus sign assures that entropies are positive quantities. With N_x as the size of the set X of possible messages, H 's range is

$$0 \leq H(X) \leq \log_2 N_x.$$

H averages the number of binary choices needed to select one message from a larger set, or the number of binary digits, bits for short, needed to enumerate that set. H is interpretable as a measure of uncertainty, variation, disorder, ignorance, or lack of information. When alternatives are equally likely,

No alternative = no choice, $p_x = 1$ and $H = 0$ bits

Two alternatives = one binary choice,
 $p_x = 0.5$ and $H = 1$ bit

Four alternatives = two binary choices,
 $p_x = 0.25$ and $H = 2$ bits

Eight alternatives = three binary choices,
 $p_x = 0.125$ and $H = 3$ bits

N alternatives = $\log_2 N$ binary choices,
 $p_x = 1/N$ and $H = \log_2 N$ bits

2^N alternatives = N binary choices,
 $p_x = 2^{-N}$ and $H = N$ bits.

Entropies and Communication

The additivity of H gives rise to a calculus of communication. For a sender S and a receiver R one can measure three basic entropies.

1. The uncertainty of messages s at sender S , occurring with probability p_s

$$H(S) = - \sum_{x \in S} P_s \log_2 P_s.$$

2. The uncertainty of messages r at receiver R , occurring with probability p_r

$$H(R) = - \sum_{r \in R} P_r \log_2 P_r.$$

3. The total uncertainty of s - r pairs of messages, occurring with probability p_{sr}

$$H(SR) = - \sum_{s \in S} \sum_{r \in R} P_{sr} \log_2 P_{sr}.$$

These lead to the sender-unrelated uncertainty entering a communication channel, colloquially called noise, expressed as

$$H_S(R) = H(SR) - H(S);$$

the uncertainty in the sender lost due to simplifications or omissions during communication, called equivocation, expressed as

$$H_R(S) = H(SR) - H(R);$$

and the amount of information transmitted between sender and receiver, which can be obtained in at least four ways:

$$T(S:R) = H(R) - H_S(R), \text{ the uncertainty at receiver R minus noise}$$

$$= H(S) - H_R(S), \text{ the uncertainty at sender S minus equivocation}$$

$$= H(S) + H(R) - H(SR), \text{ the sum of the uncertainties at S and R minus the total}$$

$$= H(SR) - H_S(R) - H_R(S), \text{ the total uncertainty minus noise and equivocation}$$

The algebraic relationships between these quantities are visualized in the center of Figure 1.

Accordingly,

- Communication is the extent a sender is able to limit the receiver's choices, and
- Information is the extent a receiver knows the sender's choices, also the reduction in the amount of uncertainty after receiving the sender's messages and larger when more choices are involved or messages occur less likely.

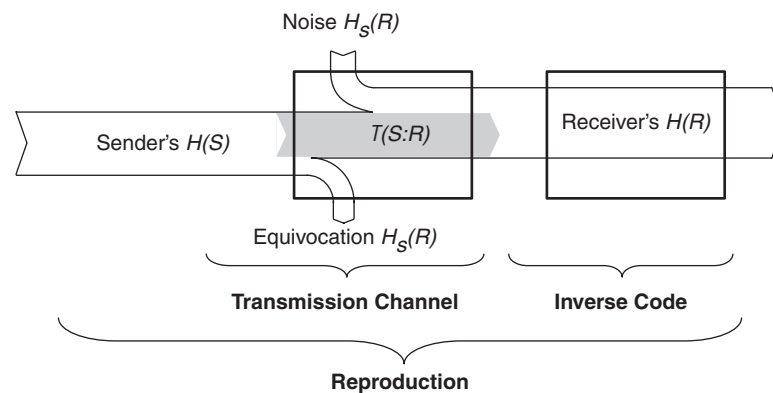


Figure 1 Transmission, Noise, and Equivocation in a Communication Channel

Both are differences between two uncertainties, with and without knowing the choices made at the other point. Both are measured by the amount of information transmission $T(S:R)$, quantifying a relationship between uncertainties.

Relation to Thermodynamics

The well-known second law of thermodynamics states that for any closed system, utilizable energy differences such as of temperature, pressure, and chemical potential decrease over time. Only outside resources may counteract this natural tendency. Thermodynamic processes converge to a state of maximum entropy at which all utilizable energy is exhausted and everything stops. Shannon's theory of communication has been considered a more general formulation of this law. It states that noise or disorder can only increase, in communication terms eroding information—that is, the ability of the receiver to relate what is received to what was sent. Without outside intervention, the process converges to where noise prevails, equivocation has irrecoverably omitted all details of the original, and communication has ceased. One can experience the beginning of this process by repeatedly photographing a photograph or making Xerox copies of Xerox copies ad infinitum. After each iteration, the grain of an image becomes rougher, distinctions become blurred, ultimately disappear, and the chance to recover the original becomes increasingly unlikely.

Coding

Figure 1 distinguishes between the transmission of information and the reproduction of original messages. Transmission involves translating messages from one medium to another, not necessarily readable along its way. For example, the signals that transmit a document to a fax machine may be overheard without making sense, yet they convey all the information needed to reproduce the original, or a close approximation of it. Fax machines embody a code. A code is a formal rule by which patterns are translated from one medium to another. To reproduce an original message, however, the last code must invert the aggregate of the preceding ones.

According to Shannon's 11th theorem, when the channel capacity $\text{Max}[T(S:R)] \geq H(S)$, one can

devise a code that reconstructs the original messages from what was transmitted.

The distinction between transmission and reproduction is central for cryptography. Cryptographers pursue two tasks: (1) finding a code to decipher intercepted messages whose apparent gibberish is presumed to transmit valuable information and (2) developing codes by which messages with sensitive information may be intercepted by unauthorized persons, but cannot be read by them. During World War II, Shannon proposed unbreakable codes, now outdated and replaced by pairs of encoding and decoding algorithms whose reconstruction exceeds computational limits.

Hence, the mathematical theory of communication also addresses limits on the ability to find codes to reproduce a sender's originals. As such, the transmission of choices and the reproduction of original messages are prerequisites of mediated communication. The readability of reproduced messages is a cultural issue, however, and goes beyond the theory. To understand each others' messages, communicators must be literate in each others' language communities.

Redundancy

Redundancy or inefficient transmission is the difference between the capacity of a communication channel and how much of it is utilized:

$$R(S:R) = \text{Max}[T(S:R)] - T(S:R).$$

Redundancy may be due to (a) unused channel capacity, (b) duplicate transmission of messages, and (c) restrictions on the set of possible messages, for example, by a grammar or specialized vocabulary. Redundancy seems wasteful, but is of considerable importance in human communication.

Much of Shannon's theory concerns the ability to devise codes that identify or correct corrupted communications. Such codes depend on the existence of redundancy. This can be experienced, for example, when proofreading text. Identifying typos is possible only when a language does not employ all combinatorially possible words. *Informition* is not an English word, and assuming the writer is using Standard English, it can be identified as an error and corrected without uncertainty. English has been estimated to be about 70% redundant,

which makes speech quite resistant to corruptions in the form of unclear pronunciation or acoustical interferences and writing proof readable and amenable to spellcheckers. Many technical communication processes avoid costly redundancy, often to the detriment of their users. Telephone numbers, passwords, and zip codes, for example, are designed without it and tolerate no human error.

In his 10th theorem, Shannon proved that the correctability of corrupted communication channels is limited by the amount of redundancy available in either the same or an additional channel. If redundancy is unavailable, communication erodes—analogue to the second law of thermodynamics. When noise occurs, accurate communication must be paid for by additional redundancy.

Digitalization

A good deal of Shannon's work addresses the problem of measuring communication of continuous variables—sound, images, and motion—with entropies that are defined for discrete phenomena. Meanwhile, technology has caught up with Shannon's methods of digitalizing and quantifying continuous phenomena. Today we are constantly confronted with Shannon's quantities. When buying a computer, we need to know its memory capacity and speed; when attaching a file to an email, we need to be concerned for its size; and when signing up for Internet service, we need to be sure of a high transmission rate. The bits of Shannon's measures or bytes in computer terms—1 byte = 8 bits—have become indispensable in contemporary life.

Human Communicators

The publication of Shannon's theory encouraged many researchers to treat humans as channels of communication and to measure their capacity of processing information. George A. Miller suggested that people reliably handle no more than seven plus or minus two bits simultaneously. There are estimates that reading comprehension cannot exceed 16 bits per second. Such limits are soft, however. Generally, experiences of information processing overload cause stress that results in errors that reduce the capacity of humans to process information.

Human information processing capacities typically are a fraction of the amounts of information

various media transmit to us, say on television screens. This does not render information measures irrelevant to understanding human communication. Miller observed that humans process information in chunks of familiar categories. So on a high resolution photograph one may recognize people and the ruins of a house destroyed by a storm without further distinguishing who these people are and identifying the pieces that led one to conclude they belonged to the house the storm destroyed. In communication theoretical terms, mapping a sender's information into fewer meaningful categories amounts to equivocation. However, the information lost to equivocation may not be meaningless entirely. It may contribute to the aesthetic appreciation of high fidelity images. Conversely, taking a photograph and e-mailing it as an attachment requires only a few decisions. The camera captures far more, which its receiver may well appreciate. Generally, humans select among and compose messages from chunks of commonly understood packages of information, not individual bits.

Weaver sought to extend Shannon's theory by identifying three levels of communication: (1) the technical problem of accurately reproducing symbols, (2) the semantic problem of accurately reproducing the desired meanings of symbols, and (3) the effectiveness problem of causing desired conduct as the result of conveying desired meanings. Weaver conceived different codes as operating on each level. However, the idea of choices among alternatives that make a difference in people's lives underlies all three levels of communication.

Four Misconceptions

Some claim Shannon's theory is one of signal transmission. However, his is a content-free mathematical calculus. The physicality of messages has little to do with the quantities it defines. Easy calculation may favor its application to discrete phenomena, digital media for example, but his quantifications are applicable to wherever its axioms are met and users are facing the question of what they can or cannot transmit.

Communication literature typically bypasses Shannon's mathematical conceptions and interprets a simple schematic drawing that Shannon and Weaver used to contextualize the theory as Shannon's linear communication model. True,

Shannon was concerned with the transmission of information and reproduction of messages from one point to another. This did not preclude extending the theory to circular communication structures. Shannon's theory provides a versatile calculus, not a particular communication model.

The pervasive use of the content metaphors in the discourse of communication research easily misleads communication theorists to interpret Shannon's entropies as measuring the information content of messages. In fact, anticipating such confusions, Shannon refused to call his calculus information theory and named his *H*-measures entropies. For him, information is not an entity contained in a message, but manifest in patterns that are maintained during highly variable processes of communication.

Finally, the theory does not presume that communicators share the same repertoire of messages, for example, having the same preconceptions or speaking the same language. By quantifying how many choices made at one point affect those made at another, it asserts fundamental limits of human communication.

Klaus Krippendorff

See also Cybernetics; Information Theory; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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MEANING THEORIES

Although in some ways the question of meaning is as old as symbol use, formalized inquiry into meaning is a far more recent development in human history. Initial investigations into the nature of meaning appear in the writings of the ancient Greeks, but it was not until the late 19th and early 20th centuries that interest in this subject led to the development of multiple (and competing) theories of meaning. The sudden proliferation of such theories reflects

the increased importance placed upon language and communication during this time period by scholars across a variety of disciplines. Furthermore, these meaning theories, and the controversies generated by them, played a central role in the development of the discipline of communication.

Members of contemporary Western cultures typically hold some version of correspondence theory—the idea that symbols and language correspond to actual features of reality. However, one of the overarching characteristics of 20th and 21st century communication theory is the rejection of this commonsense account of the nature of language and meaning. By critically examining the assumptions of the correspondence theory of meaning, communication scholars have focused attention on the complex interaction between the central elements involved in any attribution of meaning: the persons engaged in interaction, their use of symbols, and the context surrounding and indicated by their interaction. To clarify the difference between correspondence theory and more communication-oriented meaning theories, this entry will cover three topics: (1) the relationship between medium and the question of meaning, (2) the rise and central assumptions of correspondence theory, and (3) three influential meaning theories that have contributed to the growth of communication scholarship in a variety of subdisciplines.

Relationship Between Medium and Meaning

Human beings have negotiated differences in meaning for as long as they have been engaged in symbol use; however, according to scholars of media ecology (including such figures as Walter Ong, Marshall McLuhan, and Eric Havelock), these questions did not lead to the formal development of theories of meaning until after the conversion of Western culture to print-based literacy (typography). According to these scholars, a culture's dominant symbolic medium has a great deal to do with how its members experience, and thus reflect on, their own (and others') symbol use. For human beings in a culture untouched by alphabetic writing (termed *primary orality*), language is not experienced as a tool, a grammatical edifice, or a means of transmission; instead, in an oral culture, the words spoken and their meanings are inseparable. The act of speaking

is a communal, almost magical, invocation of an object or experience; in such a situation, there is no distinction between the speaker, the spoken to, the words spoken, and the spoken about. For the member of an oral culture, language is felt to be a happening: a communal symbolic event that makes present, and thereby renews, his or her culture's history, values, and experiences. For the oral mind, then, there is no problem of meaning to theorize, since meanings cannot be abstracted from the once occurring, participative event of speaking.

The creation of the phonetic alphabet decisively altered the human experience of language; as a result, it also made possible the first systematic inquiry into the nature of meaning, an inquiry carried out in the text of Plato's dialogues. The alphabet, which constituted a technologizing of the word, effectively separated sound from meaning, instead locating meaning in visual (alphabetic) units—units that themselves are meaningless apart from their proper placement in a sequential, visual order. As a consequence, the alphabet transformed language into an object available for visual inspection—something never experienced within oral cultures. Further, as Havelock argues, the key alphabetic innovation, the pure, unvocalized consonant, introduced into human consciousness an experience of ideal elements contained within, but transcending, the empirical world. Thus, the introduction of the alphabet made possible a new type of reflection upon the word; the result was an understanding of language as a code separate from the self, a code that concretized and particularized meanings that transcended the give-and-take of temporal conversation. Plato's doctrine of the Forms—with its strict separation of the unchanging, ideal realm of meanings from the realm of concrete experience—neatly encapsulated the reflections on language encouraged by the interiorizing of the alphabet. Further, this view of language played a decisive role in the evolution of Western consciousness—and paved the way for the theory of language and meaning that was to dominate modern thought: correspondence theory.

Correspondence Theory of Meaning

For almost 2,000 years, the writings of Plato represented the West's most significant foray into the nature of meaning. Although later scholars did not

ignore the question of meaning altogether, it was often raised simply in regard to hermeneutics, as scholarly treatises attempted to specify the correct procedures for interpretation of the words of (typically, biblical) texts. However, the age of Enlightenment—a period of intense intellectual upheaval that produced the formative texts of modern rationalist thought—laid the foundations for a new account of the nature of language and of meaning: correspondence theory. Although this theory is indebted to the work of philosophers such as John Locke and Immanuel Kant, it fully emerged in the work of post-Kantian philosophers of language in the 19th and early 20th centuries (such as Gottlob Frege, G. E. Moore, and Bertrand Russell).

To understand the central assumptions undergirding this theory, it is helpful to return to the media ecological focus on changes in communicative media. By the mid-1700s, Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press (with movable type) had revolutionized the outlook of scholars and increasingly, Western culture as a whole. Typography represented not a shift away from alphabetic literacy, but instead the intensification of the objectifying, individualizing, and fragmenting effects of the alphabet. The result was the completion of the ancient Greeks' break with the oral world. The typographic transformations of the word and the habits produced by reading printed texts reinforced the belief that analysis (fragmentation into parts) and sequence were the hallmarks of logical inquiry, leading scholars to assert the primacy and inherent rationality of this linear model of thought—and to extend this universal rationality to all aspects of human existence.

Simultaneously, the typographic intensification and valuation of the visual led to increased emphasis upon the nature of perspective and with it, the difference between the seer and seen, knower and known. As a result, modern rationalists asserted the autonomous nature of the individual self, severing it from other selves and the external world; they thereby effected an absolute distinction between the inner, subjective world and the outer, objective world. Rationalists consequently viewed the world as a neutral container for all human activity, one whose outlines and features could be discovered and known through careful application of rational thought. However, the production of this knowledge faced two key questions: (1) What

makes knowledge possible, given the distance between self and world, and (2) how can an inquiry ensure that it produced objective knowledge of the external world, unaffected by the distortions of subjectivity? Correspondence theory was an account of language that attempted to address these twin concerns and thereby guarantee the foundations of rationalist inquiry.

According to the tenets of correspondence theory, the primary purpose of language is to assist in the pursuit of knowledge—by bridging the gap postulated between human beings and the external world. As an intermediary, language operates in the space between the human mind and its surroundings; it is by means of language that we are able to connect the inner world of the self to the objective world of nature and society. On this account, words correspond to particular, identifiable elements of the objective, external world; the meaning of a word is the corresponding aspect of reality that it designates. To learn a language, then, is to learn the proper word–world relationships for a particular social grouping; to use language properly is to use the words that accurately reflect a particular external state of affairs. According to correspondence theory, this indicates the valuable function that language plays: to provide its users with an accurate picture or representation of reality. Correspondence theory cautions that vigilance is necessary to ensure the accuracy of linguistic correspondence—but since words refer to elements of reality, they can be checked against the data provided by perception. In this way, language provides the foundation needed for the creation and transmission of rational, scientific knowledge about the world.

This last statement indicates a secondary function of language, according to the tenets of correspondence theory. Since language is a medium used to designate a particular state of affairs in the external world, it simultaneously provides the means of connection between the inner, subjective worlds of two or more persons. This linking of subjectivities is possible because language anchors private thought to the public, external world. As long as all persons involved share a common language, there should be no problem of misunderstanding—since the words exchanged correspond to specific aspects of the common, objective world. Language spans the distance between selves, in other words, connecting these private subjectivities through

symbolic reference to a shared reality. To the extent that a speaker correctly matches his or her words to his or her intent (i.e., the aspect of reality he or she wishes to indicate to another), his or her inner world will become accessible to the other.

Correspondence theory, although tied to particular movements in the philosophy of language (especially in Anglo American philosophy), has become the commonsense, everyday understanding of language and meaning in the West. However, a number of scholars over the last 100 years have offered critical responses to this theory, proposing alternate theories of meaning and language. Media ecologists contend that this is one of the results of new electric forms of media—their instantaneous nature encouraged scholars to reflect not on temporal sequence of discrete units, but on holistic patterns and contexts. Thus, the increasingly dominant electric forms of media revealed the integrative phenomenon of language in a way never before possible. This entry will conclude by briefly treating three of the most important of these alternate meaning theories for the discipline of communication: (1) semiotics, (2) context theories of meaning, and (3) symbolic interactionism.

Three Influential Meaning Theories

Semiotics

Semiotics is an approach to questions of meaning that has played a significant role in the development of communication theory, especially in media studies and in visual communication. Although there are multiple approaches to and definitions of the field of semiotics, they all share one central commonality: reframing the study of language and meaning as the study of signs. This emphasis upon the sign can be traced as far back as St. Augustine of Hippo (in the 4th century), but its modern formulation is attributable to two late 19th-century figures: Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce. These two thinkers offered strikingly different approaches to the study of signs, but both agree that correspondence theory offers an inadequate account of the workings of language.

Unlike Peirce, who was interested in both natural and cultural semiosis—the process of relating signs to persons and things—Saussure’s approach is founded in a rigid distinction between natural processes and the cultural realm of human

symbolic activity. He refused to recognize the semiotic nature of natural processes, instead limiting his science of signs, or semiology, to analysis of the workings of language. In direct contrast to correspondence theory's linkage of word and world, Saussure argues that language does not have a direct relationship with reality. He instead describes language as a system of signs; further, he defines the sign as composed of a relationship between two central elements: the sound pattern (or signal or signifier) and the concept (or signification or signified). Saussure thus argues that meaning is not the element of reality designated by a word, but a relation between two psychological phenomena—the signal and signification. Further, the sign relationship, the indissoluble connection between signal and signification, is an arbitrary one—not arbitrary for an individual user, but contingent upon social conventions linking the two. Thus language reflects not reality, but the linkages between signal and signification common to a particular social group. For Peirce, by contrast, the sign relationship is triadic, uniting a sign vehicle, a semiotic or signified object, and an interpreter, to or for whom the relation exists. However, in both cases, the question of meaning is shifted away from an external, objective world (as in correspondence theory) and toward a relationship of representation that constitutes the meaning of the sign.

Subsequent theorists, most notably Roland Barthes, extend the sign relationship to the study of visual communication, arguing that photographs, advertisements, and televisual or filmic images are structured like a language—and therefore can be analyzed as chains of signification designed for both aesthetic and economic purposes. Others, including figures typically referred to as postmodernists (such as Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and Jean Baudrillard) critique the approaches to meaning of both correspondence theory and semiotics, celebrating the polysemy, or multiple nature, of meanings and the indeterminacy and undecidability of reference. They argue that even the semiotician's attempts to establish linguistic representation are undermined by an inability to maintain the distinction between signifier and signified. These reactions to semiotics thus represent an even more radical challenge to the tenets of correspondence theory.

Context Theories of Meaning

Context theories of meaning have been influential in a variety of subfields within the communication discipline, including rhetorical studies, organizational communication, and intercultural communication. This approach was first championed by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards in their widely read book, *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923), and later clarified by Richards in essays detailing a context theory of meaning. Ogden and Richards's perspective was originally (and specifically) offered as a rejection of correspondence theory's view of meaning. In contrast to the belief that a meaning is an aspect of reality picked out by a particular word, Ogden and Richards argue that meaning is dependent upon the user of the word. They argue that an adequate model of meaning requires three terms: symbol, referent, and the thought or reference of the person engaged in symbol use. In other words, there is a direct relationship between one's thought of something and that something; there is also a direct relationship between the thought of something and the symbol chosen to reference that thought. However, the symbol user mediates the relationship between symbol and referent—so there is no direct link between word and world, apart from the person whose thought (indirectly) links them.

Ogden and Richards contend that it is inattention to this indirect relationship between symbol and referent that leads scholars (and laypeople) to ignore the centrality of meaning in discourse and the ever-present threat of misunderstanding. They argue that the linkage that each language user draws between symbol and reference is dependent upon his or her experiential history. As Richards explains, language functions to summarize, or stand for, recurring, linked elements of a language user's experience—or otherwise said, language summarizes contexts previously experienced. As a result, the connection that a language user draws between a symbol and a referent is dependent upon his or her experience of significant contexts. Since no two human beings share the same experiences—or agree on the most salient details of those experiences—no two human beings use language in the same way, making meaning a matter of individual difference, not external reference.

This theory of meaning provided the impetus for the work of a later 20th-century theorist,

Kenneth Burke. He cites Richards's discussion of context to offer a constitutive theory of language. Reversing the relationship between word and world posited by correspondence theory, he argues that things are the signs of words. Burke defends this unorthodox view by arguing that human beings use language to entitle their (nonverbal) context *of* situation. In other words, human beings use words to abbreviate or distill the endless complexity of experience, grouping the details of a situation into a heading; as entitled by that linguistic heading, the language user's experience is constituted as a type or kind of situation. This is the primary way that all language works—it designates, highlights, and unites aspects of experience, thereby constituting it *as* something meaningful.

Further, this act of entitlement reflects the language user's culture since its values, rules, and hierarchies will determine the salience of situational details and will delimit the situational typology drawn upon in the act of entitlement. As a result, for Burke, the world of experience is less a product of nature than of culture; human beings experience not an independent, external, objective world, but a once natural, once nonverbal context that has been given a particular character through an act of social-symbolic entitlement. Language, then, does not refer to the natural world; the natural world instead reflects the values and assumptions of the symbolic, cultural realm. Correspondingly, Burke sees meanings as the texture of relationships, cultural, experiential, and symbolic, which are summarized in and constituted by language. This discussion of the relationship between culture, meaning, and context has influenced scholars in rhetorical studies, but has also been appropriated by theorists of communication and culture, especially Clifford Geertz and Dell Hymes.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism, the name given to a theoretical perspective primarily derived from the writings of George Herbert Mead, played a very important role in the development of theories and scholarship in interpersonal communication. Like semiotics and the context theory of meaning, symbolic interactionism represents an alternative to the account of meaning and language offered by correspondence theory. Indeed, symbolic interactionism begins with root assumptions quite different from

those described earlier (when discussing correspondence theory). For symbolic interactionists, human beings are first and foremost social beings—individual identity is not only emergent (rather than given), but it also is a social, symbolic product. Further, human beings are conceptualized as actors, necessarily engaged with others in a communal, symbolic world that is always already meaningful.

The discussion of language and meaning offered in the work of symbolic interactionism reflects this sharp difference in starting point. For symbolic interactionists, meanings are never individual; instead, they are social or communal agreements regarding the proper use of words. More significantly, symbolic interactionism rejects a referential account of language and meaning. According to this perspective, the meaning of a word is not an object, but is the response that it generates. To understand the meaning of something is to understand how to act or behave toward it—how to draw the object into one's own future conduct—not to have an accurate reflection of a preexisting reality. Meanings are shared, then, to the extent that interactional partners harmoniously coordinate their activity in regard to one another and their shared situation. This understanding of meaning as behavioral and directed toward the future places the question of meaning squarely in the realm of shared, social interaction. Whether one is engaged in a simple conversation of gestures or an exchange of shared symbols, the meaning of another's conduct is the future action he or she will take; therefore, meanings are asserted, imputed, challenged, and altered through the give-and-take of mutual activity. Meanings, as social products, are learned, used, and generated in interaction with others. These meanings are then drawn upon by individual actors as they navigate the world of everyday life and activity. Since the symbolic-interactionist account places communication at the forefront of social life, it has been embraced by a wide variety of scholars in their studies of communicative interaction in interpersonal, group, and organizational contexts.

Bryan Crable

See also Culture and Communication; Language and Communication; Medium Theory; Semiotics and Semiology; Symbolic Interactionism; Visual Communication Theories

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MEDIA AND MASS COMMUNICATION THEORIES

When people think of the media, they primarily think of one of the most popular leisure activities in the world: watching television. However, there are many other forms of media, or mediums, which must be examined when studying mass communication. Until recently, defining mass media was easy. Mass media were comprised of eight traditional industries: books, newspapers, magazines, recordings, radio, movies, television, and the Internet. Recent technological advances and societal changes, however, challenge traditional definitions of mass communication. Mass communication theories have also evolved with the changing nature of the media.

Although the definition of mass communication can vary from source to source, most definitions have similar elements. Mass communication is often described or explained by comparing it to interpersonal communication, when a source encodes a message and sends it to a receiver via both verbal and nonverbal messages who then decodes the message and provides feedback. In interpersonal communication, the source and receiver are typically individuals, the channel is typically face-to-face, and the communication is typically private. Feedback is generally direct and immediate.

Mass communication, however, is the process by which a person, group of people, or large organization creates a message and transmits it through

some type of medium to a large, anonymous, heterogeneous audience. In mass communication, the source is typically a professional communicator or a complex organization that incurs a great cost. The message is typically rapid and public. And, as stated, the receiver is generally large, heterogeneous, and anonymous. Feedback in mass communication is generally indirect and delayed.

New technology, however, tends to blur the lines between traditional interpersonal communication and mass communication. With a good computer and basic computer skills, a single individual can publish his or her own professional looking magazine. With the trend towards narrowcasting in the broadcast and cable industries, the audience is becoming less anonymous and less heterogeneous. And with Internet channels designed to show unique content, the audience can be relatively small.

There are also some questions as to whether other, nontraditional forms of communication should be considered when examining mass communication. For example, some researchers feel cell phones should be included in the definition of mass communication. At first look it may appear that the cell phone does not fit our definition because it is usually used for person-to-person communication. However, most current cell phones have Internet access and are able to connect to the Web, which is typically included in mass communication. The question is, then, does this make the cell phone a mass medium? Researchers disagree on the issue.

History of the Study of Mass Communication

Scholars have been studying the media and mass communication for over a century. Although newspapers had been around for many years, it was the introduction of film and radio that ushered in the academic study of the media as a form of communication. It is with radio and film that literacy was no longer a barrier for enjoying the benefits of the media. The first films were made at the end of the 1800s and in the early 1900s. The first official radio station began operations on November 2, 1920, on the top of Hornes department store in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The 1920s saw a rapid growth in both film and radio as a form of popular entertainment.

There are three paradigms by which the media have been examined. The first paradigm, called the

powerful effects paradigm, viewed the media as very strong and powerful; it governed from around the 1920s to the 1940s. Researchers felt that the media (primarily radio and television) had a very immediate and direct impact on audiences. The assumption was that the audience was passive and uncritical. Research during this timeframe generally supported the powerful effects paradigm. Perhaps the most famous large-scale examination of the media was The Payne Fund Studies, a series of 13 studies undertaken between 1929 and 1932 that focused on the effects of movies on young people. The results of these studies showed that there were strong and powerful effects of viewing movies on children. However, current researchers generally dismiss the results of these studies due to numerous methodological errors.

The second paradigm, often referred to as the minimalist effects or the limited effects paradigm, began in the 1940s and ended in the 1970s. Perhaps no study was more influential in the paradigm shift from powerful effects to limited effects than one conducted by Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues on the influence of the media in the 1940 presidential election. The researchers found that the mass media had little direct influence on voting behavior and that it was interpersonal communication with others that had a far greater influence. The media tended to reinforce existing behaviors rather than change them. Reinforcing this paradigm, Wilbur Schramm conducted a series of well-publicized, multiyear studies on the effects of television on children. Results of Schramm's work showed that there is a complex relationship between children's television viewing and subsequent behavior. He found it difficult to predict the effect of watching television and questioned the causal relationship between watching television and negative effects. There were many variables that would influence this relationship, including the child's age, mental ability, and social situation.

Changes in society and in communication technology in the 1960s ushered in the third paradigm, often called the cumulative effects paradigm. An increase in the number of households with television, violent images of the civil rights movement, and a number of new theories of media exposure caused a reevaluation of the perception of the effects of media exposure. It is during this time that theories of long-term influence such as social learning

theory (social cognitive theory) and cultivation theory were developed. Researchers no longer saw the effects of the media as limited or directed and immediate, but they did see the effects as cumulative and powerful. It was the first time that children had been exposed to television all their lives, and it was thought that this constant, long-term viewing of violent or negative images would have profound effects on viewers. This paradigm was supported by research during this time period, and the idea of long-term, cumulative effects of mass media is generally supported today.

Mass Communication Theories

There are a number of theories, some specific to mass communication and some more general theories that have been examined when studying the mass media. A majority of the theories used developed outside of the field of communication and then were applied to the media by communication scholars. Although it would be impossible to mention all the theories in this short entry, I will outline three broad categories of media theories and briefly explain some of the major theories in each category. This list, by no means exhaustive, includes some of the most common theories used by media scholars in the last 50 years.

Theories About Culture and Society

The first category includes theories based on the media's effects on culture and society. Many of these theories can be applied to things other than mass media and mass communication. However, all have been used to examine the media's influence on the world around us. Most of these theories focus on macrolevel media effects on culture and society.

Media systems dependency theory is a systems-based theory that examines the mutual dependence between the media system, the political system, and the general public. According to this theory, each member of the dependency triad is dependent upon and has influence over the other two. Each has influence over the other, yet each needs the other to exist. For example, the political system needs the media system for information dissemination and publicity and needs the general public for legitimacy and for votes during the election season. The general public needs the political system for authority

and structure and needs the media system for entertainment and information. Those who examine the media from a dependency perspective argue that any systemwide examination of the media should be examined through these dependencies.

Agenda-setting theory attempts to explain how the general public determines the most important issues of the day. According to agenda setting, the media do not necessarily tell people what or how they should think about an issue. However, the media (and specifically the news media) can influence people's perception as to what is important to consider and talk about. The more someone sees an issue being covered in the news, the more this person will feel this is an important issue. So the influence is not in the direction as would be expected—from the individual to the media. It is not the individual that sets the media agenda, it is the media coverage of an issue that sets the public agenda. This becomes increasingly distressing given the criteria that news organizations use to determine the newsworthiness of a story.

Spiral of silence is a theory of public opinion. The theory is based on the assumption that people do not like to feel isolated and that society tends to isolate those with deviant or novel positions not congruent with prevailing thought. Because we fear isolation, we constantly assess the situation around us and the perceptions of people with whom we interact. If our opinion is that of the dominant majority, we speak out and give our opinion. If our opinion is deviant from the dominant majority, we are more likely to keep our opinion to ourselves. This could eventually lead to an actual change in our position. The spiral of silence focuses on how different or deviant opinions are suppressed in our society.

Knowledge gap hypothesis looks at the role of and use of communication technology in society. According to those who study this hypothesis, the general public can be split into two segments: the information rich and the information poor. The information rich are those of a higher socioeconomic status that tend to be wealthier, better educated, and have greater knowledge on a variety of issues than those who are information poor. The information rich have better access to technology and are more technologically savvy. When a new technology is introduced, the information rich tend to acquire information and adopt the new technology at

a faster rate than the information poor. Therefore, the gap between the two population segments tends to increase rather than decrease. This concept is very similar to the digital divide.

Cultural imperialism typically focuses on how Western nations dominate the media around the world and how this domination can have powerful effects on other cultures. According to the theory, the importing of cultural products (primarily film and television) by smaller, less-developed countries can have the unintended effect of imposing Western values and ideology—inherently imbedded in cultural products—on the importing country. This can then have relatively large, macrolevel effects on the host country by Americanizing it, changing or destroying the local culture.

Critical cultural studies theories focus on the social role of mass media and how the media can be used to define power relations among various subcultures and maintain the status quo. Critical cultural studies researchers examine how the media relate to matters of ideology, race, social class, and gender. The media are seen not only as a reflection of culture, but also as cultural producers themselves. The emphasis is on how political and social structures influence mediated communication and how this affects power relations by maintaining or supporting those with power in our society.

Theories of Influence and Persuasion

Another category of theories focuses on how the media can influence or persuade people to think or behave in a particular way. This is perhaps the most often researched area of the mass media. Although there are a number of theories that can be applied to this area, below are descriptions of four of the more common theories used in the study of mass media.

Social cognitive theory, developed primarily by psychologist Albert Bandura in the 1960s, focuses on how and why people tend to model what they see in the media. It is a theory that focuses on our capacity to learn without direct experience. This observational learning is dependent upon a number of things including the subject's ability to understand and remember what he or she saw, identification with the mediated character, and the circumstances that would lead up to the modeling of this behavior. Social cognitive theory is one of

the most often cited and examined theories applied to the study of the media and mass communication.

Cultivation theory research began towards the end of the 1960s in reaction to the turmoil from the civil rights and women's movements being presented in the news. According to cultivation researchers, television is the primary storyteller in today's society and has become the primary source of socialization for people today. Television also presents a mainstream, homogenous view of the world. There are consistent themes such as high levels of violence, stereotypical gender roles, and the virtual nonexistence of the elderly that cross all program genres. The more someone watches television, the more he or she will perceive television reality as the same as real life. Therefore, heavy television viewers feel the world is a more dangerous place, place a stronger emphasis on traditional gender roles, and underestimate the number of elderly people at greater rates than light television viewers.

The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) examines the ways in which people are persuaded. According to the ELM, there are two routes to persuasion: the central route and the peripheral route. If persuasion takes place via the central route, critical examination of the situation has occurred, and the best decision with the available facts is made. For example, a student deciding whether to go to a study group or to stay home would examine all the facts and decide that it would be better for his grade if he attended the study group. If a peripheral route is taken, some decision rule other than critical thinking is used. In this example, this person could be persuaded to go to a study group because all his friends want to go to a study group. The decision rule here would be majority rule. Little critical thinking would occur. Persuasion via the central route tends to last longer and be more salient than persuasion via the peripheral route.

Desensitization is one of the most often cited media theories by the popular press. According to desensitization, repeated exposure to violent or sexual images reduces the initial negative reaction to these images, and viewers tend to eventually become comfortable viewing those images. Viewers are no longer bothered by seeing somebody murdered or raped on television. The fear, then, is that these viewers will then not have the feelings of concern, empathy, or sympathy toward victims of

actual violence. Additionally, desensitized viewers may end up seeing these deviant or criminal behaviors as normal and common.

Media Use Theories

The final category focuses more on the motives for using the media rather than directly examining effects. Perhaps the most studied theory in this category is uses and gratifications theory, which focuses not necessarily on the effects of media exposure, but more on the reasons why we choose to expose ourselves to specific forms of media. According to uses and gratifications researchers, media users are active and choose a medium to satisfy a specific need. If a user needs information, her or she could read the newspaper, watch television, listen to the radio—whatever medium will best meet the need for information. An inherent assumption here is that we all have functional alternatives. If the need is entertainment, the user may choose another medium. These different patterns of media choice can eventually lead to different patterns of exposure and effects.

Mass Media and Politics

Important to note here is that the study of mass communication can often be political in nature. A number of highly publicized events such as the school shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, have caused the public and more importantly, politicians to try to find an answer to why and how these things can happen. We want to know why seemingly normal, well-adjusted high school boys could commit such a heinous crime and then kill themselves. As in other high-profile mass murder cases, the media were blamed in the attempt to find an easy answer to the question of why this happened. The media are often blamed for various negative aspects of our society including crime and sexual violence.

Although research indicates that the media can play a small role in these issues, it is clear that a number of variables can lead a person to become violent, including the person's history, personality, upbringing, and other events that have shaped that person's life. The media are one aspect of this complex relationship. The media, however, are often a

convenient scapegoat for those looking for an easy answer or for something or someone to blame. Anyone knowledgeable about the effects of media should recognize this as a fallacy and understand that the media are just part of a large group of variables that should be examined when studying violence in society.

Summary

The definition of media and mass communication is in a state of flux. New communication technologies are blurring the lines and altering the definitions. New theories are being developed to address the changing nature of the media. The theories discussed here are just a sample of the ways at which researchers try to understand the media and their influence on our lives.

Kevin J. Pearce

See also Advertising Theories; Agenda-Setting Theory; Audience Theories; Broadcasting Theories; Cultivation Theory; Cultural Studies; Elaboration Likelihood Theory; Film Theories; Media Effects Theories; New Media Theory; Spiral of Silence; Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency; Violence and Nonviolence in Media Studies

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MEDIA DEMOCRACY

The meaning of media democracy is often taken to be self-evident. It is widely assumed that in democratic societies, the media play an important role in monitoring, maintaining, and extending democracy. In a democracy, the media are expected to encourage transparency and accountability and to act as the eyes and ears of citizens. Democracy itself is described as a system of rules based on universal adult franchise, the sovereign power of the people, collective decision making, constitutional rights and guarantees, and the rule of law. Although the press has traditionally been ascribed the role of watchdog, other media including public-service broadcasting, community media, and in recent years, new forms and uses of information technology and Internet-based media have been celebrated for their role in, and contributions to, the democratization of society. Community and public service broadcasting have, for example, lobbied on behalf of prisoners of conscience, women's rights, and the rights of children; in addition, investigative journalism has played an important role in uncovering scandal and corruption in high places. Democratic media in many parts of the world have exposed the gaps between politics as principle and politics as practice. The power of media democracy can best be illustrated by the fact that there are examples of media reporting that have played a critical role in the fall of governments.

Democratic media not only are involved in informing, educating, and entertaining, but also are expected to exercise a social function: to lobby and advocate for social change both within the confines of a country and beyond it. However, extraterritorial media advocacy remains a contested and sensitive issue for most governments. And yet in a

globalizing world in which the media themselves are global entities, it can be argued that the media cannot shy away from being involved in global forms of advocacy. Whether or not this role has diminished over the years remains a contested issue. Examples of such media advocacy include the role played by Western media in supporting the case of the Nigerian activist Ken Saro Wiva and more recently that of the prisoner of conscience Aung San Su Kyi in Myanmar (Burma). The theories of media democracy relate to a number of theoretical traditions including media and communication, communication and social change, public service broadcasting, global media governance, media and politics, new media theory, women and media, and the political economy of communication, among other traditions.

Democracy and Democratization

There is an important difference between democracy and democratization. Postcolonial scholars in particular have observed that the dominant tradition of democracy and its links to the public sphere was the common experience of a select group of countries in Europe that had experienced the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution and that had embraced Modernity. In other words, it has been argued that the dominant tradition of democracy is Western. Postcolonial impositions of democracy have had chequered history in countries in Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia. The term *democratization* is often used to describe the progressive betterment of any given sector in society resulting in equity, empowerment, and social change. Democratization refers to a process of social change that is engendered in context and based on local requirements and needs. The democratization of the media or media democratization refers to the reform of existing media; the creation of an accountable, balanced media sector; and the use of the media to bring about progressive, social change. A balanced media sector is reflected in provisions for equal space for different kinds of media—commercial, public, and community—and legislation that restricts monopoly and enables diversity.

Media Ownership and Corporate Control

In recent years, particularly in the wake of economic liberalization and the deregulation, privatization,

and commercialization of the media, the power of media monopolies has increased throughout the world. The repeal of cross-media ownership rules has led to the emergence of a handful of media giants owning vast swaths of media real estate. Between them, Time Warner, Bertelsman, Viacom, Disney, and News Corporation own the world's most lucrative media real estate that includes the press, television, radio, the music industry, cable, satellite, and the Internet. These transnational media giants are complemented by a number of dominant regional and national media corporations.

The current state of global media ownership is a key issue in discussions on media democracy. News Corporation's ownership of 60 to 70% of newspaper circulation in the United Kingdom and Australia (see Gorman's "A \$3 Billion Gamble" and "Media Ownership in the UK"), its close association with conservative politics and social agendas, and its anodyne or noncontroversial and soothing content is often cited as a contemporary example of dumbing down. The role played by embedded journalists in the context of war reporting in Iraq has been described as a collusion between government and the media. The tendency for the media to report safe stories as well as the accent on entertainment and consumerism at the expense of hard news is evident throughout the world. Local issues including poverty, the food crisis, and unemployment are often underreported at the expense of lifestyle and business news.

There has also been an increase in the media surveillance of citizens in the post-September 11th era and invasions of privacy. Governments in some parts of the world routinely restrict cyberflows and control access. And there have been cases of new media search engines such as Yahoo and Google supporting efforts by governments to clamp down on net-based democracy advocates. Critics of media monopolies have argued that the increasing privatization and commodification of media content has led to divides between the communication rich and poor and compromised the vision of universal access, although this perspective has been countered with the argument that the profusion of media outlets and content catering to different audiences and tastes reflects greater rather than lesser media diversity.

Advocates of media democracy also point to the existence of restrictive copyright laws and the ways in which media corporations employ these

laws to limit the availability of ideas in the public domain. Lawrence Lessig from the Stanford Law School popularized the concept of creative commons precisely to counter enclosures around knowledge. This movement, supportive of media democracy, has attempted to make digitized copyrighted content accessible and offers copyright holders the option to grant users fair use of copyrighted content in exchange for attribution and acknowledgment. The public domain is a metaphor used to describe the space for and availability of ideas that can be appropriated and used by the public. The fact that the U.S. government has extended copyright terms on eleven occasions since 1978 indicates the power of media lobbies to enforce the status quo. It has also been argued that the present system of global and national media governance and in particular, the role played by the World Trade Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Internet Consortium for Assigned Names and Numbers, the International Telecommunications Union, and the Federal Communication Commission, among numerous other organizations, have favored the interests of monopoly media providers.

Media Democracy in Practice

The perceived inability of governments and media governance institutions to promote and support the conditions for media democracy has led to a variety of citizen and civil society-based projects aimed at extending media diversity and campaigns for media reform. Today, there are literally thousands of old and new media-related projects aimed at extending media democracy organized by civil society groups. This includes community radio in rural Haiti, telecom cooperatives in Argentina, information and communication technologies-based networking and e-commerce projects for women in Francophone Africa, a variety of indigenous media projects, independent media projects (Indymedia), blogging for social change, citizen journalism, and various movements for freedom of expression and the right to information in different parts of the world. Global bodies such as the World Association for Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) and the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) are involved in global governance negotiations. Although AMARC has been involved in lobbying for the recognition of and legislations in support of community radio, the APC continues to play an

important role in the democratization of the Internet through its involvement in issues related to Internet governance. Initiatives such as the Creative Licensing project offer an alternative copyright option for creative artists who do not want to be bound to restrictive copyright laws and corporate control of their knowledge. Such options offer the right to define the modalities of use of artistic products. A number of global and national freedom of expression projects have contributed to the valorization of voice and the right of people to speak up as individuals and/or via the media. The Paris-based organization Reporters Without Borders has, for example, lobbied for freedom of expression and the release of imprisoned journalists in contexts characterized by a lack of respect for media democracy. These projects have collectively contributed to the globalization of media democracy.

Media reform movements in different parts of the world have attempted to consolidate these expressions of media democracy and use the combined power of these projects to lobby for change and media reform. The lobbying and advocacy role played by the Communication Rights in the Information Society campaign at the United Nations Telecommunications Union, sponsored by World Summit for the Information Society in 2003, is an example of a civil-society based global media reform initiative.

Theorizing Media Democracy

John Keane, who wrote the classic book *The Media and Democracy*, has argued that a redefined public service model based on a plurality of nonstate media functioning as permanent thorns in the side of political power could become the basis for the revitalization of media democracy. Although Keane does support the role played by market-influenced media as a countervailing force, he is nevertheless opposed to market forces influencing in all media sectors. The political philosopher Michael Walzer, in his book *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*, develops the concept of blocked exchanges—what money cannot buy—in a way that can be used to support Keane's redefined public service model. According to Walzer, money is the dominant exchange today, and he is interested not only in what cannot be bought, but also in how one can fix boundaries to what money can and cannot buy. He lists a number

of blocked exchanges—rights, for example—that should not be up for sale, commoditized, or marketized. This concept of blocked exchange can usefully be extended to cover public service broadcasting and community media that are in contrast to the commercial character of much media and essential to and a reflection of media democracy.

Although there certainly is a need for media diversity, accessibility, and accountability, there are a number of challenges facing the project of media democracy today. Foremost among these challenges are a variety of contemporary, internal security-based government restrictions that place limits on media democracy. In the post-September 11th era, a variety of restrictions have been placed on the reporting of issues that are of public concern including issues related to terrorism and the rules of military engagement in foreign countries. There are also commercial pressures, best illustrated by moves by a number of public service media outlets, including the British Broadcasting Corporation, to privatize some of their services. However, an equally pressing challenge is the need for public awareness and education on the worth of media democracy. The media are often seen by the public as little more than a channel for entertainment. People are often not aware of the central role played by the media in the reinforcement of values that are critical to the functioning of a democracy. Media literacy can play an important role in strengthening public commitment to media democracy. It is often said that we deserve the media that we have. Although the project of media democracy requires the input of citizen's groups and the media reform movement, its long-term sustainability is predicated on broad, public support. At the end of the day, it is citizens who form and give shape to media democracy.

Pradip Thomas

See also Americanization of Media; Deliberative Democratic Theories; Free Flow Doctrine; Globalization Theories; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Media Sovereignty; New Media Theory; Neocolonialism; Rhetorical Theory

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MEDIA DIPLOMACY

International relations assesses good and bad relations, initially between sovereign states and now more recently between states and other international actors: international organizations, non-governmental organizations, individuals, and multinational corporations. International law provides the ability for nations to interact in their mutual relations based on conventions, treaties, customs, general legal principles, international judicial decisions, and scholarly writings. The study of international relations began and increased considerably after World War I, with the 1970s a time of particular attention to and growth of theories on this subject. William Slomanson suggests that there are two primary approaches to international relations: the monist approach that sees international law and national laws forming a unified, universal legal system and the dualist approach that argues that they are distinct systems, allowing states to accept or ignore international laws that conflict with their national laws.

Diplomacy is the official conduct of international relations between national leaders, conducted privately and often in secret or through public diplomacy. Diplomacy includes the establishment of foreign missions, ambassadors, envoys, and consular services. Diplomatic efforts require states to develop foreign affairs ministries, national and international policies, and the establishment of official missions abroad to implement policies and necessary personnel for the systems to work efficiently. The foreign ministry negotiates with the host government and reports on important events in the foreign country. Foreign ministries organize other activities, including international exchanges, public and media diplomacy, consular services for its citizens, and visas for foreign citizens and residents.

Dean Edmund Gullion of the Tufts University Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy identified public diplomacy in 1965 as involving all international diplomacy except direct official interactions between national governments. It includes the ways that countries or international organizations like the United Nations interact directly with citizens in other countries. The influence on foreign public attitudes and opinions includes not only government spokesmen in one country addressing the citizens of another nation, but also private groups communicating with citizens of other countries. In this way, one government's or citizen's approach to foreign affairs involves communication between diplomats and foreign citizens or foreign correspondents.

Public diplomacy supplements the transnational flow of information and ideas. Diplomatic media report on public addresses or statements and meetings at the United Nations, often with as many as 1,000 or more journalists present during the annual General Assembly meetings. Currently, as many as 130 heads of state and government go to New York for the annual General Debates, with journalists reporting on the activities and debates on a global, regional, or national basis. Many other international and regional governmental and nongovernmental agencies and organizations exchange diplomats and utilize public and media diplomacy, such as the African Union, Arab League, ASEAN, European Union, G8 Countries, Organization of American States, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, and World Trade Organization. Government-sponsored programs inform or influence public opinion in other countries through publications, cinema, cultural exchanges, radio, television, the internet, art, music, drama, sports, and public exhibitions. In this sense, it is a dialogical two-way exchange between diplomats and citizens of other countries, or between citizens of various countries.

Public diplomacy is thus people centric. Public diplomacy is also called cultural diplomacy, media diplomacy, public information, internal and external broadcasting and print media, transnational news, and political influence. Increasingly, public diplomatic media also include the Internet, Web sites, chat rooms, and blogs that rapidly cross cultural, national, and regional borders.

Two cases studies demonstrate successful public and media diplomacy initiatives. The first was the

European Coal and Steel Community (which later became the European Union), established by international treaty in the 1950s. Supporters of European integration believe that the union can create greater international understanding and dialogue among European countries and serve an important outreach function to other countries. The European Union identified in 1994 three goals for media diplomacy to take into account the growing information society: (1) a world perspective that promotes and facilitates international alliances; (2) an awareness of and focus on preserving European characteristics, including its multilingualism and diversity of cultures and economies, in the midst of increasing globalization; and (3) a competitive international information system that includes adequate development of basic technologies.

Another example that exemplifies public and media diplomacy is the U.S. State Department's Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, whose stated goal is to promote mutual understanding between the United States and other nations by conducting public educational, informational, and cultural activities and by explaining American foreign policy and U.S. national interests abroad, primarily through its open and transparent media diplomacy. Among its media diplomacy endeavors is the shortwave Voice of America (VOA), its satellite 24 hour WORLDNET Television channel, as well as surrogate international broadcast services such as Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Marti directed at Cuban audiences, and Radio Free Asia. VOA presents more than 660 hours of programming weekly in more than 53 languages. The U.S. Bureau of Public Affairs and International Information Programs Office provides electronic and print materials to television and radio stations throughout the world, as well as regular position papers to foreign governments and media outlets. Cultural programs connected to U.S. embassies and consulates abroad often have an extensive paper, book, magazine, and electronic information resource center for use by foreign citizens, including, for example, Web sites for study in the United States. Thus, official diplomacy is almost always supplemented by public and media diplomacy as the visual aspect of such diplomatic efforts.

Michael H. Prosser

See also Americanization of Media; Flow and Contra-Flow; Free Flow Doctrine; Globalization Theories; Media Democracy; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Media Sovereignty; Neocolonialism; New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO); Propaganda Theory; Public Opinion Theories

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MEDIA ECOLOGY

See Medium Theory

MEDIA EFFECTS THEORIES

Media effects theories are, in essence, an umbrella term for intertwined research areas regarding the study of media audiences and effects. Although there have been disagreements about the development of the approaches and what aspects of study need to be highlighted, three main bodies of research can be extracted as the key conceptual ideas about the effects of media. They can be understood as periods in time, marked by a paradigm shift about the impact media have on audiences.

In general, the study of media effects has a history that traces its origin to late 19th-century crowd theories or mass society research. Being open to mass-communicated media influences was seen as the result of the loss of traditional institutions of authority of family, church, and state in a society that focused intensely on individuality. Understanding this irrational behavior of a mass

audience became a means for early media psychology research to ascertain the kind of satisfaction audiences derive from media use.

Period 1: Direct Effects Models

This period encompasses work in the early 20th century, roughly ending in the 1930s. Drawn from stimulus-response models from psychology, the view of the mass audience was pessimistic. With the anonymous mass replacing the community, the media were said to have enormous power to which the isolated, anonymous members of this mass audience would succumb immediately. The hypodermic needle theory or magic bullet theory expressed the original concept of the effects of media. It contended that (a) technical advances and mass production of popular culture have created a mass audience focusing on the same messages, and (b) powerful stimuli elicit an immediate, mechanical and uniform response, compatible with the sender's intentions. In other words, once the message hits or is injected into the audience, it will exert its powerful influences on everyone who processes it.

The emergence of mass broadcasting media, such as radio, motion pictures, and later television, reinforced the beliefs of media overpowering the audience, although they found support more through real-life anecdotal evidence than scientific research. For instance, on October 30, 1938 (the night before Halloween), Orson Welles, through his *Mercury Theater of the Air*, produced and narrated a radio adaptation of the science fiction story "War of the Worlds" and created with it a mass hysteria in the country, as people thought the nation was really under attack by creatures from Mars. A subsequent study conducted by a research team from Princeton University found that, while the impact of the program differed by specific audience factors, by and large most Americans had tremendous trust and confidence in the media. Since the theoretical framework for differences in audience response was nonexistent at the time, little consideration was given to factors that might have unearthed differences.

Period 2: Limited Effects Models

In 1940, researchers from Columbia University engaged in a massive project about the role of radio messages on voter behavior. The so-called

The People's Choice study by Paul Felix Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet shifted the perception of powerful effects of media to one in which the media were seen as having only minimal influences on the audience. In 1958, Joseph Klapper, a communication consultant and chief spokesperson for this new paradigm, published an influential book in which he argued that the effects of media were negligible.

The reason for media's limited effects was seen in the audience's control over selectivity processes. People can selectively expose themselves to media messages, they can selectively pay attention to certain elements of a message, they can select how to perceive or interpret a message, and they can select what to retain and recall, or learn from the media. This shift of power from the media to the audience was a result of persuasion research that found how social connections among people and individual influences of people in the communication flow network as well as other personal attributes have a limiting effect on mediated messages. Consequently, Lazarsfeld and his colleagues developed the notion of a two-step flow of media messages, a process in which opinion leaders played a vitally important role. In short, personal and social characteristics of individuals and groups lead people to choose mass communication that reflects their own beliefs. Media were thus used as reinforcement.

This idea of media engagement motivated some researchers to study the function that media served in more detail. In 1959, Elihu Katz named this approach uses and gratification research. The uses and gratification perspective, formalized in an article by Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch, aims to identify how people use media, to understand motives for media behavior, and to identify functions that follow from audience needs, motives, and behaviors. The theory is grounded in five assumptions: (1) People are motivated and purposive in their communication behavior; (2) people actively select and use media to satisfy felt needs or wants; (3) people are influenced by social and psychological factors when selecting among communication alternatives; (4) the media have to compete with other forms of communication for attention, selection, and use; and (5) people are able to articulate their reasons for using media. With the emergence of new media and technologies, this theory remains greatly interested in the different uses of different media.

Period 3: Cumulative Effects Models

With the introduction and widespread use of television—making it the dominant medium by the 1960s—scholars started to doubt whether selective exposure was still possible. A new paradigm based on more sophisticated scientific techniques (e.g., lab experiments, multimethods approaches) emerged with a renewed outlook on stronger effects. The main emphasis of these models is an overpowering of the audience's potential for limited exposure through a consistent and repetitive delivery of themes and message across media content. The difference between this and the direct effects models lies in the explanation of effects as a result of cumulative exposure to similar content rather than exposure to a single event. In other words, over time audiences start to adopt the media's framing of reality as their own representation of it.

Cultivation Theory

One example of the cumulative effects of media is cultivation theory. Proposed in 1969 by George Gerbner, it was the strongest media effects model to date since the magic bullet theory. The theory holds that through repeated, heavy exposure to television, people begin to view the world as similar to the television world. Given the emphasis on crime and violence in many programs, a heavy TV viewer will perceive the world as a more violent place than it really is. The result is a social legitimization of the media reality. Although cultivation theory primarily sees effects as cognitive (alignment of TV world with real world) and affective (fear, aggression), it has been shown to also have influences on people's behavior. Gerbner and his colleagues attribute two processes as the primary reasons for media cultivation. The first process, mainstreaming, refers to a vanishing of group differences due to similar cultivation by media messages. The second process, resonance, describes a resemblance of a person's real-life environment to the depicted media event. A person living in a high-crime neighborhood, who already fears criminal victimization, now gets a double dose of exposure to the same message. The cultivation theory has been criticized over the years but due to its posited long-term effect has been hard to either verify or falsify with methods that avoid self-reporting.

Agenda-Setting Theory

Another example for the cumulative effects of media is the agenda-setting theory. Conceptualized by Bernard Cohen, Maxwell McCombs, and Donald Shaw, it discusses the power of the news media to direct attention to certain issues. Cohen captured the essence of the agenda-setting effect when he noted that the media do not control what gets thought, but are quite powerful in dictating what gets thought about. McCombs and Shaw tested the theory originally in the context of the 1968 presidential campaign and found a remarkable similarity between the media's top issues and the agenda of undecided voters. The agenda-setting effect is based on the assumption that the media agenda actually precedes the public agenda. Moreover, the media would have to be reliable, objective, and independent of vested interests.

Due to the fact that the selection of events for inclusion in the media's agenda is influenced by prevailing interpretations of the world, agenda setting is inevitably linked to framing research. Simultaneously, media agendas are likely to also shape the frame of interpretation of a news event by the recipient. In a contemporary extension of the original theory, the second level of agenda setting, the media also suggest how the people should think about the issue. There are two types of attributes: cognitive (substantive or topical) and affective (evaluative, or positive, negative, neutral). Adopting this notion, McCombs and Shaw now contend that the media may not only tell us what to think about, but also tell us who and what to think about and perhaps even what to do about it.

Spiral of Silence Theory

This theory is based on the idea that dissidents to a prevailing (media-created) idea will not speak out against it if they perceive themselves to be in the minority and thus avoid the risk of isolation and rejection. This behavior pattern in turn leads others, maybe more moderate voices, to also keep silent since they come to believe that most people agree with the majority viewpoint. In the end, the process spirals into a relative silence and can lead to the demise of viewpoints even though they might actually be held by a substantial number of people. Created by the German media theorist

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, the spiral of silence theory connects media effects with an impact on public opinion and democratic behavior patterns.

The key association to the media is that by giving differential attention to people, events, ideas, and opinions, the media also differently confer credibility and authority. The lack of recognition for opinions leads to an accelerating process of disappearance from the public domain. The result is a seeming consensus that fails to recognize large silent majorities. Most research in this area tends to confirm that the main tendency of the media is toward consensus on what is important to know. There is somewhat of a connection of this theory to the third person effects research, according to which people believe themselves to be immune from media influences, but at the same time believe others are not.

Summary

Media effects research has been of such importance that several specialized subareas of research have developed, each armed with theories and methods for their respective topics. Among them are studies on effects of media on crime, violence, and aggression; media education, edutainment (entertainment that has an educational element or function to it); pornography; persuasion; media stereotypes and socialization; political agenda diffusion; media and fear appeals; and the impact of new media technologies.

On a more general level, the field of media effects also experienced a gradual separation of audience analysis and effects research. This is most likely the result of the multitude of influences on audience composition and media-use behavior patterns. Research by Jack M. McLeod and Byron Reeves revealed that there is no simple answer to the question of whether the media affect people; the answer depends on the type of effect in which one is interested. Their analysis classification scheme of micro- versus macrolevel effects, content-specific versus diffuse-general effects, attitudinal versus behavioral versus cognitive changes, and change versus stabilization effects has made the conceptualization of media effects more sophisticated than it was in the past.

Olaf H. Werder

See also Agenda-Setting Theory; Audience Theories; Cultivation Theory; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Spiral Models of Media Effects; Spiral of Silence; Two-Step and Multi-Step Flow; Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency

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MEDIA EQUATION THEORY

Media equation theory, developed in the 1990s by Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass, argues that we respond to communication media, media technologies, and mediated images as we do to actual people and places. At its simplest, the theory (sometimes referred to as the media equation hypothesis or simply the media equation) can be summarized as media = real life. The claim that we treat—and react to—the media in our lives not as mere tools or appliances, but as real social actors, has important implications for interpersonal and mass communication theory as well as for the disciplines of sociology, social psychology, cognitive science,

and evolutionary biology. The findings of media equation research also have direct applications for (and in fact, have been used in) fields as diverse as computer software and hardware design, political campaigning, advertising, and filmmaking.

As Reeves and Nass demonstrate in their 1996 book, *The Media Equation: How People Treat Computers, Television, and New Media Like Real People and Places*, evidence of the equation extends well beyond pleading with a recalcitrant computer, screaming with genuine fright while watching a horror movie, or yelling back at an irritating pundit on the TV screen, although such actions do provide handy illustrations of the equation in everyday life. Reeves and Nass's hypothesis is supported by the results of dozens of empirical studies conducted throughout the 1980s and 1990s to explore people's reactions to and interactions with a wide range of communication media. The most important findings come from their investigations into the realms of manners, personality, emotion, and social roles.

Method and Key Findings

To develop and test the media equation hypothesis, Reeves and Nass looked at existing social psychology studies that illustrated some rule about human-to-human interaction and then repeated those studies, substituting media for one of the humans. In virtually every case, they found that the human–human rules held for human–media interactions. Among their more important findings are the following:

Manners

We use and respond to manners when interacting with our media. For example, people are polite to a computer they have worked with when required to rate its performance face-to-face (that is, providing the evaluation via the same computer they have just worked with), but less polite—and more honest—when providing an evaluation using a different computer. People like computers that flatter them more than they like computers that do not. And people even consider computers that praise them to be superior to computers that criticize them.

Personality

People ascribe personality attributes to media and media technologies, including animated television characters and even simple line drawings—that is, anything with visual features resembling a face is almost automatically described as having personality traits. However, a face-like appearance is not always necessary for us to ascribe personality to media; even text can suggest a personality. Thus, people perceive computers that use dominant language in their text interfaces as having dominant personalities and computers that use submissive language as having submissive personalities. Moreover, dominant people prefer dominant computers while submissive people prefer submissive computers: just as we are attracted to people we perceive to be like ourselves, we are attracted to machines we perceive to be like ourselves.

Emotion

People's positive and negative emotional responses to media content mirror their responses to nonmediated life experiences. For example, people evaluate media content as positive versus negative (or good vs. bad) just as they do nonmediated content. Negative media content attracts more attention and is remembered better than positive media content, just as negative real-life content is attended to and remembered better than positive. Similarly, highly arousing or exciting media content will be better remembered than less-arousing media content.

Social Roles

Finally, Reeves and Nass found that we ascribe social roles to our media and that we respond to media in ways that reflect these imputed roles. Expertise is one such role. Content on a television set that is designated a specialist set (e.g., a TV that is labeled *news television* or *entertainment television*) is perceived as superior to the identical content shown on a set labeled as a *generalist*—and surprisingly, even the visual quality of TV programming is judged to be superior when broadcast on a so-called specialist set. Alliance is another social role that people impute to media, as illustrated by the finding that people paired with a computer on a learning task come to think of the

computer as a teammate, think more highly of the computer, and feel they have something in common with the computer.

The immediate physical presence of media technologies also affects the relative roles in which we cast them and the people who developed them. So because we directly interact with computers but usually have no such direct contact with their developers or their software designers, we respond automatically and directly to the machines themselves—that is, we think of computers—and not the programmers behind them—as the sources of their content. (Interestingly, however, when people respond to newspaper content, they do think about the newspaper as an institution and do consider its publishers, and not the paper itself, as responsible for its content.)

One of the more striking sets of social-role findings concerns the activation of stereotypical responses. Even when interacting with media technologies such as computers—machines that obviously have no actual sex or gender—people react to gender cues, responding to male-voiced computers and female-voiced computers as they do to men and women. They judge male-voiced computers to be more knowledgeable about technical subjects and female-voiced computers to be more knowledgeable about love and relationships, they take evaluations from male-voiced computers more seriously than those from female-voiced computers, and they like male-voiced computers that evaluate them more than they like female-voiced computers that evaluate them.

Explanation

Based on consistent patterns in the findings of these diverse studies, Reeves and Nass argue that the media equation is not rare, is not a reflection of confusion or naïveté, and is not limited to those people for whom interaction with media technology is something new, unusual, or infrequent. Rather, the media equation is fundamentally social and natural, rooted in a universal truth: Although our technologies are quite new, our brains are old. That is to say, the human brain has not yet evolved to respond to mediated actors and images as if they were any different from real physical objects. When something is in our presence, is visible, is audible, depicts motion, and/or conveys emotion—characteristics of virtually

all of our media technologies—we react to that something as we would react to any other entity with such presence and properties. We respond automatically to what seems to be real because there is no switch in the brain that can be thrown to distinguish between the real and mediated worlds; some 200,000 years of evolution takes precedence over 20 years of personal experience.

Accepting what seems to be real as real, however inappropriate, is automatic—and fundamentally human. Our responses to media, then, are not determined by rules about how to use a specific tool or appliance, but rather by rules that apply to interpersonal relationships with fellow actors in our social world. These responses are unconscious and natural, Reeves and Nass argue, because our media are fellow actors in our social world.

Implications

The finding that media are not simply tools or appliances, but are actual participants in our social world and that we respond to them as such, has both positive and negative implications. Computing technology can be, and is being, designed to be more polite, more friendly, and more personality driven. Indeed, recent research in the field of educational technology has used media-equation theory to assess the impact of perceived politeness on software's success in teaching and learning. At the same time, as critics have pointed out, the very media equation principles that can be used to develop more effective and user-friendly technologies—namely, our unconscious, automatic social responses to our media—can also be exploited for purposes of propaganda, manipulation, and other forms of social control.

David Weiss

See also Audience Theories; Cognitive Theories; Medium Theory; New Media Theory

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MEDIA ETHICS THEORIES

The field of media ethics encompasses a range of work that applies moral philosophy, ethics discourse, and social-science approaches for the purpose of documenting and critiquing practices in journalism, public relations, advertising, and other types of communication. Scholarship in media ethics has sought to bring various philosophical claims to bear on media practice, to construct normative frameworks for behavior, and to draw upon the philosophies of mind and technology to articulate the moral duties of communicators in a variety of contexts. For example, theoretical work in the field seeks to explore and understand the value of nonmalfeasance, or minimizing harm, in a variety of media practices and how this value might be weighed against other moral claims. More broadly speaking, communication ethics articulates moral duties stemming from verbal and mediated transactions and attempts to set forth our moral obligations residing in the communicative act. Media ethics also provides frameworks for addressing ethical dilemmas that include a variety of ethical reasoning and rhetorical strategies in media practice.

Ethics, as one of four main branches of philosophy, along with logic, metaphysics, and epistemology, generally can be divided into studies of goodness, studies of right action, applied ethics, and several other subdivisions. Ethics and communication are closely intertwined because we understand ethics to be fundamentally relational: It addresses questions of our duties as moral agents and requires us to consider the impact of our actions on others. Media-ethics theorizing is rooted

in moral philosophy, of which ethics is a branch. Although related, moral philosophy and ethics are necessarily distinct. Moral philosophy is concerned with the epistemological examination of what constitutes the good, how we might identify its intrinsic features, and how we come to know it. Moral philosophers are largely preoccupied with justifying the use of ought statements, an endeavor that dates back to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and the work of Socrates. Other more recent and contemporary moral philosophy explores the properties of goodness and how our moral judgments might be based on them.

Ethics, conversely, refers to a process of deliberation we undertake to weigh moral claims that may be in conflict in a given case; such cases are often referred to as ethical dilemmas. Philosopher Margaret Walker characterized ethics as the pursuit to understand morality in a way that highlights one's personal responsibility for values. Ethics is concerned with the strengths of our argumentation and the quality of our articulation for or against a course of action when moral claims or obligations may be invoked. In media practice, such dilemmas often involve conflicts between truth and harm, individual interests and public service, privacy and community, and so on. Ethics arises from conflict among the elements of a moral system, according to media ethicist Deni Elliott.

Communication ethics addresses questions regarding the primacy of communication in human identity and interaction. Communication involves natural processes of meaning making and construction of reality that we use to bridge internal experience (i.e., consciousness, symbolic modeling, attitude formation) and outward experience (observable behaviors, negotiated meaning, material production). The philosophy of ethics, then, situated as it is in this relational context involving interaction, interdependence and effects, finds a natural home at the nexus of the communicative act: the duties it presumes, the responsibilities it entails, and the possible harm it can contain.

Clifford Christians, a renowned media ethics theorist and pioneer of the field, traces the evolution of the discipline to 1980, with several key reports released at that time, including *Many Voices, One World: Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information and Communication Order* of United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Cultural Organization, which reviewed international media policies and issues of communication and human rights. Five years later, the field's premier U.S. journal, the *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, began publishing. Christians noted that these efforts marked a watershed for professional and academic ethics in mass communication. The field has since been steadily establishing itself as a discipline of applied ethics. Media ethics as a field also is concerned with pedagogical issues, as the topic has increasingly been incorporated into core curricula in media, journalism and communication studies programs throughout the United States.

Media ethics is largely interdisciplinary, drawing from political science, social and cognitive psychology, sociology, and audience-effects research. Methodologically, much of the work in the field rests upon philosophical explication of moral concepts for media practice as well as on qualitative analyses of media behavior and norms. Quantitative social-science methods are increasingly being used to provide more solid empirical bases for theorizing. Lee Wilkins and Renita Coleman, for example, analyzed the moral development of journalists as compared with other professions. Survey, interview, and content analysis techniques are being used not only for descriptive purposes, but also as the starting point for normative theorizing as well.

Normative Approaches

Ethics theorizing articulates moral duty and ways to examine possible effects, harms, and stakeholder interests. It draws on longstanding moral claims about our obligations as members of the human community to honor ideas of dignity, truth, and the welfare of others. In representing this work, the field of media ethics encompasses a wide range of voices, methodologies and frameworks, most notably those of Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, W. D. Ross, John Rawls, and Jürgen Habermas.

Aristotle set forth a vision of personal and public virtue that emphasizes concepts of moderation and community engagement. His idea of the virtues refers to two categories: intellectual and moral. The moral virtues in particular require us to search for a proper intermediate point between extreme examples of excess or deficiency. Aristotle also argued that while a life of contemplation of the virtues represents the highest good, it is

insufficient without corresponding social action and engagement.

Immanuel Kant's moral system, rooted in a spiritualist ethic, requires us to honor the capacity for reason and the right to free will in all individuals, regardless of our desires to accomplish certain outcomes. At the core of his system is the claim that our human capacity for reason enables us to know these duties and that freedom enables us to act on them. On these two pillars—rationality and liberty—rest his central claim that we are obligated to act morally as the only way to carry out our duties to others. By moral action, Kant meant that we test our decisions by asking whether they can be universalized—whether it would be acceptable if everyone applied the decision as a standard of behavior. This universal moral obligation requires that we treat individuals as ends in themselves and never solely as a means to attain other goals or desires we may have. To do otherwise undermines both a person's autonomy and rationality.

W. D. Ross advocated a moral system that was called intuitionist because it claimed that we had an inherent ability to recognize what our moral duties were. In his landmark 1930 book *The Right and the Good*, he argued that rightness and goodness are objective features of the world in just the way that shape, size, and mass are objective features. His theory was similar to the duty-based theories of Kant and others in that he believed we had certain prima facie obligations—standards of behavior that require us to honor several key values in all our interactions with others. They include duties of fidelity (including promise keeping and truth telling), duties of gratitude and justice, and duties of self-improvement and of not harming others. Ross's system attempts to frame dilemmas not as conflicts of moral duties, but as conflicts of reasons to do or not do something.

John Rawls argued that the principle of justice is the foundation of social order. The goal of society is not to promote the greatest good for the greatest number of people, but to promote justice. This means focusing on how a community ought to distribute scarce goods—a term that refers to just about everything that one might want to have, from wealth to opportunity to liberty to self-respect. Rawls offered a provocative rhetorical device, the veil of ignorance, to suggest what kind of decision-making process might best ensure justice in a

world of limited goods. If policymakers had general knowledge of the world yet suffered from particular ignorance about their own traits, interests, and ambitions, Rawls argued they would set social policies designed to protect the least advantaged in society, since any one of the negotiators could conceivably be among them once the veil is lifted. They would thus conceptualize justice as fairness.

Habermas has developed a theory of communicative action as the basis for mutual understanding, shared knowledge, trust and interpersonal relationships. He suggests requirements for what he has called the ideal speech situation—communication largely free from constraints and distortions and held up as a Kantian standard for ethical discourse. Individuals and social structures should strive to cultivate a healthy public sphere that advances what Habermas refers to as the fundamental principles of justice and solidarity.

Media ethics theorists also examine how John Stuart Mill's conception of utilitarianism might be an appropriate framework for assessing media norms and practices. Some ethicists argue that, as much as it informs democratic legislative action, it is ill-suited as an ethics-based framework because of its exclusive consequentialist focus and its atomistic approach to social needs. Seyla Benhabib and other feminist theorists have questioned assumptions of Western rationality in many of these approaches, instead calling for a franker intersubjectivity that respects individuals within their own sociocultural contexts yet still with an eye toward promoting universalist truths.

The articulation of a pluralistic approach that validates and prioritizes universalist values is emerging as a predominant concern in the field, with many theorists such as Clifford Christians, Michael Traber, Patrick Plaisance, and Stephen Ward arguing that Enlightenment, rights-centered and libertarian perspectives are no longer adequate frameworks for moral responsibility in media. Theorists have sought to develop ways to apply communitarian principles to media practice—to begin with claims that human identity is rooted in social relations and community networks, and that this community orientation is a key antecedent to the exercise of individual rights—to provide more balance between individual interests and the public good. Moral agency, according to this perspective, requires our system of individual rights to be in the

service of human virtue, not the other way around, and that any notion of the good, or the most virtuous of human endeavors, should take priority over a rights-based system. This is articulated by philosopher Charles Taylor, who wrote that the good always provides a basis for establishing what is right.

Christians calls for developing theory in the field more effectively in ways that are not restricted by formalist, hierarchical and Western rationality, and to formulate normative frameworks or guidelines that are not bound by the cynicism of cultural relativism, but acknowledge the range of human cultural and historical experience. In a landmark monograph surveying the field in 2008, Christians identifies nonnegotiable norms like justice, compassion, and stewardship as the basis for promoting human dignity, social change, and responsibility in media institutions.

Christians and other media ethicists are also among those refocusing the field away from questions of institutional norms and elements of professionalism and emphasizing the use of general ethics theory. In doing so, he wrote, we broaden the range of relevant questions and engage in debates regarding the role of political philosophy in public communication. Concern for institutionalizing ethical standards for professional behavior through the adoption of codes of ethics—for journalism, public relations, advertising, marketing—has shifted to efforts to link philosophy of ethics to organizational and social cultures. Christians couples this with a call for the promotion of cosmopolitanism as a normative value for setting high, accurate theoretical standards in which political theory and a focus on global values converge with a universalistic ethic that transcends tribal divisions in understanding news ethics. This global humanitarianism phase of media ethics theorizing is, according to John Ferré, the most recent of four historical periods of ferment in American media ethics history.

Articulation of questions and standards for media ethics began during the first period in the Progressive Era, when society began understanding the central role of the press and practitioners expressed concern about the need to professionalize the field. The second period emerged in the 1920s from the riotous excess of Joseph Pulitzer, William Randolph Hearst, and other “yellow” journalists when professionalization began in earnest. A key manifestation of this development was the establishment of college-level journalism training programs.

The landmark 1947 Hutchins Commission report, “A Free and Responsible Press,” ushered in the third period emphasizing concerns that the press needs to exercise a sense of social responsibility that extends beyond any profit-making motive. This phase featured the implementation of news councils and ombudsman positions at several dozen news organizations around the country, as well as regular press criticism publications such as the *Columbia Journalism Review*.

Media Sociology

Although normative theorizing is directed toward multiple levels of analysis—individual, organizational, and social—much empirical research in media ethics is focused on the individual level of analysis. Research in this area explores attitudes of media practitioners toward questions of moral autonomy, privacy, harm, and the public good. Data gathered by quantitative methods are used to explore relationships among opinion responses and demographic patterns. Research in this area also has sought to measure perceived role conceptions and the relationship between those roles and perceptions of professionalism, social responsibility and other aspects of the decision-making process. It seeks to expand theory’s predictive power in being able to anticipate how media professionals may be likely to deal with or resolve a particular type of ethical dilemma or conflict.

With this individual-level focus, much of the work of ethics-related media sociology involves the use of survey and structured interview methods to explore individual moral development, ethical ideologies, and perceptions of values such as moral autonomy and truthfulness. Social-science work in this area attempts to provide a clearer understanding of the relationship between various levels of analysis when it comes to normative communication and decision-making. Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese cautioned that routines and organizational constraints of a news organization, for example, are likely to minimize or negate the influence of personal attitudes, values, and beliefs on media content. However, others warn against ruling out any legitimate degree of autonomy in the newsroom and overestimating the power of workplace socialization. Much ethics-related empirical research, consequently, has focused on manifestations of values in content in efforts to contribute to this debate.

Media Technology

Also central to the agenda of media ethics theorizing is addressing the implications, effects, and transformative uses of communication technology. Media ethics theorists debate whether the ethics of online communication, whether persuasive or informative in intent, raise fundamentally new questions or amplify and possibly re-orient longstanding issues and concerns of privacy, transparency, trust, autonomy, and others. Digital technology places priority on interactivity, affects how people approach, understand and engage social issues, and transforms our understanding of community. Media ethics endeavors to respond to all of these issues. Questions involving the epistemology of virtual reality, the link between trust and telepresence, and normative guidelines for issues of transparency, justice, autonomy, and harm in cyberspace all represent important areas of ferment. Theorists also have explored assumptions underlying conventional binary thought processes, encouraged and embodied by communication technology, that typically frames (and limits) our ethical deliberations. Much of the work here draws upon the philosophy of technology literature of Jacques Ellul, who argued that a spirit of expedient machineness, or *la technique*, is the defining feature of modern life, and which has co-opted humanistic and ethical concerns, as well as the work of Jean Baudrillard, who argued that traditional distinctions on which we have relied—between reality and image, fact and fiction, signifier and signified—have disappeared as our reproductions of the world have become our reality.

Patrick Lee Plaisance

See also Ethics Theories; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Philosophy of Communication

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MEDIA RICHNESS THEORY

Perhaps the most influential media theory, at least for the new media (i.e., information and communication technologies), is media richness theory (MRT) proposed by Richard Daft and Robert Lengel in their seminal 1986 article. MRT initially did not consider the new media, but they have been retroactively fit into the theory's framework.

MRT argued that managers could improve performance by matching media characteristics to the characteristics of the tasks. It contended that media varied in information richness (later called media richness), defined as the ability to change understanding within a time interval. MRT theorized that four factors influenced media richness: the ability of the medium to transmit multiple cues (e.g., vocal inflection, gestures), immediacy of feedback (how rapidly the medium enables receivers to respond to messages), language variety (e.g., words, mathematics, art), and the personal focus of the medium (the ability to personalize the message to the receiver).

Richer media (such as face-to-face conversations) enable users to communicate more quickly and to better understand ambiguous messages compared to leaner media (such as written memos). Therefore, according to the theory, the use of richer media would lead to better performance on equivocal tasks—tasks that have multiple and possibly conflicting interpretations of the available information—thus presenting a challenge for participants to arrive at a shared meaning. In contrast, leaner media were better for low equivocality tasks because rich media provided communicators with too much information and superfluous messages. Thus MRT argued that the use of richer media would lead to better performance for equivocal tasks (such as deciding whether to acquire a company), while use of leaner media would lead to better performance for less equivocal tasks (such as determining customer reactions to product labels). MRT is imprecise about the definition of performance, but in later works, Daft and Lengel discuss performance in three terms: making better decisions (effectiveness), making better use of time (efficiency), and establishing shared systems of meaning (consensus among participants).

MRT began as a theory of media use, not media choice. It discussed the conditions under which each medium would be most effective, not how managers actually choose media. However, the first empirical test of MRT by Daft, Lengel, and Linda Trevino in 1987 studied media choice, not the effects of use. The research presented managers with hypothetical communication tasks and asked them to choose which medium to use to see if managers' perceptions of best media-task fit matched the predictions of MRT.

The ensuing years have witnessed numerous tests of MRT. However, most studies of MRT have used it to predict media choice, not performance, which is what MRT actually addresses. Typically, researchers have asked managers to choose which medium they would use to send a set of hypothetical messages, looking to see if the managers' espoused choices fit the propositions of MRT. Although some studies have found limited support for MRT, in most cases managers have made different choices than those predicted by MRT, picking supposedly less rich media for equivocal tasks. Thus, MRT is seldom used for understanding media choice.

There are fewer than a half dozen studies that have used controlled tests to examine the central proposition of MRT: that matching media richness to task equivocality improves performance. For example, see the 1998 study by Alan R. Dennis and Susan T. Kinney. None of these studies have found any support for MRT's arguments that matching media richness to task equivocality improves performance. Thus, MRT is seldom used for understanding the performance impacts of media use.

Despite the empirical evidence to the contrary, MRT still enjoys high face validity among managers. There is an intuitive belief that richer media should be better than leaner media for equivocal tasks and that this should influence the media people choose. Although MRT is a well-established theory, it should be used with care given the paucity of empirical support for it.

Alan R. Dennis

See also Computer-Mediated Communication; Group Communication Theories; New Media Theory; Organizational Communication Theories

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MEDIA SOVEREIGNTY

Are media today able to maintain their autonomy and independence and contribute to the public sphere, functioning as the Fourth Estate. In the United Kingdom, it was traditionally held that the business of government was carried out by three estates consisting of the Lord's Spiritual (the clergy), the Lord's Temporal (hereditary peers and nobility), and the House of Commons (consisting of the representatives of citizens); the press or journalism was described as the Fourth Estate, with the specific task of monitoring the government and making it accountable—hence, its watchdog function. Theories of media sovereignty deal with the degree to which the media are autonomous and independent in light of government interference, commercial requirements, antiterrorism legislation, and the demands of foreign policy. The gagging of media coverage of the war in Iraq through the institutionalization of embedded journalism and other means illustrates the point.

The concept of sovereignty *per se* derives from attempts by historians and political scientists to understand the basis of state formation. This basis is often traced back to the Peace of Westphalia (1648) that legitimized the sovereignty of a number of states in Europe after the 30 Years War and specifically legitimized a state's claim to its territorial boundaries and to its authority to rule, claim allegiance, and exercise authority within that territory. This meaning of sovereignty has been contested by the rise of supranational states such as the European Union, multilateral trade and governance institutions such as the World Trade Organization, and entities that are part of the UN system that have increasingly whittled away at state sovereignty.

But can sovereignty be used to describe the state of the media given that media, irrespective of their type, exercise at best power over consumers rather than citizens? One can argue that the media, unlike the state, have at best experienced relative sovereignty, given that state, public, and commercial media have had to compete for audience allegiances and have been restrained by a variety of domestic and international legislations. Although the doctrine of the free flow of information certainly contributed to the globalization of information and media and strengthened the influence of

global media cartels, the sovereignty of these organizations derived from the political support that they received from colonial and postcolonial governments, erstwhile and contemporary global hegemony such as the United Kingdom and the United States. The primary issue, then, of media sovereignty is whether sovereignty derived from discourses relating to the state can be applied to an understanding of the media. Should the concept of sovereignty derived from discourses related to the state and used to make sense of the power of the state to maintain its borders, territory, and integrity as a nation be used to understand the role of the media that is primarily one of supporting and extending the public sphere?

Second, there is the issue of whether sovereignty restricts understandings of the role of the media in society today and offers room for both authoritarian and regulatory justifications for media control. There is also the need to recognize the limits to media sovereignty in the light of media diversity, audience diversity, a proliferation of new media platforms, and multiple media roles in contemporary society. Third, there is a need to understand the complexity of media sovereignty in a context characterized by transnational media, increasing international trade in media products, the strengthening of global media governance, the accentuation of global information and communication flows, and in response to all this, varying attempts by nation states to both liberalize and protect domestic and international media markets and flows of information and communications. Furthermore, the satellite and cable revolution, the Internet, global networking, and the accentuation of global flows of information and communication have all contributed to a diminishing of the explanatory potential of the concept. The conceptual frameworks of media sovereignty overlap with and relate to media democracy, media imperialism, the political economy of communications, media ethics, and media identity, to name only a few.

Issues around media sovereignty were first explored by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) MacBride Commission in the early 1980s. Contemporary media consolidations and attempts by authoritarian governments to restrict transborder information and communication flows have reawakened interest in this concept. The MacBride Commission,

chaired by the Irish Noble peace-prize recipient Sean MacBride, was asked to write a report on the state of communications in the world.

Although international media flows from the developed to the developing world were once considered to have a detrimental impact on national and cultural sovereignty, today the unhindered reception of global information and communication is deemed to be measure of media sovereignty. One of the interesting facets of media sovereignty today is that its most vociferous supporters are often those who are otherwise opposed to each other—the political Left that continues to be concerned with the negative impact of media imperialism and the Right that is concerned with the negative impact of mediated values and its implications for national and cultural identity.

Although there are any number of research findings from within the media-imperialism school that reveal the extent of information and media domination and consequently threats to national sovereignty, research has also revealed contra-tendencies. In the presatellite and cable era, some countries at the receiving end of global cultural flows resisted cultural and media imperialism through limiting the imports of audio-visual products such as Hollywood film via a quota system, subsidizing local film production and creating a market for local media fare. Today, except for a handful of countries that continue to monitor and restrict access to cross-border media flows, most countries have either completely withdrawn or lowered the barriers related to cross-border media flow. Quotas for Hollywood film imports to India, for example, have been withdrawn, and issues related to media sovereignty have largely receded in the context of the emergence of a strong and diverse domestic media market.

Issues related to media sovereignty are not as prominent as they once were. Although advocates of communication rights do focus on sovereignty issues related to Internet governance, the tendency in media research today is to focus less on media and cultural imperialism and more on the global flows of cultural products and cultural labor, the globalization of media production, local adaptations, hybridity, and the mediation of cultural identities. That UNESCO's Convention on Cultural Diversity does make the case for trade in audio-visual products to be treated differently from trade in nonmedia goods and services, however, suggests

that media sovereignty is still an issue of contemporary global concern. This convention describes media products as a vector of national identity, a view that is shared most prominently by the French and Canadians.

Pradip Thomas

See also Free Flow Doctrine; Media Democracy

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MEDIUM THEORY

Medium theory is concerned with the fixed features of the channels of communication and how these features are distinguished psychologically and sociologically from other media. The theory examines the relationship between human senses that are required to use a medium and the structure of the medium itself. We do not experience the world directly, but through different media of communication. These media filters—oral, typographic, and electronic—determine what we know and how we know it. The emphasis is not on the content of media (e.g., sex, violence, entertainment), but on the nature and structure of media and how these alter thinking and social organization. Typical issues for media theorists concern the complexity of the medium of communication, what senses (visual, aural, vocal) are activated to attend to the medium, how messages are constructed, the speed and directionality of the medium, and how all of these have social and psychological influence.

The influence of medium theory issues is at both the individual and the social levels. On the individual level, medium theorists study how medium choice influences a communicative situation between

people. For example, it is a different experience and different senses are activated if an employer fires an employee by sending him or her a letter as opposed to speaking to him or her face-to-face, even if the content of each message is the same. A computer-mediated interpersonal relationship has medium influences that affect the relationship and differentiate it from a face-to-face relationship. On the social level, medium theories note how changing patterns of social interaction attributable to medium differences (e.g., Internet, cell phones, Blackberries) change social structure in general. Thus, the Internet has altered the speed, storage, and availability of information and created an information class including changed patterns of reading. Facebook has influenced social capital, or the resources accumulated through the relationships among people, and allows for the formation of new social networks. The major issues in medium theory are its historical development, the principles of media epistemology (the impact of predominant media on human thought and knowledge), and its social effects.

History of Medium Theory

Marshall McLuhan and Harold Innis are most associated with medium theory. Innis analyzed historical social changes by associating them with the dominant medium of the time. He correlates human history with communication technology. Innis showed how political power was possible by information monopolies. Early church scribes, for instance, controlled religious information—including ideas about behavior, morality, salvation, and obedience—and thus exercised political control. But the invention of a new communication medium, namely the printing press, made for wider availability of religious information and resulted in new interpretations that ultimately undermined church authority.

Innis was responsible for numerous important insights about the social effects of media. He explained how highly specialized media that required skill and training, such as writing in the 15th century or early computers, served primarily special interests and elites who had the time and resources to master the media. On the other hand, media that are inexpensive, easily learned, and available to everyone (writing in the 20th century, Internet) have democratizing effects. The invention of the printing

press in the 15th century laid the foundation of the Enlightenment in the 18th century. Innis also illustrates how the dominant medium in a culture determines its stability. Accordingly, stone carvings are permanent and difficult to revise and thereby associated with long lasting conservative cultures. In contrast, modern electronic communication systems facilitate speed, the movement of messages across great distances, decentralization of information, and cultural change.

McLuhan was influenced by Innis and extended his perspective. McLuhan argued that the human senses were important to the communication process and that media extended the senses. Media technology, according to McLuhan, extends the self into interaction with the medium. Hence, television allows us to see beyond the limits of biology. The telephone does the same for hearing. Computers and electronic media allow information to be stored (electronic data bases), manipulated (word processing), and transmitted (e-mail) far beyond the meager capabilities of human nature. McLuhan rejected the mind-body dualism and held that all knowledge was based on sensory information and that the frequency and intensity of sensory stimulation determined the nature of knowledge and experience. McLuhan's essential argument, then, was that the structure, form, and popularity of a medium were the chief ingredients of an individual's experience and social structure. He also suggested that each medium had its own character, including strengths and weaknesses, and what worked well with one medium may not work well for another. Consequently, the fixed and static nature of print does not translate well to the visual medium of television. McLuhan and Innis integrate culture and human history into medium theory and thus establish the concept of media epistemology, or how knowledge and culture are reflective of the dominant historical media.

Media Epistemology

Human history from a medium theoretical perspective is divided into three major periods—oral, print, and electronic—with each affecting the senses and the structure of culture differently. Media epistemologists argue that each historical period relies on different senses and therefore its own forms of thinking and communication. Medium theory begs

the epistemological question about how media and knowledge are linked. Orality, print, and electronic media make up what Raymond Gozzi and Lance Haynes refer to as zones of epistemology. Each zone not only represents a historical period of human development, but also results in a basic reorganization of power, information, and society.

Orality is the most organic and natural medium of communication. The human communicator is responsible for the production, transmission, and storage of knowledge. Orality is the first stage of human development at the individual and cultural level. Speech comes naturally and is learned easily by all humans. Knowledge develops through direct experience, and the grounds and warrants for knowledge emerge from group oral traditions and rituals. Memory, and all its limitations and weaknesses, is the primary mechanism of information storage and reliability. There is no separating people from their cultures and realities because there is no distinction between an individual and his or her knowledge. Language in oral cultures operates to stimulate existing meaning carried in the consciousness of known others. For that reason, clichés, epithets, and sayings are characteristic of orality. A single word or brief phrase arouses a whole network of meaning. Moreover, linguistic rhythm and pattern serve as memory devices and became the foundation for modern literature.

Change is slow in oral cultures, and they are traditional because they have no means for contact outside their own group. Their knowledge is directly semantically ratified and has accumulated over time such that it represents the group's concrete reality. Survival depends on accumulated knowledge, and challenging such knowledge with creativity and innovation is threatening. Strands of oral qualities of communication appear in many groups and families or any collection of people with close interpersonal relationships and an established group consciousness (e.g., gangs, families, religious groups, prisoners, organizations).

The invention of the printing press introduced the print or the typographic era and had different influences on consciousness from orality. Writing changed the distribution patterns of information as well as what was distributed. The printing press made it possible to store lots of information and communicate it easily to others. Writing became the dominant medium, and thus knowledge was

influenced by the nature of the printed word—visual, sequential, and fixed—such that information is more deliberate and orderly. Walter Ong explained how print was a first step in splitting consciousness and alienating individuals from communities. As literatures developed, people are separated into different informational worlds. The literate and powerful read and manipulate symbols, while others remain in their local oral community.

Print is fixed to the page and separate from human experience. It is considerably more permanent than speech. As reading became more common, it was easy to treat the printed page as objective. Moreover, writing began to develop rules and structures (e.g., grammar) for communicating ideas. Unlike the member of the oral culture, who is immersed in his or her group reality, the typographic person is more individualist and associated with rationality or step-by-step reasoning. Print made it possible to develop literatures associated with styles, authors, and intellectual property. The printing press, with all its structural and social implications, fostered scientific inquiry and the rejection of religious and traditional authority. Joshua Meyrowitz explained how these changes in thinking patterns led to a form of linearity that affected changes in architecture (e.g., buildings became more orderly), physical space (e.g., villages with winding paths became linear grid-like cities), and assembly-line production. Print remains a medium of authority (note how in a court of law a witness places his or her hand on the Bible, not a CD of the Bible).

The current electronic era is associated with numerous changes in society due to the dramatic increase in speed, information transmission and storage, and the distances among users of electronic media. The electronic epistemological zone makes it possible to take messages that are complex, sophisticated, and technologically based and make them appear natural, real, and occurring in real time. Television, the Internet, DVDs, cell phones, movies, iPods, and the applications these technologies spawn isolate senses of reality and assemble an organized bricolage, or interconnected set, of experience that constructs feelings, identifications, empathy, and emotional responses. The electronic media create a lifelike sense of presence, but the messages really come from a distance. Moreover, what we are witnessing (e.g., watching television, movies,) presents a vivid sense of reality,

but a viewer is not really witnessing anything occurring at the moment.

An important epistemological concept of medium theory is the idea of distant presence. Distant presence refers to the power of communication media to provide an informational experience for a user that is not local. In oral traditions, individuals have direct experience with others. All interactions are local, robust, and in real time. But in electronically mediated traditions, experiences feel immediate, but are really at a distance. Messages on television, for example, are fashioned and packaged at an earlier time, but are designed to embody the generalized domain of knowledge and experience held by diverse audiences. Ong refers to this as *secondary orality*, where the current complex and technologically based media essentially produce messages that return us to oral-like epistemological conditions. The literary tradition of writing is associated with linguistic complexity, rationality, and coherence. But many aspects of contemporary electronic media emphasize brevity, speed, titillation, and the privileging of visual impact. Sensory experience is returned to the communication experience. Scholars such as Neil Postman decry the simplistic show business epistemology of media such as television and its deleterious effect on the quality of discourse in society. New electronic media have restructured and redrawn the boundaries of social life by influencing modern conceptions of information, knowledge, society, the concept of the public, development, and values.

Social Effects of Media

Information in the electronic age is easier to amass, organize, and use for personal or business reasons. Information in traditional societies was limited and kept close to the user of the information. Digitalization makes it possible to generate, store, and transmit information from great distances. It resides in electronic space and can be extracted at will. Moreover, information is commodified and has exchange value. In traditional cultures, information was useful to the individual for the normal maintenance of life. But commodified information can be bought and sold (e.g., television shows, computer software, movies, reports, data bases) and has market value rather than simple intrinsic value. Accordingly, information takes on commercial

and entertainment values. As a consequence of commodification, information is valuable in inverse proportion to its availability. Hence, information becomes intellectual property (e.g., movies, books, scripts, software, commissioned reports), and it is owned, protected, and registered. The fewer people with skills and access to information, the more valuable the information becomes.

The nature of knowledge—what is worth knowing and how it is known—has changed as a result of changing predominant media. The written word has lost its supremacy as the organizer of knowledge. The concept of truth changes more easily from medium to medium. People are more likely to get news from television or text messages than they are from the newspaper, and what counts as news is subject to medium effects. The sheer amount of information is daunting. And what passes for knowledge accumulates at a startling rate. Knowledge, like information, is sold and packaged and acquires the business values of attractiveness, speed, price, and ease of use. So the sound bite was invented, and long discursive disquisitions become scarce. Infotainment gains currency because information cannot escape being packaged as entertainment. The increased distance between knowledge users is a troubling consequence of the new media society. Simple activities such as pointing and clicking on a computer or touching the icon of a cash register obscure very sophisticated technological, mathematical, and logical knowledge, but the user needs to know none of it. This colonizes certain segments of society and redistributes literacy.

Electronic media are implicated in reorganizing societal structures. The concept of a common public has been fractionated such that people do not share a sense of place in Meyrowitz's phrase. Modern media create new audiences and collectives. All the people who watch a television show (e.g., *Survivor*, *Fox News*, *American Idol*) may be considered a media-created public. They share commonalities and access and control of their demographic information is a commodity of value. New media have created new publics, and this is particularly true in the realm of political communication. Jürgen Habermas explained how the 18th-century salons and coffee houses became a forum for democratic discussion, a context where there was greater equality among participants and conversation was subject to argument and reason

rather than flattery and acquiescence to status. These public spaces created a type of communication, opened up new problem possibilities, and were more inclusive. But new media reshuffle the boundaries of public life such that collegiality and commonality are disappearing, and aspects of democracy are threatened.

Modern media are highly commercial and yoked to corporate interests. The ability of new media to engage all the senses, according to Postman, means that entertainment is the supra-ideology of most discourse, especially on television. Entertainment values specify that media content must be absorptive of attention and attract people for reasons of personal satisfaction. When a medium treats subject matter as entertaining, it changes the attitudes and meanings that audiences have for the subject matter. Thus news and politics, when treated as entertainment, change the relationship between the subject matter and the audience. When the news, or politics, or educational messages become quick, breezy, and visually appealing viewers are lulled into experiencing excitement, tension, and personal identification. They come to expect such stimulation and are bored or uninterested to the extent that it is absent. This is why social critics blame modern media for a host of society's ills ranging from short attention spans to the decline of reading and a lack of political engagement.

The implications of medium theory have also played a role in national development. Early media theories of development were naïve, assuming that modernization for the sake of modernization was desirable. Still, Majid Tehranian explains that media influence development through four inter-related processes: Information can revise important issues such as health and agriculture, control in the form of computerized storage of records (finances, taxes, purchasing patterns) can modernize a culture, development and globalization are dependent on electronic information processing highways, and finally, new media influence democratization. They are particularly important for mobilizing people and communicating new ideas. All media can be agents of good or ill—and while they mostly help government and industry, new technologies retain their liberating potential.

Finally, medium theory addresses questions of normative theory or how the media should perform and what society should expect from media. Citizen

democracies cannot be sustained without a repository of quality information and outlets for open discussion. The media play a key role in these functions as well as contributing to freedom, diversity, and cultural solidarity. A normative political model of the media seeks to intervene in media operations and suppress inequalities in the market, promote freedom, and improve public access. A key tension in societies is access to the media. A private economic theory has media in the control of individual ownership. But free-market perspectives argue that a hyper-media environment is the strongest protection against state oppression. A second issue is the problem of the media assuming commercial values and thus subjecting political discourse to such values. Political language begins to sound like advertising, and the discourse is packaged for easy sale and consumption. Again, some critical scholars accuse the media of debasing public discourse and threatening the quality and authenticity of democratic institutions.

Donald Ellis

See also Computer-Mediated Communication; Epistemology; International Development Theories; Journalism and Theories of the Press; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Media Democracy; New Media Theory

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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIZATION ANALYSIS (MCA)

Membership categorization analysis (MCA) is a tradition of qualitative empirical research focused on the understanding of membership categories as they are used by people in talk and social interaction as well as in texts and other media of communication. Membership categories refer to identities, and MCA is focused on the study of identities as they are achieved or contested, organized, and understood within the practical contexts of social interaction and language use.

Membership categories are extremely numerous and diverse, referring, for example, to categories of class, race, gender, nationality, religion, linguistic community, age, and occupation; to memberships in associations, political parties, or social clubs; and many other types of identity that are more obviously contextual in nature, such as driver, applicant, and organ donor. The varieties of identity categories are termed membership categories with reference to the convention within ethnomethodology of referring to people (speakers, subjects, agents, actors, etc.) as members. The notions of member and membership often implicitly allude to the competence in cultural and linguistic methods of practical reasoning and practical action (folk methods or ethnomethods), which can be found in members of any culture or linguistic community. Thus, MCA, following ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, addresses issues and practices of identity very broadly without privileging certain types of identities, such as public speakers; without privileging certain types of communication, such as mass communication; and without privileging communication in institutional contexts, such as political or professional communication. MCA can and does encompass studies of specific varieties of identity and studies of identity

with reference to specific kinds of communication or specific institutional contexts, but such interests are not exclusive of or privileged with respect to the study of membership categories and membership categorization practices observable in vernacular speech. Although MCA is situated within the social sciences, the approach is often philosophically informed and humanistic as well as empirical in approach, illuminating and explicating not only empirical data and patterns, but also the logic and the rhetoric of social identities in their relations to social practices and social organization.

Originating from the scholarship of Harvey Sacks at the time he was laying the foundations of conversation analysis (CA), MCA generally has been avoided in the subsequent trajectory of CA, which has focused on the analysis of conversational sequencing rather than questions of identity. This separation of MCA and sequentially oriented CA has been somewhat controversial. Although CA has generally diverged away from MCA, and much CA has diverged from ethnomethodological sociology as well, MCA has retained a more complementary understanding of the relationship between CA and MCA, and especially between MCA and ethnomethodology. Hence, MCA studies of identity can include elements of sequential analysis, as suggested especially in the work of Rod Watson, and often are attentive to methods of practical reasoning and practical action, in keeping with ethnomethodological interests. MCA is today an established international research tradition in its own right, with its own practitioners and literature, even as it continues to be identified in relation to either CA or ethnomethodology, if not both.

The scope of MCA is quite broad and the potential applications numerous. In the process of studying the deployment and understanding of membership categories in talk and other media of communication, MCA has developed a wide range of insights about how identities are organized across membership categories and how they can be related to a variety of other aspects of social interaction and social contexts. The fact that certain membership categories can be conventionally or contextually associated, such as baby and mommy, or teacher and student, is taken up in the analysis of membership category devices, or collections of categories. A related insight refers to standardized relational pairs of categories, referring to pairs of

categories that are conventionally related and that, moreover, often involve conventional relational features such as rights and obligations, which may be either symmetric, as in the pair neighbor–neighbor, or asymmetric, as in the pair parent–child. The fact that individuals can be correctly described by means of an indefinite number of membership categories gives rise to questioning and analyzing how identifications are done minimally, selectively, relevantly, contextually, and intelligibly. The close attention within MCA to just those identities that become observably relevant in situated contexts of communication, with reference to participants' own displayed understandings, distinguishes MCA from many other traditions of inquiry. A variety of other approaches are theoretically or politically committed to the study of particular categories such as class, gender, or racial categories; MCA is committed to the study of whichever identities become relevant within a given conversation or text.

MCA also investigates and analyzes the intricate and complex relationships that obtain between (a) identities; (b) attributes of persons such as their actions, motives, beliefs, or knowledge; and (c) interactional contexts. These relationships, addressed for example in the work of Peter Eglin, Stephen Hester, and Lena Jayyusi, allow studies of membership categorization to branch out considerably, addressing many more facets of social interaction and communication than might be immediately apparent. MCA also has been used, especially in the work of Jeff Coulter, to address collectivity categories, their features and their actions, thus respecifying many macro social and institutional phenomena in communication and interaction. A developing genre of MCA studies addresses interactions in institutional settings, suggesting at least one potential line of convergence with CA, which has developed a significant literature on studies of work. Such overlaps between MCA and other traditions, whether with CA, discourse analysis, discursive psychology, or other traditions, suggest some of the potential lines of development and influence for MCA in the future.

Throughout their variety, MCA studies share an empirical and analytic focus on illuminating the pragmatic and categorical logic of social identities. Central concerns include how membership categories are collected together and related to each other and how they are inferentially related

to issues of social action, social context, or social structure, all by means of the cultural and linguistic methods that are the topics and the findings of MCA.

Tim Berard

See also Conversation Analysis; Ethnomethodology; Identity Theories; Phenomenology; Pragmatics; Speech Act Theory

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METACOMMUNICATION

Metacommunication is communication regarding communication. The word *meta* came from the Greek word for *along with* or *about*; thus, the simplest definition of metacommunication is communication about communication. Metacommunication is a common human activity; indeed, in a variety of ways people are almost continuously communicating about communication both nonverbally or verbally.

Similarly, metacognition is thinking about thinking and metamathematics examines the mathematic basis of math or what is sometimes called calculus. For each of these metas, there is an attempt to unravel the calculus or modify the underlying meaning of a phenomenon. Therefore, when people metacommunicate, they are sending messages about messages to refine the meaning of communication. Metacommunication is not always intentional. In fact it is often accomplished spontaneously and

unconsciously. A related unique and remarkable quality of communication is ability to refer to, comment on, and even to modify itself, a property sometimes called reflexivity. Communication theory, the topic of this encyclopedia, is itself reflexive in that, by examining communication theoretically, human beings can alter the nature of subsequent communication itself.

In sum, virtually every communication message contains metacommunication messages that frame, modify, and contextualize the original message. Anything that frames or contextualizes communication is a form of metacommunication. This can be explicitly done though talking about communication or implicitly done through commenting about communication though nonverbal communication. The next four sections will examine four types of metacommunication: explicit metacommunication, implicit metacommunication, verbal metacommunication about nonverbal behavior, and nonverbal metacommunication about nonverbal communication.

Explicit Metacommunication: Talking About Talk

Perhaps the form of metacommunication that is easiest to understand is talking about talk. It is also the most common form of metacommunication in both the media and in interpersonal situations. People comment on other's communication behavior continuously: "Jonathan, you need to say please," "Wow—was that a great speech," and "You are always yelling at people." These are examples of explicit metacommunication about talk.

Another common form of explicit metacommunication occurs when a person comments about his or her own prior statement. After telling a hurtful joke or making a critical comment, a person may say "just kidding" or "not really" to indicate how to take the comment. Apologies, excuses, and explanations are forms of metacommunication that deconstruct, clarify, or repair prior statements.

A further function of explicit metacommunication is socialization. Parents and teachers metacommunicate by saying "watch your mouth," "say please," or "don't interrupt." This metacommunicative education is intended to socialize the child and to make him or her aware of manners, norms, and the conventions of his or her culture.

Explicit metacommunication about talk is sometimes the source of conflicts or arguments. Couples or families often argue about what was actually said in a prior argument, who called whom what, or the language that was used in criticizing another person. Such cycles or patterns can lead to protracted metacommunicative arguments where the participants repeat and escalate the conflict by referring to the other's hurtful words and action. Cross complaining that characterizes many interpersonal conflicts usually includes metacommunicative comments. "Don't raise your voice to me," one person says, and in response the other says, "Well, you interrupted me!" In many conflicts, an entire series of such metacommunication squabbles occur, most of which are complaints about the others' inappropriate communication behavior. Conversely, explicit metacommunication can be used to come to understandings about conflicts and to avoid the statements that caused conflicts to spiral out of control. Couples therapy and family therapy feature considerable metacommunication about functional and dysfunctional communication patterns.

Considerable coverage of political campaigns consists of metacommunicative references to the words and speeches of the candidates. Both media commentators and other candidates carefully scrutinize, analyze, and criticize candidates' words. Gaffes by political candidates are fuel for substantial discussion and often have extensive negative consequences to their campaigns. Sometimes clarifications, retractions, or apologies are offered by the campaign as part of the metacommunication process. Political spin doctors are professional metacommunicators who attempt to fix, retract, hype, or augment their candidate's words.

Explicit metacommunication can be illogical or paradoxical. The metacommunicative expression, "This sentence doesn't exist," is communication about communication that is completely illogical. Similarly, metacommunicative injunctions such as "be spontaneous" or "don't think about blue giraffes" are paradoxical. Explicit metacommunication can talk about the imaginary, the ineffable, metaphysical, mystical, as well as mundane everyday discourse.

Though not always recognized by the participants, the primary topic of all communication classes and books is metacommunication. Professors measure, digest, criticize, analyze, and

theorize about communication and its consequences. Indeed, communication instructors advise students to use introductions, previews, and frames as metacommunicative statements that aid the comprehension of a speech. Similarly, summaries and recapitulations are metacommunicative attempts to aid in the recall of the main points of a speech.

In contemporary discourse, the expression TMI (too much information) is a metacommunicative attempt to stop a person from communicating something that is too gross, personal, scatological, or sexual. Saying TMI is an effort to metacommunicatively shut down communication and to prevent public discussions of this topic in the future.

Implicit Metacommunication: Nonverbal Signals Regarding Talk

Communication is more than talk and language; much of human communication takes place nonverbally without words or explicit symbols. Paralinguistic communication, such as tone of voice and inflection, continuously comment on and modify the meaning of words. Kinesic behaviors including gestures and facial expressions provide context for and add meaning to the spoken word. Proxemic and tactile communication modifies and provides powerful information about the relationship that in turn comments on and provides a frame for the verbal message. Eye behavior similarly provides metacommunicative cues. A list of all the forms of nonverbal metacommunication is beyond the scope of this article, but all forms of nonverbal communication provide metacommunication framing and context for the verbal message.

Scholars have observed that all communication contains both content and relationship components. The content or report element consists of what is said such as, "Please close the door." The relationship or command element consists of how it is said—for example, with a pleasant tone of voice or angry scowl on one's face. The relationship or command element is a form of implicit metacommunication. It modifies what is said so that the message becomes "do this quickly," "I'm kidding," or "why did you forget to close the door?" It comments about the attitude of the sender or the relationship between the sender and receiver. Over time, patterns of this form of metacommunication will

establish the nature of the relationship between the interactants. Power disparities in relationships are a function of persistent metacommunicative control moves that establish patterns of dominance and submissiveness.

Another form of implicit metacommunication is sarcasm. Sarcasm occurs when nonverbal behaviors such as tone of voice, facial expression, or eye behavior tell the receiver not to take the message literally. Incompetent senders of sarcastic messages sometimes fail to include implicit nonverbal cues causing the receiver to take the message literally. Unskilled receivers, including small children, may not understand sarcasm and are insensitive to nonverbal metacommunicative cues resulting in literal interpretations of the message. Similarly, during an intercultural interaction, one person may miss sarcasm because he or she is unfamiliar with the subtleties of cultural metacommunication.

Implicit metacommunication can even completely change the meaning of a verbal message. Consider the use of the word *yes*, a simple affirmative utterance of agreement or acquiescence. When responding to an invitation to go to dinner, one could respond, "Yes!!!!" signaling an extremely affirmative response; "Yes?" indicating ambivalent affirmation; or a vocally reluctant, negative *yes* that may indicate no. In the latter example, the literal meaning of the word *yes* is completely reversed, but only if the receiver is attuned to the paralinguistic metacommunication that communicates the reversal. This illustrates the power of implicit metacommunication; it is a second channel of communication that occurs simultaneously with the primary channel and acts to modify and even reverse its meaning.

One crucial aspect of competent communication is the use of conversational turn-taking cues. Yielding the floor to another communicator relies on implicit metacommunication cues such as audible and visible exhalations, cessation of gestures, pausing, looking directly at another interactant, and leaning back. Similarly, effective acquisition of a turn employs implicit metacommunication cues such as visible inhalations, direct eye contact, forward leans, and preparatory gestures. Indeed, without these implicit metacommunication cues, interruptions would be ubiquitous and smooth conversational behavior would be impossible.

Verbal Metacommunication About Nonverbal Behavior

Words can also be used to comment about one's own or another person's nonverbal behavior. Words often comment about the nonverbal actions of others. People make comments such as, "His hands were all over me," "Did you see that dirty look," or "What a delightful smile she has." Likewise, during interaction, people often comment verbally about their own nonverbal behavior. People say "excuse me" after accidentally pushing someone in a crowd, say "thanks" for a backrub, apologize for wardrobe malfunctions, say "you should have seen my face" when surprised, or "I am still shaking" in response to fear.

Nonverbal communication lectures and courses about nonverbal communication systematically metacommunicate about nonverbal behavior. Ironically, nonverbal communication instructors and authors primarily use language to flesh out the nuances of numerous nonverbal behaviors, though occasionally pictures, film, and role playing compliment talk as instructional techniques. Theories of nonverbal communication are almost entirely language-based explanations and predictions about nonlinguistic phenomena exemplifying this third type of metacommunication.

Nonverbal Metacommunication About Nonverbal Communication

Sometimes nonverbal behavior is employed to metacommunicate about other nonverbal actions. Nonverbal actions can communicate about other individuals' nonverbal behavior. For example, a person may roll his or her eyes about inappropriate touch behavior by another person thereby metacommunicating nonverbally. Likewise, a person may smile in response to a person's attire, which constitutes a nonverbal metacommunicative evaluation. Nodding one's head in response to a pleasant backrub is one of hundreds of potential examples of this kind of metacommunication.

Likewise, nonverbal behaviors can metacommunicate one's own nonverbal communication. An aggressive gesture may be modified with a smile. An absent handshake can be apologized for with eye contact and a friendly wave of the hand. An embarrassing action can be ameliorated with an

apologetic shoulder shrug. Most of these nonverbal comments on one's own nonverbal behavior occur mindlessly and spontaneously as part and parcel of ongoing communication. Proxemic and chronemic communication of others is often managed metacommunicatively. In response to an excessively long visit by another person, a series of nonverbal leave-taking cues are typically employed. So instead of asking a person to leave, cues such as looking at one's watch, leaning forward, sudden claps of the hands, and repositioning of the feet are used.

As part of childhood socialization and behavioral control, parents frequently admonish children to stop some unacceptable nonverbal behavior through nonverbal communication. Mothers will scowl when their child shoves another child at the theatre or movies. During dinner, parents may wave a finger or shake their heads to signal to a child to back off or stop touching.

The fact that other mammals can engage in metacommunication suggests that it is an ancient characteristic of communication. One typically nonhuman form of behavioral metacommunication is aggression displays of animals. Young mammals such as chimps, cats, dogs, and even humans may engage in play wrestling, biting, and hitting that may appear very real to the untrained eye. These adolescent aggression displays rarely result in any injuries despite menacing body language and vocalizations. Through subtle vocal, kinesic, and tactile cues, the young animals indicate that this is not real combat, but a ritualized recreational game, albeit one that may hone future fighting skills.

Theoretical Importance of Metacommunication

Metacommunication is a fundamental feature of all interaction and a central concept in communication. Implicit metacommunication characterizes all human communication because nonverbal cues continuously communicate context. Interactants are typically unaware of most metacommunication signals in ongoing interaction, though they respond to them spontaneously and mindlessly. Similarly, the viewers are often unaware of subtle metacommunication in the mass media. Metacommunication is largely a set of evolved behaviors that developed to facilitate efficient and complex human communication. Skilled communication requires competent

unconscious production and recognition of subtle metacommunication signals, the result of socialization, practice, and our evolutionary ability.

Peter A. Andersen

See also Competence Theories; Conflict Communication Theories; Framing Theory; Kinesics; Language and Communication; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Palo Alto Group; Paralanguage; Relational Communication Theory

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METAPHOR

Metaphor occurs when we use words or visual constructions to make novel references in atypical contexts. In the sentences, “Metaphor can dress our ideas more clearly and colorfully” and “Metaphor offers a window on the world,” the words *dress* and *window* illustrate metaphor. We do not typically use *dress* and *window* to refer to words.

Perhaps the most basic use of metaphor is to expand the reach and repair the inadequacy of our referential system. When confronted by novel subjects, our tendency is to communicate by using words that seem related or similar, based on points of comparison between the novel and familiar subjects. The language of astronauts, as they struggled to describe the moonscape to audiences back on earth, was replete with basic metaphor.

Beyond its capacity to expand the referential system, metaphor can improve communication effectiveness. By associating the unknown with the known or the abstract with the concrete, metaphor can clarify meaning. By creating associations with colorful, picturesque points of comparison, metaphor can raise interest in and magnify the importance of subjects. “She is a volcano who might erupt at any moment,” for example, expresses vividly a speaker’s fear over his or her supervisor in a work situation. By creating associations with liked or disliked and admired or despised points of reference, metaphor can also transfer attitudes that often serve hidden communication agendas, often raising ethical questions. “He speaks with Hitlerian fervor,” for example, creates a negative association without justifying the metaphorical pejorative. If the impression is striking enough, we may forget to ask critical questions, such as “What exactly does the speaker mean?” or “What justifies that description?” In all such uses, metaphor becomes a rhetorical strategy, selected for its capacity to promote the communicator’s goals and to enable communication.

Classical Conception of Metaphor

The idea of metaphor first took form in the classical rhetoric of the early Greeks and Romans. The theory of expression developed over several thousand years ago diminished the role of metaphor in the creation and control of thinking. In Aristotle’s justly famous *Rhetoric*, Book I deals largely with developing effective arguments. Book II offers a primitive, but insightful analysis of the psychology of the audience. Book III, which deals with the expression of these generated, adapted arguments, finally offers a place for the work of metaphor.

Even more influential in shaping the early theory of metaphor were the famous five canons of rhetoric developed within the Ciceronian tradition. For Cicero, rhetors who systematically practice the art of effective communication must begin by discovering, exploring, and selecting ideas (*inventio*), arranging these ideas for maximum effect (*dispositio*), choosing words to convey these ideas with clarity and color (*elocutio*), committing these ideas to memory for recall during presentation (*memoria*), and presenting these ideas amplified by the full resources of voice and gesture (*pronunciatio*). Metaphor was relegated to the third phase of the

process as a stylistic device, even though it did occupy a prominent place in the canon. Aristotle, for example, thought that understanding metaphor was the key to grasping the power of language. Still, the metaphor used most often by classical theorists to describe metaphor—as our earlier example indicates—was that it served as the dress of ideas. This metametaphor indicates and signifies how classical rhetoric underestimated the full range of metaphor's work. As they separated ideas from words, and relegated words to an inferior service role in expression, these early theorists restricted understanding of both creativity and expression.

More Recent Conceptions of Metaphor

More recent theorists have reversed the priorities suggested by classical rhetoric to underscore the potential primacy of metaphor in generating the flow of thought and shaping the patterns of thinking within cultures. Kenneth Burke, perhaps the preminent rhetorical theorist of the 20th century, defined metaphor as perspective. In his *Permanence and Change*, Burke noted that to use significant metaphor is to frame reality in a certain way and to invite others to share our stance upon it. As our second initial example indicated, such metaphor offers a window on the world. Indeed, certain metaphors may become embedded in cultural vision and even come to represent unexpressed and perhaps unrealized principles of epistemology. Here the simple principle is as we see things, we come to know them. Ancient cosmologies, for example, positioned the earth as the center of the universe, and entire systems of religion, philosophy, and literature developed around that core vision (Dante's *Divine Comedy* is a striking literary example). That centrist image of the earth quickly lost its metaphoric character for those who came to accept and depend upon it as literal reality. Those brave scientists who eventually suggested that it was the sun, not the earth, that dominated our small corner of the universe quickly found themselves labeled as heretical enemies of the state and of organized religion. Many were forced to recant their views and were even burned at the stake—such can be the power of a metaphor that has transmogrified into a principle of culture. It can defy contrary evidence and argument—no matter how rationally compelling—for long centuries. To

challenge its prerogatives requires revolutionary rhetoric that can eventually topple the prevailing metaphor and raise a new vision in its place, a vision often expressed within a new metaphor. Burke described the work of such radical new metaphors as perspective by incongruity. They may indeed seem incongruous, shocking, even appalling. As such, they administer verbal shock treatment to cultural vision, and if successful, forever reshape the flow of thought. Surely the passing into oblivion of the many gods of the Greeks and Romans and the rise of a monotheistic religion expressed in the metaphoric center-image of a Son of God was a major moment in the cultural clash of these mega-metaphors.

Beyond religion, Burke suggests, entire schools of scientific thought may develop to explore the implications of rich metaphors. At the core of quantum mechanics, Newtonian physics, and the theory of relativity may lurk metaphors that fire the minds of scientists and spark discoveries that forever change the human condition. Such metaphors, clearly, are not selected to express ideas that have already been discovered. Rather, they are portal metaphors that open onto fields of discovery not previously imagined.

As such, they break the old classical boundaries that confined the work of metaphor to elocutio and establish instead its role in driving the creative processes of inventio. Taken in this larger sense as a vital form of intellectual behavior, metaphor can also express and reinforce patterns of culture and thus can have larger sociological significance. George Lakoff and his associates have identified underlying systems of metaphorical thinking that organize the ways groups think and react to events that impinge upon them. For example, Lakoff's work in identifying the ways liberals and conservatives think through elaborate, contrasting conceptual systems of metaphors promotes, he believes, not only understanding of the conflict between these groups, but also establishes the grounds for ethical critique and whatever hope may exist for eventual reconciliation. In short, any distinctive group, Lakoff speculates, will be distinctive in terms of the patterns of metaphor that guide those who constitute it.

Lakoff does grant, however, that some metaphorical tendencies may be shared across groups. Michael Osborn has focused on these commonalities by

identifying what he calls archetypal metaphor, metaphors that appear to endure across time and many cultures. Such metaphors, he argues, are drawn from shared experiences that are pervasive in the human condition, that touch people deeply, and that provide, therefore, the grounds for depth identification. They are more frequently selected and are more often elaborated in messages. A prominent example occurred in Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*, where the birth-death-rebirth cycle of life structures the speech and represents the speaker's vision of our nation's spiritual destiny. Other prominent sources of such metaphor are the contrast between light and darkness, war and peace, adventures at sea, disease and cure, and family relationships. Although such metaphors resist change, Osborn concedes in his study of the sea metaphor that at least some archetypal forms may evolve across time and if not change meaning, at least acquire different uses. To the extent that archetypal metaphors do endure across time, they enhance communication across the generations and ages of humankind and make it possible to enjoy and learn from poetry and drama written thousands of years ago. They connect the human experience.

Developing the Technology of Metaphor

The grand expansion in the theory of metaphor that happened over the 20th century has also provoked considerable interest in the technology of metaphor, the structure of the metaphoric experience. I. A. Richards did groundbreaking work in suggesting that metaphor should be viewed as an interaction between a tenor, the subject of the metaphor, and the vehicle, the novel association introduced by the metaphor. When we experience radical metaphor, we can be aware of an initial double-focus effect, a blur produced when images from different realms of experience are suddenly superimposed on each other. In successful metaphor, such confusion quickly resolves itself into a startling new perception of reality. By bringing together images not previously combined, metaphor can spark a conflagration of thought that is the essence of creativity. Osborn elaborated this conception by suggesting that interaction occurs along lines of association that are established by qualifiers, forms of contextual, situational, communal, and sometimes archetypal influence that bear upon the meaning of the metaphor.

Members of Lincoln's audience could have been aware simultaneously of the situation of the immediate battle, where thousands had perished, and the context of national history in which much had already been endured for the sake of liberty, despite the contradiction of slavery. They would have sensed the underlying depth appeal of the archetypal birth-death-rebirth pattern and would have been moved by the majesty of Lincoln's evocation of the form. At the same time, many of them might have strained to hear Lincoln's less-than-powerful voice, and others might have been ear-weary by hours of listening to previous speakers. All of these factors might have qualified the meaning of the metaphoric experience differently for different people.

Finally, Osborn noted that speakers such as Lincoln are able to draw out, amplify, and control the meaning and importance of metaphor through extensions, strategic repetitions and variations of the vehicle that can develop and extend metaphorical meaning throughout a message and even across many messages, rendering the metaphor thematic. In his great speech, "I Have a Dream," Martin Luther King, Jr., extended his dream metaphor over much of his speech. Long after that speech, King was still talking about his dream, and after his death, other speakers extended that metaphorical motif in reminding audiences of his spiritual legacy and of their obligation to transform it into reality.

Such explorations remind us forcefully of the inadequacy of the original classical conception of metaphor. Rather than the dress of ideas, perhaps even more than providing a window on reality, metaphor may dominate a message as the engine of its thought. It is clear that recent rhetorical and communication theorists have expanded dramatically our conception of metaphor and our appreciation for the work it can perform in communication.

Michael M. Osborn

See also Culture and Communication; Language and Communication; Meaning Theories; Rhetorical Theory

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METATHEORY

Metatheory is theory about theory. Every theory is based on certain assumptions about the nature of theory and about fundamental aspects of the phenomena or subject matter theorized. Most often these metatheoretical assumptions are implicit, meaning they are not explicitly articulated within the theory itself. The purpose of metatheory is to explicitly articulate and critique the metatheoretical assumptions that underlie theories and to articulate normative metatheoretical principles to guide the creation and assessment of theories. Metatheory addresses questions such as what is theory. What are the purposes of theory? How should theories be constructed? How should they be tested or critiqued, and by what criteria? In the case of communication metatheory, answering these questions can involve arguments about the fundamental nature of communication as well as about knowledge and inquiry in general.

Communication theorists James A. Anderson and Geoffrey Baym have distinguished four types of metatheoretical assumptions:

1. *Ontology*: Assumptions about existence such as the nature of the human individual and how we

relate to the world around us. For example, some theories assume that human behavior is determined by external causes, while others assume that individuals freely choose how to act. Theories also disagree about whether communication phenomena exist objectively, independent of our theories, or whether those phenomena exist only as socially interpreted, in which case the communication phenomena we study do not exist independently of our theories but are shaped to some extent by the theories we use to interpret them.

2. *Epistemology*: Assumptions about knowledge such as what it means to know something and how knowledge claims can be validated. Some theories assume that theoretical claims can be supported only by empirical observation, while others assume that theoretical claims can be based on conceptual analysis and rational argument, and still others assume that theories are interpretations of the world that cannot be proven with much certainty, if at all.

3. *Praxeology*: Assumptions about the practice of theory such as how a theory should be structured and presented and factors that determine a theory's relevance and originality. Theories are always written for particular audiences—intellectual communities in which it is conventionally expected that theories should address certain issues, cite certain precedents (usually previous theories in the same tradition), and be written in certain ways (e.g., using verbal arguments, formal systems of propositions, or mathematical formulas).

4. *Axiology*: Assumptions about the values that a theory should reflect or how a theory should contribute to society. In the empirical scientific tradition, it is generally assumed that the best way for science to contribute to society is by providing carefully tested, objective, value-free theoretical knowledge. In contrast, normative, value-based theorizing is explicitly intended to evaluate and influence communication practices.

An articulated, logically consistent set of ontological, epistemological, praxeological, and axiological assumptions distinguishes a coherent metatheory or metatheoretical approach, although metatheoretical writings seldom mention all four types of assumptions explicitly. Communication theorists have not agreed on a single metatheory, but continue

to develop theories and debate the fundamental assumptions of communication theory from various metatheoretical stances. These debates are not restricted to communication theory, but extend across disciplines into philosophy, the humanities, and the social sciences. Several broad approaches to metatheory can be distinguished, including empirical-explanatory social science, interpretive social science, critical theory, and practical theory. Each of these broad approaches includes a range of contending views. To suggest in a general way how the same communication phenomena can be theorized from some of these different metatheoretical stances, group leadership will be used as a running example.

Scientific Theory and Explanation

Scientific communication theories typically assume, among other things, that human behavior is determined by knowable causes (ontology), that theoretical claims can only be proven by empirical evidence (epistemology), that theories should present clear definitions of terms and logically consistent sets of propositions that can be tested empirically by independent investigators (praxeology), and that the purpose of theory is to explain communication phenomena objectively as they are and not to criticize communication practices or argue for value-based normative claims about what communication should be (axiology). For example, a scientific theory of leadership would not attempt to define good leadership or criticize leadership practices in our society. Instead, it might attempt to explain, for instance, how groups respond to particular leadership styles under varying conditions of competition with other groups. Such a theory would need to define key concepts such as leadership styles, intergroup competition, and group response with sufficient clarity and precision to allow direct or indirect empirical observation by means of experimental procedures, survey questionnaires, or behavioral measures. The theory would also need to include statements explaining how these concepts are related empirically in the communication process—for example, the cognitive processes that cause group members to respond more positively to directive leadership styles in conditions of heightened intergroup competition. Hypotheses based on these theoretical explanations could then be tested in empirical studies, thus

providing evidence for or against the theory. Although scientifically inclined communication theorists generally agree on this broad picture of theory, they disagree on a number of metatheoretical issues.

Two approaches that have received much attention in recent discussions of scientific theory are postpositivism and scientific realism. Positivism (or logical empiricism) is a philosophy of science that holds that appropriately constructed theories can be strictly verified or falsified by empirical data. This view has been heavily criticized on many grounds and today is largely rejected. Postpositivism rejects the strict assumptions of positivism while continuing to uphold empirical validation, objectivity, and value-free inquiry as pragmatic goals that scientific theory should pursue as far as possible. Scientific realism defends the stronger ontological and epistemological stance that theories should refer to entities and causal mechanisms that really exist independently of our theories about them. Realism opposes more skeptical views such as instrumentalism (which holds that scientific concepts are invented to explain empirical data, but do not necessarily correspond to real entities), and perspectivism (which holds that phenomena do not exist independently of our theories because the perspective or paradigm in which a theory is constructed determines how empirical observations will be interpreted). Other ontological differences within the scientific approach concern whether communication should be theorized primarily at group or individual level of analysis and whether communication phenomena are restricted to interaction processes or whether they also include personality traits and cognitive structures.

Interpretive Social Science

Interpretive (or hermeneutical) metatheories assume that the social sciences, including communication studies, are essentially different from the physical and natural sciences because human social action is ontologically distinct from natural processes. The key difference is that humans, unlike other physical or biological entities, are self-interpreting beings—that is, humans typically behave with some degree of self-awareness and on the basis of some particular understanding of what they are doing. Explaining human social behavior is not like explaining a chemical reaction. To explain human action, one needs to

understand what it means to the people involved—meanings that vary over time and among different social groups and individuals. Life in human society depends on our ability to interpret our own and other people's actions. Of course, this is what we do in everyday communication, but those everyday understandings are usually focused on immediate practical concerns. Interpretive social science contributes to society by extending the scope of our understanding in formal studies that interpret the specific meanings found in various cultural groups, social situations, texts, and artifacts of the past and present. Although it may be possible to some extent to theorize general causal mechanisms that influence human behavior regardless of cultural meanings, interpretive metatheories take as an epistemological assumption that the potential for this kind of empirical scientific theory is not very great. Hence, they tend to downplay the importance of theory in general and focus instead on understanding the particular meanings that are found in each situation. In the praxeology of interpretive social science, empirical studies are not conducted to prove or disprove general theories. Theories can only provide us with various general themes or frameworks of interpretation that may or may not be helpful for understanding what is going on in a particular situation.

An interpretive approach to theorizing leadership would begin with the assumption that the meaning of leadership changes over time and varies among people with different cultural backgrounds. A communication theorist might be interested in how leadership is communicated in particular groups, such as leadership styles in Mexican organizations or how understandings of female leadership are changing as more women continue to enter top positions in business and politics. Theories might play a helpful role in these interpretive studies. For example, theories of narrative might be used to interpret stories about leadership successes and failures collected from Mexican organizational members or female business leaders, or theories of leadership style might be compared to the experiences reported by participants in these settings. The goal in either case would not be to verify these theories empirically, but the studies might find that Mexican leadership stories have different themes than have been found previously or that female leaders are developing new styles that theories might be revised to include.

Interpretive praxeology divides into numerous distinct traditions such as various schools of ethnography and cultural theory, narrative inquiry, ethnomethodology, discourse analysis, rhetorical criticism, psychoanalysis, and historiography, all relating to theory in different ways. There are ontological debates about the reality of cultural patterns, rules, narratives, and social practices, and epistemological debates about the objectivity or subjectivity of interpretations. Interpretive axiology stresses the intrinsic value of cultural and historical understanding, but some theorists argue that interpretive understanding always has a practical motive. To the extent that practical motives for understanding are emphasized, interpretive metatheory may blend with critical or practical theory approaches.

Critical Approaches

Whereas the essential goal of empirical scientific theory is to explain the general mechanisms by which communication processes work and that of interpretive theory is to facilitate better understanding of particular meanings, the essential goal of critical theory is to emancipate society from material and ideological conditions that distort communication and perpetuate unjust power relations. Critical approaches embrace an overtly political praxeology and a value-based axiology. Critical approaches have varied across a wide range of ontological and epistemological positions from highly objectivist, deterministic theories of political economy at one extreme to postmodernist skepticism about the possibility of any stable meaning at the opposite extreme. However, most critical theory now blends with interpretive approaches while continuing to differ from purely interpretive approaches with regard to praxeology and axiology.

Critical theory broadly construed includes strands of critical cultural theory, feminism, queer theory, postcolonial, and critical race theory along with older strands of Marxism and Frankfurt School critical theory. Modern theories of political economy in the Marxist tradition critique hidden manifestations and consequences of the ideology of capitalism. The neo-Marxist Frankfurt School, which was formed in 1930 in Frankfurt, Germany, and relocated to the United States during Germany's Nazi period, contributed to critical theories of

media and culture. Jürgen Habermas, the most prominent current theorist in the Frankfurt School tradition, has developed a different critical theory based on an ideal of free and open rational discourse (the ideal speech situation), an ideal that can be used to critique the ways in which actual communication processes are distorted by power and ideology. Other current strands of critical theory such as feminism and critical race theory critique the distorting effects of dominant ideologies of social class, race, gender, and sexuality with varying emphasis. However, most of these current strands of critical theory disagree with Habermas's ontology of rational discourse. Instead, they embrace postmodernist assumptions.

Dennis K. Mumby has distinguished postmodernism from critical theory, arguing that empirical-scientific, interpretive, and critical approaches are all forms of modernism from which postmodernism essentially differs. Postmodernism rejects modernist assumptions such as the ontology of the autonomous rational mind, the epistemological separation between truth and power, and ontological assumption that language can express stable meanings and personal identities. However, as Mumby implies, postmodernist ontological and epistemological assumptions can be integrated with a critical axiology and praxeology, as we have noted many strands of critical theory currently do. Postmodernist approaches that are not critically oriented can be regarded instead as forms of interpretive theory.

A critical theory of leadership would attempt to reveal ways that existing ideas and practices of leadership contribute to hidden ideological distortions of communication that perpetuate injustice. These could include assumptions about leadership that privilege particular gender or racial identities or physical body types. They could also include autocratic or latently strategic leadership practices that undermine the potential for democratic participation in decisions. For example, organizational communication theorist Stanley Deetz has theorized about group interaction patterns that create conditions of discursive closure, marginalizing certain members or precluding the possibility of certain topics from being discussed.

Practical Theory

Practical theory is the most recently developed of the four broad metatheoretical stances presented

here and is still by far the least common. Like critical approaches, practical theory assumes that theories of communication can and should have a positive influence in changing the world, not only in explaining or understanding the world as it now exists. Also like critical theories, practical theory spans a wide range of ontological and epistemological assumptions shared with scientific or interpretive metatheories while differing in axiology and praxeology. In contrast to critical theories, however, practical theories are less focused on ideological issues and tend to include constructive proposals for new or reconstructed communication practices along with critiques of existing practices. Practical theory assumes that theories should address practical problems (praxeology) and that an essential purpose of theory is to open new possibilities for action contributing to the improvement of communication practices in society (axiology).

J. Kevin Barge has distinguished three main approaches to practical theory: mapping, engaged reflection, and transformative practice. Practical theory as mapping views practical theory as a high-quality description of practical problems, communicative strategies, and the consequences of performing particular communicative strategies. A practical theory of leadership in the mapping approach might describe the problems that leaders face when group conflict intensifies (such as loss of trust), leadership techniques that can be used to alleviate those problems, and the possible effects or unintended consequences of using those techniques. Practical theory as mapping can incorporate assumptions from scientific, interpretive, or critical metatheories. A scientific approach to mapping follows the ontological-epistemological assumptions of empirical scientific theory, such as the assumption that phenomena exist independently of our theories. Interpretive and critical approaches instead assume a social constructionist ontology and epistemology—that communication practices change depending on how they are interpreted in society—and that communication theories can actively contribute to that process of changing interpretations and practices. Whereas a scientific practical theory of leadership would map the empirically verified causes and consequences of specific leadership techniques, an interpretive or critical mapping approach would use a theory of leadership as an alternative framework or lens for reinterpreting situations, revealing hidden

problems and envisioning different leadership practices.

Practical theory as engaged reflection approaches theorizing as a reflexive process in which practice and theory productively inform one another. Although generally sharing the social constructionist assumptions of critical and interpretive mapping, engaged reflection differs from them in the praxeology of theory construction and use. In engaged reflection, theories are created through systematic study and reflection on practical problems and are explicitly designed to reconstruct the communication practices they theorize. Two distinct approaches to practical theory as engaged reflection are currently under development: grounded practical theory and design theory. A grounded practical theory of leadership would be created by empirically observing and critically reflecting on the practice of leaders in action and then constructing a normative theoretical model of leadership problems, techniques, and philosophical ideals. Development of a design theory of leadership would begin with an ideal model of leadership, such as the ideal of rational deliberation, then would observe leaders in action to see in what ways their practice fell short of the ideal model, and finally would design and test communication techniques that could be used to bring actual leadership practices closer to the ideal.

In practical theory as transformative practice, theorizing is seen as a process of elaborating the communication abilities of both practical theorists and research participants. Unlike engaged reflection, the praxeology of transformative practice develops theory not by observing and critically reflecting on practices of others, but through the practical theorist's own active participation in helping others to solve communication problems. This is a different social constructionist approach. For example, a practical theorist might work with community leaders to develop a public participation process to address controversial issues in the community. New theoretical ideas might emerge as the theorist worked to facilitate this collaboration—for example, ideas for better ways of talking about disagreements in community meetings. Practical theorists could then apply and further develop this theory in future collaborations with leaders in other communities.

Robert T. Craig

See also Axiology; Critical Theory; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Empiricism; Epistemology; Ethnography of Communication; Ethnomethodology; Frankfurt School; Grounded Theory; Interpretive Theory; Marxist Theory; Narrative and Narratology; Ontology; Postpositivism; Practical Theory; Realism and the Received View; Scientific Approach; Traditions of Communication Theory

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MODELS OF COMMUNICATION

See Constitutive View of Communication

MODERNISM IN COMMUNICATION THEORY

What makes the study of communication modern? Would a research study about the use of instant messaging by romantic couples in the 20th century be more modern than a study of the broadcasting of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's radio speeches in the 1930s? Does it make a difference if the romantic couple lives apart on two different continents or if the President of the United States gives weekly radio addresses in the 20th century? Would it matter whether we used an interpretive research method to study the romantic couples or an experimental design to study the radio speeches? What if the couple is gay and the President of the United States is Black? Could both studies be modern? What might be the difference in time, space, people, technology, or practice that would authorize someone to claim that his or her study of communication is modern? Questions about the modern status of communication imply that some difference in kind exists between those things and people that are modern and those that are not. If not a difference in kind, then a difference in degree is implied so that something is claimed to be more modern than something else. Moreover, those who claim to be modern or more modern tend to assume it is better to be modern and that everyone and everything should want to become more modern. Yet the positive value of being modern does not go unchallenged; some advocate the virtues of tradition, others declare the end of modernism and call for a recognition that we live in postmodern times, and others suggest a different way of being modern. To appreciate the importance of modernism for communication theory requires an effort to ascertain what makes the modern modern.

The Modern as Modern

From a European perspective, modern philosophy emerges out of war. The Thirty Years War (1618–1648) combined religious battles between Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists with the political designs of continental European powers such as the Hapsburg Empire, France, Sweden, and Spain. Amidst the chaos of war, René Descartes published

two books that would define the modern difference about rationality. Beginning with a radical doubt about the existence of all things, including Descartes' own existence, Descartes posited the act of thinking as a means for discovering the truth about all things. For Descartes, thinking provided the means by which a set of clear and distinct ideas could be perceived by the mind, removing doubt and providing criteria for knowing what is true. What makes Descartes' philosophical intervention modern was his effort to provide a foundation for knowing about the world in and through a rational operation of the mind. In other words, the foundation for the modern idea of truth was reason or rationality and not superstition, religious dogma, or communal tradition.

Descartes' approach was not without problems, though. For example, Descartes' distinction between two types of substances, mind and body, set in motion an ontological dualism that privileged mind over body. This philosophical starting point for providing a foundation for rationality has been challenged by many, but perhaps no more comprehensively than by Baruch Spinoza's claim that reason could not be separated from the effects of the body. This idea that the body could not be removed from reasoning has been a crucial element of most feminist critiques of modern reason, especially in the 20th century. Yet Descartes' effort to separate the rationality of the mind from the body set in motion modern problems about how to understand the interaction between reason and emotion and humans and nonhumans that persist today. Regardless of how one approaches the contours of rationality, in a time of religious war, Descartes, a Jesuit-educated philosopher, attempted to provide a safe harbor for reason. In so doing, he provided an answer to the question of what makes the modern modern—namely, the effort to ground knowledge in nothing more nor less than the power of human reason.

The most significant difference between the early modern philosophies of the 17th century and the late modern philosophies at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was the systematic challenge to the modern faith in rationality. In the 1780s, Immanuel Kant would answer the question "What is Enlightenment?" by highlighting the public use of reason as the faculty by

which humans lifted themselves up from their own immaturity. With faith in the public use of reason to root out falsehoods, in the second half of the 19th century, John Stuart Mill would emphasize the key interaction between thought and public discussion to outline a modern understanding of liberty and democracy. Yet by the early 20th century, Max Weber had begun to describe the modern understanding of reason as an ideal type and better approached as an historical force of rationalization. In other words, Weber began to systematically study rationality as a social process highlighting the historical character of rationality, a process philosophers in the second half of the nineteenth century had already begun to note. Questions about the effects of modern reason lead to distinctions and disputes about the social-political effects of reason (modernity), the economic forms of reasoning (modernization), and new cultural or aesthetic modes of reasoning (modernism). The recognition of rationality as an historical force intensified an appreciation of how social, cultural, and economic factors affected the character of rationality. Increasingly, the complexity of modern society was feared to leave little room for anything, but as Max Weber described it, a formal rationality of universally applied rules, which push out alternative forms of rationality less beholden to the needs of bureaucratic organizations such as the modern state or the modern corporation.

As World War II (1939–1945) came to an end, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno declared that rationality had been robbed of its critical powers and had become a threat to humans because it was ever more oriented to only produce knowledge to better dominate nature, a process of domination that had tragically been directed at other human beings. As a corollary to their thesis, modern communication was increasingly understood as a form of propaganda and distraction as powerful new cultural institutions robbed people of their critical faculties. From a different philosophical direction, the ability of modern rationality to distance itself from tradition was called into question. For example, by highlighting the importance of prejudice for understanding, Hans-Georg Gadamer challenged the Enlightenment claim that the advancement of reason would protect human beings from the immaturity caused by the bias of tradition. As the

20th century came to a close, postfoundationalism, the death of philosophy, or the postmodern were advanced as different ways to describe the inability of the modern regime of rationality to locate its foundation in reason alone.

It is possible, however, to note how the postmodern is also modern. Although one story of modern reason highlights the inability of reason to be its own foundation, this very process might be due to a poor understanding of reason as something eternal, timeless, and universal. If reason is embodied, then it is not merely an abstract mind working to secure clear and distinct ideas. If reason has a history, then that history is not merely the domination of nature and human beings, but a capacity for reason to promote reflexivity so that knowledge might allow humans to learn and adapt to new challenges. Finally, if reason is not immune from tradition, but fully embedded in cultural histories, then it is better to speak of a critical and/or alternative modernity that challenge the ways certain kinds of modern reason have been used for nefarious purposes. In other words, the history of modern reason requires one to appreciate both the promise and problems of reason to recognize the different cultural, political, economic, and/or national forms that reason might take in order to respond to different situations and human needs.

Increasingly, the study of modern reason no longer begins in Europe, but starts from the standpoint of those who have outlined a counter-modern politics to the racial or colonial assumptions underwriting North Atlantic visions of modern reason. Similarly, one might approach modern reason as not merely public discussion and debate oriented to a specific type of rationality, but as all the different institutional forms and modes of justification that help people come together to act in a way to promote their common good. Thus, the claims to postfoundationalism, the death of philosophy, or the postmodern do not so much describe a new age, a leap into another time or period of history, but a tendency within the history of modern reason itself. To reflect on and produce the kind of knowledge required for the emancipation of human beings, a thoroughly modern tendency, would increasingly require an embodied, historical, and cultural idea of reason, a notion of reason specifically well suited for communication theory.

Communicative Modernity

Another way of claiming that knowledge requires an embodied, historical, and cultural understanding of reason is to say that knowledge depends on social interaction rather than on the abstract principles or procedures of a rational mind or methodology. Since the 20th century (though one might find antecedents in Greek Antiquity), social interaction has been understood to rely on modes of communication. Whether the unit of social interaction consists of two people talking or standing at a bus stop or an institution of social interaction such as a family or a modern corporation, both of which might have parts scattered across the globe, communication makes possible the coordination, cooperation, and understanding that makes possible the achievement of collective action. Moreover, communication supplies more than pragmatic purposes since communication can provide interactive norms and rules required for a social world to come into being stretching that social world across space and time.

Consequently, just as one might write a history of modern reason, one can begin to chart a modern history of communication as a solution to the problems poised by modern reason. As the 20th century began, George Herbert Mead began to outline the importance of communication for social interaction while advocating a social psychology; others followed suit, explaining the need for a communicative approach to social interaction to account for the production of different forms of knowledge. Even in the most epistemologically rigorous fields of science, the social studies of science revealed the crucial role of communicative practices for making better the knowledge claims of science. The significance of communication in the production of knowledge even enabled others to modernize the ancient art of rhetoric as a mode of inquiry required for all knowledge. The role of communication for understanding social interaction led Jürgen Habermas to challenge the pessimism of those that argued that the fate of modern reason was nothing more than an instrument of domination by pulling together different critical, pragmatic, and hermeneutic philosophical traditions to outline a communicative theory of rationality. A communicative theory of rationality corrects the tendency to imagine modern reason as a disembodied procedure of

the mind to better appreciate the social reflexivity and interactional basis of rationality. The promise of a communicative rationality is that it can provide an idea of reason that can challenge both the goals and the norms of social interaction by providing a critical space for describing how those goals and norms might be implicated in relationships of power or domination. A communicative rationality provides modern reason with a means of self-correction and critique.

Since the 20th century, it is not so much a methodology, technology, or practice that appears to be the defining characteristic of modern reason; rather, it is the way scholars have turned their eye toward communication as a way to create knowledge, define and express goals, and invent and change social norms that provides the foundation for a modern perspective on rationality. In so doing, the study of modern reason has come to be transformed by approaching it from a communication perspective—that is, how different communicative practices and communicative technologies make social interaction sustainable or unsustainable. Although some communicative approaches, such as those of Habermas, attempt to locate communication in universal processes, others avoid abstract disembodied universal theories of communication to better account for the particular ways in which reason is harnessed to approach specific social problems. From a communicative perspective reason is just as likely to be approached with a local sensibility taking care to study how the communication of reason is affected by different forms of life, institutional norms, and cultural traditions. A communicative approach to reason is also cognizant of the very different forms modernism might make in different parts of the world and at different times. For example, for some, modernism may provide the means to subjugate other people as less modern and in need of modernization. Yet for others, modernism may provide new cultural forms and political resources to challenge forms of domination. To begin to approach reason as a social, cultural, and embodied process is to recognize that reason cannot take place without communication. In other words, nothing could be more modern than the study of communication.

Ronald Walter Greene

See also Argumentation Theories; Critical Theory; Hermeneutics; Philosophy of Communication; Postmodern Theory; Pragmatics; Scientific Approach; Social Interaction Theories; Symbolic Interactionism

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MONTREAL SCHOOL

See Constitutive View of Communication; Organizational Co-Orientation Theory

MORAL CONFLICT

See Conflict Communication Theories

MOTIVATED INFORMATION MANAGEMENT THEORY

The theory of motivated information management (TMIM) was developed by Walid Afifi and Judith Weiner and first published in 2004. A revision to the theory was put forth by Afifi and Christopher Morse in 2009. The theory shares close ties to Dale Brashers’ uncertainty management theory, Austin Babrow’s problematic integration theory, and Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory. The revision also relies on Lazarus’ appraisal theory of emotions. The theory grew from a desire to bring together ideas from existing frameworks on uncertainty, elaborate on the role played by efficacy beliefs, explicitly acknowledge the role played by the information provider in uncertainty management interactions, and improve scholars’ ability to make specific predictions about uncertainty management decisions.

The theory proposes a three-phase process that individuals go through in deciding whether to seek information about an issue or to avoid doing so and a similar two-stage process that information providers go through in deciding what, if any, information to provide. The theory is restricted to issues that the person considers personally relevant and important. Because the theory assumes that interaction partners impact these decisions, the authors also restricted applications of the theory to the domain of interpersonal interactions. Its predictions have been tested in several contexts within that domain, including efforts to understand discussions with next of kin regarding organ donation

decisions, search for information from romantic partners about their sexual health status, and avoidance of sensitive topics by adolescents when talking to their parents.

Process for Information Seeker

The first phase in the information management process, according to TMIM, is the interpretation phase in which people assess their uncertainty about an issue. Individuals experience uncertainty when they feel that they cannot predict what will happen in a given situation or on a specific issue. Uncertainty discrepancy reflects the difference between the amount of uncertainty someone has about an important issue and the amount of uncertainty that person wants about the issue. The original version of the theory proposed that individuals' need for a balance between actual and desired states made it so that uncertainty discrepancy caused anxiety. Faced with a serious diagnosis, for example, a patient may feel anxiety from too much uncertainty about his or her condition, but knowing too much can create anxiety as well. The revised version of the theory, though, proposes that the discrepancy can create emotions other than anxiety, including anger, shame, or guilt, among others. Regardless, the emotion felt as a result of the uncertainty-discrepancy leads individuals to the evaluation phase, where they make assessments that determine whether to seek information or not.

The evaluation phase, in which the individual weighs whether or not to seek additional information, involves two general considerations. First, individuals ask themselves about the costs and benefits that come from seeking information about the issue (outcome assessments). Second, individuals decide whether they have the ability to gain the information needed to manage their uncertainty discrepancy (efficacy assessments). Feelings of efficacy generally translate to a sense that one is able to engage in the behavior or to accomplish the task at hand. The theory argues that individuals make three types of efficacy judgments related to information management: (1) Can I cope with what information I might discover (coping efficacy), (2) do I feel that I have the communication skills to competently seek the information from the target person (communication efficacy), and (3) will the

target person be able and willing to give me information that will reduce my uncertainty discrepancy (target efficacy)? The theory argues that individuals' assessments of the rewards and costs of information seeking impact their efficacy judgments, but have little direct impact on their decision to seek information. In other words, TMIM assigns efficacy as the primary direct predictor of that decision.

Once efficacy judgments are made, individuals move into the *decision phase*. There individuals decide whether to (1) seek information, (2) avoid information, or (3) cognitively reappraise the importance of the issue or the size of uncertainty discrepancy. The theory predicts that the combination of high perceived costs to information seeking and low perceived efficacy is especially likely to push individuals toward deciding to avoid information, while the opposite judgment on those two evaluations is especially likely to lead to a direct search for information.

Process for Information Provider

The theory then moves to describing the information management process for the target-information provider. Once an individual approaches someone for information, that person makes assessments that impact how much information they provide, if any, and how they do so. TMIM argues that the provider goes through very similar evaluation and decision phases to that of the information seeker. Specifically, providers assess the costs and benefits they see from giving this person the sought-after information (outcome assessments) and their efficacy to do so. In this case, the three efficacy perceptions revolve around these three questions: (1) Can I cope with the consequences of providing this person with the sought-after information (coping efficacy), (2) do I feel that I have the communication skills to competently provide this person with the sought-after information, and (3) does this person have the ability and willingness to manage the information that I would provide (target efficacy)? These evaluation-phase assessments then lead providers to the decision phase, where they determine whether to provide information to the seeker and if so, how to do it (e.g., how directly, how fully, in what location).

Findings

Studies that have tested the theory have provided generally favorable results about its utility to predict individuals' information management decisions, but have been limited to testing the seeker part of the proposed process. There have also been findings that have suggested the need to more fully understand the role of outcome assessments in the process, more adequately understand the impact of emotions in the evaluation process, and provide a better way of measuring coping efficacy.

Walid Afifi

See also Interpersonal Communication Theories; Problematic Integration Theory; Relational Uncertainty; Uncertainty Management Theories; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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the ways that the communication practices of dominant groups suppress, mute, or devalue the words, ideas, and discourses of subordinate groups. The theory is concerned with what and how much people with differing social status speak, when and where they speak, with what words and concepts, in what modes or channels, and with what repercussions. The muted group theory encourages attention to the ways that language systems and practices are not created equal by all speakers. The theory suggests that an important way that a social group creates and maintains its dominance is by stifling the speech and ideas of those the dominant group has labeled as outside the privileged circle.

Historically, the hierarchies of, for example, gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, caste, religion, country of origin, national identity, aboriginal status, immigration status, regional geography, and language have been used to constrain and devalue the talk and ideas of many speakers. Because these hierarchies are constantly constructed through language and communication, the muted group theory provides one valuable framework for looking at the relationship, and particularly the communication, between asymmetrical groups.

Members of subordinate groups do, of course, speak. People attached or assigned to subordinate groups may have a lot to say, but in mixed situations they may have little power to say it without getting into trouble. Their words (and interests and work), unless presented in a form acceptable to those in dominant groups, are often not considered as understandable by or as important to those in dominant groups as are the words, interests, and work of the dominant group. The speech of those in subordinate groups is often disrespected, and their knowledge often not considered sufficient for decision or policy making. Their experiences are often reinterpreted for them by others, and they are encouraged to see themselves as represented by the words and concepts in the dominant discourse. A premise of the muted group theory is that members of stifled groups may, at least at times, experience a doubleness of existence, seeing reality both as it is experienced from a dominant perspective and also from their own, muted, perspective.

For example, women in most if not all cultures are not as free or as able as dominant men are to say what they want to say, when and where they

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

See Learning and Communication

MUTED GROUP THEORY

The muted group theory, initially developed by Edwin Ardener and Shirley Ardener, focuses on

wish to say it, without ridicule or punishment. They are muted. Although out of necessity they learn of the perceptions and knowledge of the dominating group, they cannot as easily or directly articulate their experiences because the words and the norms for their use have been formulated primarily by their self-declared superiors. Words and perceptions continually ignored may eventually come to be unspoken and perhaps even unthought.

The relative muting of women and other members of subordinate groups can be considered as an everyday, chronic silent crisis, distinguished from the loud crises (such as public debates and government scandals) that attract much more media and research attention. By not including girls and women and other subordinate groups in their theorizing and studies, many communication researchers have further devalued the talk of women and subordinate minorities.

Uses of the Theory

Since the muted group theory was initially developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s for use in anthropology, it has been widely used by communication scholars, as well as by researchers in many other fields, including media studies, philosophy, athletics, business, literacy, political science, education, and literature. The premises of muted group theory are also found in many studies in which the theory is not mentioned by name.

Because the use of the theory by itself may encourage a focus on comparison of and differences between groups, interaction within a group may receive limited or no attention. In addition, because the theory itself does not indicate the processes involved in the muting, some researchers combine muted group with other theorizing. Muted group theorizing—particularly in conjunction with, for example, co-cultural, standpoint theorizing, and/or research approaches that highlight political, economic, and institutional context—has been used to study long-standing injustices and misunderstandings as well as ways of improving communication in many situations.

Development of the muted group theory has grown out of and respects cultural differences of many sorts. Some contemporary critics of the theory suggest that it neglects the complexities of gender, class, and race domination. But a look at the

decades of research using the theory makes clear that consideration of the relationship of groups and categories does not need to be simplistic, universalistic, essentialist, static, or ahistorical. Much of the work involving muted group theory illustrates how relationships of the dominant and dominated groups and of the individuals in these groups are fluid, with identity and group assignment or attachment never unitary or neatly consistent over time, locations, and situations. Women, for example, may enter speaking from very different experiences, although they often share many common problems, and power relationships are always operating. The muted group theory suggests that gender hierarchies still need to be taken seriously, but they do not require an assumption that all the differences are between women's and men's experiences.

Further, the work of some researchers makes clear that speakers in varying situations may not acquiesce with their silencing, but resist, or subvert. Many traditionally marginalized speakers, such as African American women, have worked to challenge suppressions including the conventional rhetorical practices of the dominant White society. Additionally, members of groups who appear to be muted in interaction with many members of the dominating groups may themselves feel high regard for their own alternative models of talk and society and not feel muted in their own communities or with friends. The use of the muted group theory has also been useful in revealing some of the ways that silence, seldom the focus of communication research, can be as complex as speech in intention and consequence.

In comparison with research several decades ago, discussions of diversity and power tend to give little attention to language and linguistics reform. There is not as much interest in the ways social injustices are reflected in language, communication norms, and evaluations of people's speech. Yet knowledge remains language-based. Consideration of the muted group theory can aid in the study of how power relationships operate, especially when traditionally marginalized group members are in mainstream communication situations.

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See also Co-Cultural Theory; Feminist Communication Theories; Feminist Standpoint Theory

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MYTH AND MYTHIC CRITICISM

Myths are enduring big stories that, neither literally true nor false, are more or less functional for interpreting human experience and giving life shape, substance, and meaning. Speaking to universal and cultural beliefs, values, and experiences, myths are articulated in dreams and cultural artifacts and are actualized in rituals. Myths have numerous and interrelated functions, such as adjusting the individual to the collective, articulating a society's identity, justifying an existing power structure, explaining a people's understanding of their literal or metaphorical origins, articulating a telos or destiny of a society, or languaging the nature of the divine or transcendent.

Mythic criticism is a type of rhetorical criticism that uses myths and theories about mythology to generate nonobvious insights into communication events, audiences, and artifacts. Since myths are particular types of stories, mythic criticism shares similar interests with narrative theory and narrativity. Mythic criticism that focuses on how cultural artifacts and events use myth to justify or reinforce hierarchies and/or in-group and out-group status is related to ideology theory and cultural studies. Mythic criticism that examines myth in performance as social ritual shares common interests with symbolic convergence theory and certain areas of performance studies. In what follows, the interrelated functions and types of myths are explained, the link between cultural and universal myths is examined, and mythic criticism as

a method of criticism in communication studies is described in more detail.

Functions and Types of Myths

There are two broad types of myth—universal and cultural—which serve a number of different but related functions. Universal myths transcend cultural and historical conditions and speak to the elemental nature of the human experience. This elemental nature refers to such experiences as birth, growth, developmental maturation, the possibility of procreation, death, and the search for meaning. Although many myths are universal, they are always inflected through cultural myths—stories specific to a society at a given point in time. Even if universal elements dominate the telling of a myth, any interpretation is always grounded in the particular sociohistorical moment out of which it arises and to which it speaks. Psychologist Carl Jung, whose writing on the collective unconscious is central to many mythological critics in the communication field, elucidates two types of dreams, the personal and the archetypal or mythic dream. The personal dream arises from the personal unconscious, consisting of repressed memories and experiences, including the shadow, while the mythic dream emerges from the collective unconscious, which is made up of archaic or primordial material that has existed since earliest times and is shared by all. These archetypes are usually expressed through cultural artifacts such as films, dreams, speeches, music, and art.

Myths are traditionally conservative in the sense that they conserve a collective memory for the culture and carry it forward in diverse telling and retelling of the myth, all with different local permutations of meaning. Myths speak to a collective past that is neither true nor false but more or less functional for the culture. In this sense, as ideological, they can be viewed as regressive if they tell a past that conserves understandings of a culture that are no longer functional for the culture. A good example is the film *Gone With the Wind*, a clearly racist and conservative construction of an ideal mythic Old South that may have helped to justify the institution of slavery for 1930s audiences. But myths, as teleological, also speak to the future and the possibility of a culture's evolution to a more perfect state of being and consciousness.

This message, for example, is most apparent in utopic (ideal) and dystopic (nonsupportive or dysfunctional) visions of society in such sci-fi films as *The Matrix*, *E.T.*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Whether predominantly universal or cultural in nature, myths serve a number of interrelated functions, all of which correspond to various types of myths. Five functions are addressed in what follows—psychological, sociological, ideological, cosmogonic-teleological, and cosmological.

The psychological function of myth deals with the suprapersonal development of the individual through various stages of life. In other words, myths go beyond the personal context to help the individual with larger issues of identity formation. They also deal with change—transitions from one state of being to the next—as well as addressing liminality—the places and periods of time between two different stages in life. Myths that predominantly address the psychological function of myth fall broadly into the category of coming-of-age myths. The classic coming-of-age myth cycle is the hero quest myth first identified by comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell and elaborated upon in his book *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*. Campbell articulates three central phases that dominate the hero quest—separation, initiation into a source of power, and return. Other examples of coming-of-age myths—and that are often embedded in the larger hero myth—are myths of romantic love, the father quest, and the sacred marriage quest.

The sociological function of myth involves connecting and adjusting the individual to the culture and articulating a culture's identity. As social cement, myths help create or confirm a culture's collective identity while addressing issues related to the individual such as socially sanctioned and unsanctioned behavior. They celebrate the culture, especially the history and values of the culture, as well as providing moral lessons for individuals as members of the culture. The American-dream myth and the myth of manifest destiny are two examples of American myths that articulate what it means to be American. They celebrate certain behaviors, such as hard work and the entrepreneurial spirit, and they support certain policies and laws, such as U.S. expansionism and the spread of democracy around the world. These myths also justify certain beliefs, such as those who are successful in life are

responsible for their success and those who are not are responsible for their failure.

The ideological function of myth, which is closely related to the sociological function, refers to myths that justify or rationalize a particular worldview or sanction particular behaviors that establish or maintain superior-subordinate power relationships and in-group and out-group status. Myths that function ideologically are also self-effacing, which means that they mask awareness of their status as myth—that is, they are articulated as natural or commonsensical. Ideological myths often erase awareness of or fail to acknowledge difference (e.g., gender, ethnicity, class, or race) or use difference as a divisive hierarchical strategy. The American dream and manifest destiny myths just discussed, for example, serve ideological as well as sociological functions. Adolf Hitler's mythology of the Aryan Race, based in Christian mythology, for example, was used to justify the murder of millions of non-Aryans during World War II. Ideological myths are often presented as literally true. The Old Testament myth of the Garden of Eden is believed to be literally true by some sects of Christians and is used to justify men's position of dominance over women and over the natural environment.

The cosmogonic-teleological function of myth refers to myths that explain origins of the local group, the larger culture or the world, while also pointing towards the evolution or destiny of the group, culture, or world, often with a divine explanation for origins and with a sense of inevitable movement towards some ultimate telos or destiny. The Judeo-Christian Garden of Eden myth, just discussed, is an example of a cosmogonic myth—a myth of origins. An example of a teleological myth of destiny is the Christian myth of the Second Coming of Christ, which, in the myth, is followed by the Apocalypse, then by a period of 1,000 years of peace, and then the final destruction of the universe. Apocalyptic myths are common in many cultures and religions.

The cosmological function of myth refers to myths that speak to the spiritual or divine nature of the individual and connect the individual with an awareness of the ineffable, the eternal, or the immortal. Myths of divine births, deaths, and resurrections, such as the Ancient Greek stories of

Dionysus and Demeter and Persephone or the Christian story of Jesus Christ's birth, death, and resurrection are some examples of myths that articulate belief in a deity, the existence of the soul, and the possibility of rebirth-renewal and a spiritual life after death. The story of Dionysus and Demeter and Persephone were actualized in the ritual of the Eleusian Mysteries which dominated the greater Mediterranean basin for over 2000 years until approximately 400 AD. The Christian story of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection is actualized in the rituals of baptism and communion that have dominated Christian worship from the 1st century AD until the current era.

The functions of myth, as should be apparent from the previous discussion, are interrelated. For example, a myth that deals with universal biological processes of growth or maturation also might link coming-of-age to a particular set of societal expectations regarding gender. Such assumptions regarding gender might also be linked to ideological assumptions that value one gender style or sexual orientation, such as heterosexuality, more highly than another.

Mythic Criticism

Although myth and ritual are studied in a wide range of disciplines, ranging from anthropology (Lévi-Strauss), to sociology (William Doty), to psychology (Jung) and literature (Northrop Frye), in the communication discipline, mythic critics use theories about myth and/or specific myths, whether predominantly universal or cultural, to articulate nonobvious insights into cultural artifacts, events, and audiences in a way that reveals something about the culture, about communication processes, and possibly about the myths themselves.

Mythic criticism as a method of rhetorical criticism can be applied to a diverse range of discourses or events, from speeches, to films, to musical performances. Films in particular, to the extent that they formally mimic the qualities of dreaming, can be powerful conduits for archetypal material and thus for mythic analysis. Although a good deal of mythic criticism in the field of communication has been done on mass-media discourse, especially film, critics have examined myth and politics (Michael McGee), Native

American protest rhetoric (Randall Lake) and the rhetorical function of universal archetypes such as light and dark and the sun and sea (Michael Osborn).

Currently, the field of communication is marked by an academic debate regarding the theoretical assessments of myth as ideological-false consciousness versus myth as liberating-enlightened consciousness. The heart of this debate revolves around whether or not mythic criticism is apolitical in nature. The charges often leveled are that, by assuming universal qualities to human experiences, mythic criticism risks erasing awareness of difference (i.e., class, race, and gender); by focusing on spiritual transcendence, mythic critics ignored the impact of material conditions (i.e., wealth and poverty); by exploring visions of unity, mythic criticism may ignore the existence of structures of power and dominance that divide (i.e., political, economic, and religious systems).

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See also Cultural Studies; Ideology; Metaphor; Narrative and Narratology; Performance Theories; Rhetorical Theory; Stories and Storytelling; Symbolic Convergence Theory

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N

NARRATIVE AND NARRATOLOGY

Narratology is the study and theory of narratives, or complex stories—what they are made of, how they are structured, and what we gain from using them as a vehicle for communication. Narratology had its beginnings in the study of literary texts. From literary analysis, the term *text* has expanded to mean anything that is equivocal and thus legitimately open to interpretation. Thus, for example, the Bible is a text; so too is Mother Nature. How are these different sources of meaning reconciled personally and theologically? For the Bible, a dark cloud might mean one thing; for Mother Nature, another. Narratology empowers us to look at such a comparison to estimate what texts mean in relation to each other.

The range of interpretative choices that a text allows means that prominent communication narratologists such as Arthur Bochner, David Boje, Larry Browning, Eric Eisenberg, Leonard Hawes, Dennis Mumby, Dave Snowden, Mary Boone, James Taylor, and Jennifer Ziegler all operate from perspectives that may not overlap very much. There is no coalition that decides what qualifies as a narrative. Since *narrative*, like *text*, has become an umbrella term, anything from a Shakespearean play to a bumper sticker can count as a narrative if it has the capacity to produce meaning through a series of events and characters in a story. There is not much omitted from what is coded as a narrative because anything counts as a story that has (a) a sequence—that is, a beginning, middle, and

end; (b) some causal development between sequences and the conclusion (our assessment of the difference between the state of things at the beginning and the end of a story produces its point or intended significance); and (c) memorable phrasing to represent what happened. Forms of communication that meet these three criteria qualify as stories to be analyzed because they make the most sense when analyzed in their space and time context. There is no better statement of the causal development in narrative than Roland Barthes's interpretation of the row of telephones from an early scene of the James Bond movie *Goldfinger*. That there are four phones in that scene only makes a difference if at some future point in the narrative their presence becomes causal by driving the story in a particular direction. Any force that causes the story to pivot (to turn dramatically), whether it be a telephone or a hero, carries what Barthes labels a cardinal function.

In recent decades, narratology has emerged as a well-credentialed field of study. We are now seeing the publication of whole books devoted to reviewing its major insights, and dictionaries now include scores of its most popular specialized terms, such as *motivation*, *sequence*, *actor*, and *ending*. The very term narratology has reinforced this credentialing. As an intellectual marker, it elevates the seriousness of the narrative project and the uses that we readers can make of it. So, too, with the word *narrative*. Compare it to the more street term *story*, which can connote anything from a religious affirmation (“I love to tell the story”) to wholesale dishonesty (“Now, Robert, did you tell a story

about your brother?”). Story lacks gravitas. It implies no particular artistic skill or rhetorical purpose. Narrative implies both.

A true narrative is both intentionally compelling and ultimately moral, and as narratology has expanded into settings as diverse as therapy, management, philosophy, leadership, communication, and psychology, it has provided practical value as well as theoretical dignity. Narratology is also now used as political shorthand to classify interpretive schools or theoretical groupings, such as European narratologists and critical theory narratologists. Expanding narratology's literary meaning and transporting it to other settings fulfills Mikhail Bakhtin's premise that the novel serves as a template for understanding human life—that we can take the art of literary description and examine routine or dramatic real lives for their narrative meaning.

Narratology involves the analysis of narratives, whereas storytelling involves the nuts and bolts of capturing events through a story, be it for sharing a personal experience or for research purposes. In this entry, our focus will be on narratology as narrative theory—exploring the nature of narratives.

So how in fact do narratives differ from other ways of communicating? Certainly one prominent feature of narrative is its ability to dramatize cultural differences by setting up space and time relations; a narrative has to occur somewhere at some time and offer the report of an idea or incident that has a spatio-temporal setting.

Narrative preciseness provides more meaning, more specificity, than an abstract representation that just hangs in the air. For example, our understanding of supervisor-subordinate relations presumes that the lower the unemployment rate, the more control an employee has over his or her work because of the difficulty and cost of replacing that person. Now, imagine the story that arises as an employee recognizes this expanded power and performs it in the workplace.

A grand historical example of the spatio-temporal nexus is the arrival of Europeans in the New World in the late 14th century. When they dropped anchor at an island in the Caribbean, each explorer was garbed in clothes and armor weighing, altogether, about 50 pounds. Imagine what they must have thought of the near-naked natives awaiting them on the beach! Such a difference may

seem starkly simple, but it is nearly impossible to analyze a culture without comparing it to another one. Stories about cultures, including their characters and settings, are the primary means for understanding a culture. A story may say as much about a culture as it does about a character in the story or the narrator telling that story.

Narrative is connected to art and literature because the concept can be applied vertically up hierarchies to determine if leaders and followers interpret stories the same way, as well as horizontally across time to create an aesthetic representation. It can also move from local to global; we can tell a local story about art in relation to the larger cultural meaning it takes on. For example, Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* depicts the Nazi bombing of Spain during the Spanish Civil War. That painting became famous to many diverse people during World War II as an international symbol of peace and diversity, not to mention as a statement against war and singularity. Narrative is artistic when the narrator (in this case, a painter) intentionally, and artfully, arranges a collection of people and events with the aim of engaging the audience.

Narratology is also connected to art when it vivifies its representation of events by employing dramatic and transformational phrases rather than, say, mundanely descriptive and technical ones. Compare, for instance, Martin Luther King's saying "I have a dream" to a more prosaic phrasing such as "I thought about this last night." Narrative communication showcases imagistic communication and gives energy through its exemplary precision and emotional resonance.

We tend to evaluate narratives by their ability to arouse the senses—that is, by their aesthetic quality. Aesthetics is best understood by the counter term *anesthesiologist*. The goal of an anesthesiologist is to deaden the patient's senses. In contrast, an effective narrative will actively engage the senses by using language to create structures that draw us in, whether as readers or listeners. In part, we are drawn into the narrative through the combination of the information that is given in relation to the information that is left out. We tend to find complex narratives—that is, ones with incomplete information—more interesting because they invite us to fill in from our own imaginations. In rhetorical theory, structures with missing data are called enthymemes. Enthymemes are syllogisms

(arguments) in which one of the premises, or even the conclusion, is left unstated. The effort we expend to hypothesize, or read in, the missing information is a kind of participation in the narrative—indeed, even a coauthorship of it. And whatever we ultimately take away from our reading determines the narrative effect. When narratives combine tantalizingly incomplete information with sequential movement, it produces their structure, and that structure allows us to make sense of them—or at least our own sense of them. Being intrinsically equivocal texts, they always remain open to individual interpretation.

According to Aristotle's classic formulation, a narrative has a beginning, middle, and end. The beginning introduces a set of conditions or circumstances that identifies a problem and the players involved in it. The middle part of the narrative brings the conditions and players into a web-like structure called the plot, which is a series of actions, or complications, that await some kind of resolution. The end of the story brings us the satisfaction of that resolution. At the same time, it allows us to make our own retrospective sense of all the events that have been depicted—that is, a moral assessment of what it all means—by remarking the difference in conditions between the beginning of the story and the end.

Just as we use a capital letter and a period to mark the beginning and end of a sentence, we use some version of “once upon a time” or “they lived happily ever after” to mark the boundaries of what is included in a narrative. How the narrator elects to begin and end the narrative helps determine our moral assessment of it. For example, a form of psychotherapy known as narrative therapy encourages clients to rewrite the narratives of their lives to make overwhelming and disempowering events of the past newly controllable by shrinking the memory of them and replacing them with alternative narratives that affirm their capacity to make choices.

This re-engineering of narratives to draw a particular conclusion that allows for the recalibration of personal identity points to their paradoxical quality. The narrator's control over his or her own story has its limits. Although the narrator has the ability to develop characters and to identify their circumstances, to show the language they use and its power to affect outcomes, the narrative, if told from one person's point of view or if focusing on

one person, is still basically a single story. But it has within it the seeds of many other potential stories, each of which might significantly alter our understanding of the characters and events.

For this reason, a key concept in narratology is *polyvocality*, a postmodern critical term that means that there is no objective truth, no single official version of a story, no preferred reading, but rather many voices to hear, many still untold stories within the told one, many angles to view the story from. In that sense, stories are democratic. The meaning reflects whatever elements or characters we decide to focus on in any given reading or hearing. Jean-François Lyotard helps to capture the local and circumstantial nature of narratives by reminding us that by telling one story, another is masked; just as narratives are meant to reveal, they also inevitably conceal. And adding more information that supports one version of a story may avoid another possible story.

Consider, for example, a curfew story that most of us have offered as teenagers to account for why we came home late. Although the facts we offer as an explanation may be literally true, the story we tell may omit another set of circumstances that our parents would find more revealing of how we actually spent our evening.

Narrative is a strategy for sense-making that is counter to a rational-scientific model. If rationality has means-ends, goals, and metrics for measurement, a good narrative is dramatic, surprising, complex, and understood only retrospectively. Stories generate meaning when they begin with a problem that needs to be solved, then follow with a series of actions that either expand or shrink the problem—including the number of participants who are drawn into the story. The emergent nature of the narrative means that the sense-making occurs when a story picks up on previous events and provides a link to future ones, which makes all stories social and political. Narrators make sense of people and events through codes of metaphors, phrases, and terms to mark and frame what is to be understood. When interpretation schemes are in conflict, there are different points of view toward what happened in the story, toward whose perspective is being presented. Point of view can be from a distance or local, from a character's view or from the narrator's—each one helping to demonstrate, once again, the multifaceted nature of narratives.

Walter Fisher suggests that narrative can include traditional rationality such as technical and rhetorical argument, but it goes beyond this to incorporate other forms not always acknowledged as rational. Narrative arguments are persuasive to the extent that audiences see good reasons in them, regardless of the form. Listeners make sense of a story if it has coherence and fidelity. A story is coherent when it hangs together as a consistent frame of meaning, and it has fidelity if it feels truthful to the listener.

The notion of stories' polyvocality has meant that individuals who have traditionally been marginalized in accounts of the past are now legitimized to tell their story, for indeed, as we have all been told, "Each person has his or her story." One example of this is the reinterpretation of the American West to bring in additional players, especially women and people of color, to join the soldier and the cowboy as main characters of the frontier. The additional interpretation of events means that stories can be more confidently assessed for their verisimilitude—the extent to which they represent some realistic or truthful set of circumstances.

Within the framework of narrative structure are the ingredients of power and identity. Just as narratives are interesting when they display people making independent choices, they are also compelling when the protagonists are powerful, when they have special abilities, when they have acute insights, and when they rise above demanding circumstances—especially against an equally powerful adversary who stands in their way of meeting and accomplishing a visionary goal. This is Joseph Campbell's popular mythical sequence, and it offers us a structure analogous to Aristotle's beginning, middle, and end. We experience it over and over again, from popular movies to our day-to-day lives: heroes (both large and small) meet obstacles, get tested by tribulations, and are helped by partners to achieve a goal.

We are drawn to mythical narratives because in one way or another a character in the story proves—or more accurately, persuades us—that persistence pays off. We identify with such narratives when we imagine "I am like that" or "I want to be like that." But the flipside of identity can also be true. We may follow the adventures of a protagonist who has many attributes, but perhaps one

major flaw, even a tragic flaw, which allows us to say, "By the grace of God, I am not like that." Such narratives, both our own and vicarious ones, help us to know who we are.

Larry Browning

See also Dialogue Theories; Hermeneutics; Interpretive Theory; Myth and Mythic Criticism; Rhetorical Theory; Semiotics and Semiology; Sense-Making; Stories and Storytelling

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NARRATIVE TRANSPARENCY MODEL

See International Communication Theories

NEGOTIATION THEORY

Negotiation is one approach for managing conflict within interpersonal, group, organizational, societal, and international settings. Negotiation is typically distinguished from other forms of conflict management through its emphasis on incompatible goals among persons and the exchange of proposals intended to reduce the differences among these incompatibilities and create an agreement. Negotiation is used in a wide variety of social settings including buyer–seller transactions, business deals, labor–management interactions, marital relationships, hostage situations, and environmental disputes. Communicative approaches to the study of negotiation have focused on the interactive elements within the negotiation process—the ways symbols, messages, and language are used to craft proposals, frame issues, and persuade others in the process of reaching agreement.

Theoretical Tributaries of Negotiation Theory

Traditional negotiation research typically has been grounded in models from game theory, distributive and integrative bargaining, and principled negotiation. Game theory emerged in the 1940s from mathematics and emphasized the way that individuals made decisions within communication situations such as negotiation. Game theory typically portrays individuals as rational actors who, when presented with various options in a particular scenario, will select those options that achieve the

optimal solution or gain, allowing them to maximize the material, economic, or socioemotional rewards that they receive from the situation. Similar to games of chance like poker, actors make choices about whether to make a move—discarding a card, for example—depending on an assessment of the likelihood that a particular move will maximize their desired outcome. The theoretical language of game theory presents a picture of interdependent players with conflicting sets of interests or goals who rationally decide to use particular strategies that will allow them to maximize their gains and minimize their losses by receiving payoffs. Game theory is strongly associated with the Prisoner's Dilemma, a multiplayer game in which players make choices as to what course of action to take based on a matrix of anticipated payoffs.

The concepts of integrative and distributive bargaining emerged from Richard Walton and Robert McKersie's classic book, *The Behavioral Theory of Labor Negotiations*, an extensive treatment of collective bargaining among labor and management. Their model emphasized four elements that characterized labor negotiation: (1) distributive bargaining; (2) integrative bargaining; (3) attitudinal structuring; and (4) intraorganizational bargaining. Subsequent negotiation theory and research has paid great attention to the elements of distributive and integrative bargaining.

Negotiation situations in general are characterized by interdependence, and distributive and integrative bargaining can be distinguished by the way interdependence is approached. Distributive bargaining emphasizes a zero-sum form of interdependence where a person can achieve his or her goals at the expense of the other, generating win-lose outcomes. Integrative bargaining represents a variable-sum form of interdependence that accentuates mutual gains or win-win outcomes, the notion that the accomplishment of a person's goals can also help others achieve their goals. Theory and research into distributive and integrative forms of bargaining have addressed a number of issues that shape the negotiation process including (a) the impact of initial offers, (b) the development of tough or soft approaches to bargaining, (c) the influence of bargaining power, (d) the character of the negotiation interaction as measured by such factors as the contentiousness of behavior, and (e) the nature of the bargaining relationship.

The principled negotiation model originated in Roger Fisher and William Ury's seminal work, *Getting to Yes*, originally published in 1981. Fisher and Ury distinguished between positional bargaining and principled negotiation. Positional bargaining emphasizes individuals acting in ways to achieve their goals or objectives. Their positions are solutions or proposals that they will subsequently have to defend and that address their needs, desires, or wants. Individuals can enact positional bargaining in one of two ways. They can engage in hard positional bargaining where they use tough hardball tactics to achieve their desired goals, or they can adopt soft positional bargaining, where they tend to sacrifice their needs, desires, or wants in order to maintain the relationship they have with the other party. Either approach leads to win-lose outcomes as hard positional bargaining emphasizes achieving one's own goals at the expense of the other, and soft positional bargaining leads to a failure of achieving one's own goals while allowing others to achieve theirs. Principled negotiation, on the other hand, emphasizes negotiating on the merits of the case and creating win-win outcomes.

Principled negotiation is grounded in four principles. First, separate the people from the problem. Rather than view the person as the problem and attack the person, the goal of principled negotiation is to collectively attack the joint problem that both parties are confronting and to work cooperatively with one another. Second, focus on interests, not positions. A position is a specific solution that meets a party's needs, desires, or wants. However, these needs, desires, or wants are the interests that underlie people's positions that inform and guide their positions. Given that many different interests can underlie a single given position, Fisher and Ury contend that agreements can be generated by focusing on common interests. Third, invent numerous options before making a decision. Principled negotiation emphasizes generating a wide variety of alternatives through processes such as brainstorming to create a rich pool of possible actions that one may draw on to craft an agreement. Fourth, use objective standards to assess the result. The negotiation process needs to be grounded in some kind of objective criteria to ensure that all parties are treated fairly. The principled negotiation model has been researched in a number of settings including

air traffic management, provider-patient relationships, labor-management disputes, community-planning initiatives, and diplomatic efforts.

These traditional models of negotiation offer a view of communication that is rooted in a problem-solving process that emphasizes the importance of making proposals and counterproposals. Beginning in the late 1990s, alternative models of negotiation began to emerge that shifted the view of communication from a process of exchange to a process of coconstruction emphasizing dramaturgical, narrative, and linguistic theory. For example, feminist theorists such as Linda Putnam and Deborah Kolb have proposed an alternative model of negotiation, grounded in feminist theory and values. They theorize negotiation as a process of mutual inquiry emphasizing collaborative learning that fosters self-knowledge and mutual understanding as opposed to traditional models that view negotiation as an exchange process of proposal and concession making intended to achieve enlightened self-interest and mutual gain. Rather than emphasize forms of communication practice such as debate and information exchange that are aimed at reaching a settlement, a feminist perspective accentuates the importance of dialogue and of sharing experiences as resources for transforming the conflict and the relationships of the disputants. As a result, these alternative models grounded in coconstruction, discourse, and language offer a complementary thread to negotiation theories rooted in a social psychological perspective.

Communication and Negotiation

Communication approaches to the study of negotiation have tended to theorize three important communication activities: (1) framing, (2) strategizing, and (3) managing relationships. These three activities are closely intertwined, but they will be presented separately for ease of discussion.

Framing centers on exploring the way that the vision, perspective, or stance that individuals use or create influences the way they make sense of the situation and create a bargaining position. The frames that people use influence whether people see something as a gain or a loss, whether individuals perceive a message or proposal as a competitive or a cooperative move, whether they identify the person's reasons and motives for making a proposal

legitimate or not, whether they respond to the other party's move using distributive or integrative strategies and tactics, and whether they are likely to accept an offer or not. Psychological approaches to framing emphasize the importance of cognitive mechanisms that serve as perceptual filters affecting the way that individuals make sense of the negotiation context and how they influence activities such as information search and strategy selection. More communication-oriented approaches to framing view it as an interactive process whereby the language that people use, the way they make proposals and counterproposals, and the way they talk about issues creates an ongoing emergent frame for the negotiation. For example, some communication theorists have explored how issue development is constructed through arguments, narratives, justifications, accounts, and case making. The key theoretical questions associated with framing center on what resources individuals draw on to create frames, what kinds of frames are constructed during negotiation, whether frames are temporally durative, and the consequences of framing for instrumental and task outcomes.

Strategizing refers to the communicative performance of strategies and tactics during negotiation. Strategies refer to broad plans that include a series of moves, while tactics are the specific messages that perform the moves. For example, *an individual* may have a broad integrative strategy, but at various points during a negotiation rely on distributive tactics to accomplish her or his overall integrative strategy. An important line of theorizing has focused on modeling the strategies that individuals employ during negotiation. A dominant strategy model presumes that the negotiation process is stable over time and that negotiators consistently use either a distributive or integrative strategy throughout the negotiation. Mixed-strategy models allow for variability of strategy as negotiators may alter their strategy over the course of a negotiation. Stage and episodic models of negotiation presume that negotiations unfold over time and that negotiators may alter their strategy according to the stage of development of the negotiation or the particular characteristics of the episode. Strategizing theory and research focus on (a) articulating the communicative moves and utterances that characterize distributive and integrative strategies and tactics such as initial

offers, concession making, and information management, including issues of bluffing, deception, and blustering; (b) the way the connection between strategy and tactic is managed; and (c) the temporal and contextual elements of strategy choice and performance—how issues of timing and context influence what development of strategy.

Managing relationships refers to the manner in which relationships among the negotiators as well as their constituencies are managed. Negotiation theory distinguishes among agents, constituencies, and audiences. Negotiators typically serve as agents who represent the positions and interests of particular constituencies. For example, during labor negotiations, the negotiators serve as agents for their key constituency, the labor union, or the company. A large number of potential audiences also exist in the negotiation process. Many times during negotiations, a negotiation team is established that consists of multiple parties, each of which is accountable to various constituencies. Members of a negotiating team may not be directly involved in the negotiation, but are witnesses to the process and during caucuses attempt to influence the lead negotiator for their team. Members of the negotiating team may have to sell their larger organization on the deal that they have made with the other party and manage the objections that are raised and the pressure that is placed on their organization by other interested parties.

Theory and research in the relationships among agents, constituencies, and audiences have focused on (a) how lead negotiators manage relationships within the negotiating team—or example, some research has explored how lead negotiators sometimes collude with their opponents to put on a show for other negotiating team members in order to enlist their support; (b) how negotiating teams manage their relationships with their constituencies through information sharing and persuasion to encourage their collaboration; and (c) how negotiating teams and their constituencies exert influence on other key stakeholders who may not be part of the negotiation to create backing for their agreement.

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See also Conflict Communication Theories; Feminist Communication Theories; Group Communication Theories; Organizational Communication Theories

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NEOCOLONIALISM

Although there is dispute about the particular meanings intended when discussions of colonialism and imperialism occur, in general, neocolonialism can be understood as the contemporary continuation of Western colonialism in new ways that differ from historically traditional forms of colonialism that expanded an empire's frontiers and its control of lands and people. Neocolonialism instead operates by controlling political, economic, and cultural elements of a society, people, or institutions. The colonial system is seen to endure and thrive even while assuming that nations and peoples are legitimately independent. In other words, a nation can colonize another, even though the second nation remains politically independent from the first.

In such a scenario, the indigenous peoples of (neo) colonized lands find that their lives are highly determined or acted upon by Western imperial forces.

Although there is not necessarily a formal occupation of their lands, nor are they physically or militarily subverted, the ways in which they are identified, organized, entertained, and studied maintain relations of power that are tantamount to colonization between the dominating Westerners and others.

Scholars study neocolonialism across disciplines with emphases on the particular aspects of life in which such control is manifest. Scholars also look at the hierarchy of individuals that helps to maintain this control and the ways neocolonialist control is maintained. Much work in this area focuses on third world or developing nations, whose populations and economies allow for Western nations to take advantage of them for economic gain, as in the establishment of international call centers and foreign assembly plants. As another example, many Western countries have well-established patterns of dependence on immigrants, both legal and illegal, to support a particular political, economic, or cultural mode of existence. Service industries in many parts of the world, for instance, would not function without immigrant populations that nonetheless are rejected in discussions of immigration policy. Neocolonialism, then, is not geographically nor topographically bound, but operates through patterns of institutional and class discourse.

The theorizing of neocolonialism often focuses on how power relations are created through patterns of interaction at multiple levels. Such theoretical work can begin by exploring the most basic linguistic level of discourse—the very language that is used by those in neocolonialist power relations. For instance, some scholars explore the ways the colonial languages of English and Spanish continue to dominate the minds and cultural ways of knowing in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Mexico. Howard Schiffman points out that even in instances when indigenous languages are considered the official languages of a people, the industries of cyberspace and management of transnational industry continue to push English as the dominant and preferred language for business, education, and international exchange.

Neocolonial scholars are not simply interested in the issues around language and language use; they are also interested in larger discursive practices that accompany language use. The work of French philosopher Michel Foucault is very influential in coming to understand how such practices

evolve historically. He shows, for example, how the primary discourse of an age determines the forms of thinking and acting in that period of history. Therefore, neocolonialist scholars look for patterns in existing practices and institutions that are normally taken for granted, but may have a huge impact on the life of a people. The rise of the Internet is a good example of a form of communication that could shape peoples' lives and institutions worldwide.

Scholars also examine race as an integral part of colonialism and neocolonial practices and power relations. Such work examines Whiteness as the dominating racial aspect of the fiber of neocolonialism. In other words, the ways in which Whites and non-Whites talk to each other can reflect underlying assumptions about their relationship to each other. The work on power alliances between women faculty in the research of Aimee Carrillo-Rowe demonstrates how racialized patterns of power relations become normalized through speech and linguistic practices that are then seen as part of everyday life. Neocolonialist theorists would hold that this allows for the creation of an unconscious neocolonialist system still largely determined by race and racial categories as powerful links to a colonialist past.

In the communication discipline, neocolonialist theory has become prominent in organizational communication and management studies as well as in studies of messages directed at mass audiences. Neocolonialist scholars examine institutional and organizational settings affected by neocolonial practices. Such work is seen in anthropological accounts of the use of indigenous management, where organizations capitalize on the use of local leadership and knowledge for facilitating control of an industry.

This type of work calls certain traditions of research into question, implying that perhaps the authority with which scholars speak in organizational and cultural studies can itself be of the discourse of neocolonialism. For example, Kirsten Broadfoot and Debeashish Munshi question the Euro-American domination of organizational studies, in which the voices of non-Westerners are not present. This kind of work calls for the critique of customary scholarly writing and a careful articulation of new forms of reporting about colonized cultures in order to avoid what is termed *paternalistic neocolonialism* in scholarship. The

International Qualitative Congress organized by Norman Denzin and colleagues at the University of Illinois has attempted to do this by making it possible for scholars from developing nations to participate in articulating competing perspectives. A good example of such efforts can be found in the work by Aimee Carrillo-Rowe, Sheena Malhotra, and Kimberlee Pérez on the call centers in India, which allows the voices of the workers themselves to determine how their experience will be described.

Furthermore, theorists of neocolonialism are interested in many of the everyday ways that representations in areas aimed at mass audiences, such as media, tourism, and the museum industry aid in the production and perpetuation of colonialist discourse. The neocolonialist scholar seeks to understand the dominating influences of neocolonialism as well as the unique and valuable contributions of the subaltern, the submissive or disempowered subject in a power relation whose voice is traditionally muted or unheard. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has been particularly vocal in inviting scholars to acknowledge and interpret neocolonial voices, seeking evidence and understanding of their respective positions.

Sarah Amira De La Garza

See also Corporate Colonization Theory; Critical Ethnography; Critical Race Theory; Cultural Studies; Postcolonial Theory; Whiteness Theory

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NETWORK SOCIETY

The term *network society* appeared with the 1991 publication in Dutch of Jan Van Dijk's book *De Netwerkmatschappij* that was subsequently translated into English as *The Network Society* in 1999. When it was first published, Van Dijk's book reflected the growing ubiquity of information and communication technologies (ICTs) across increasing realms of economy, culture, and society. From stand-alone desk-top computers that were a prominent feature of ICT development in the 1980s, the interlinking or internetworking of computers (desktops and larger mainframe systems) through the telephone system was the basis of both the Internet and the network society more generally. This growth of computing and information sharing and the rapid shift towards the networking of their diverse applications were part of a larger economic transformation that had begun in the 1970s. At this time, economies based upon planned and managed Fordist, or assembly-line production, began to introduce more market-oriented production based upon free market competition.

A key thinker in the initial conceptual formulation of the network society is Manuel Castells and his three-volume work *The Information Age*. Central to this transformation was the salience of digitally encoded information as the primary driver for economic, cultural, and social change. This occurred because within an increasingly competitive global system, knowledge began to replace labor as the most valuable component, and consequently, the production of services, as opposed to manufacturing, became centrally important. For Castells, the nature of this change constituted a

technological revolution, a paradigm shift of the kind articulated by Thomas Kuhn in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Castells termed this the *information technology paradigm* and in his *The Rise of the Network Society*, extended the idea that saw the cheap economic input of information as the most significant feature of change.

Castells identifies five primary features of the information technology paradigm: (1) information is the raw material of new forms of production and consumption, (2) digital information is all pervasive, (3) the logic of digital information affects society, (4) flexibility is a fundamental part of what information enables, and (5) networked information tends to converge into highly integrated systems. The network society is a product of these processes; networks provide the basis for organizing and expansion in the information age. The expansion of computing was due to the enabling effects of the networking process itself—the ability to link and spread and diffuse information flows on an unprecedented scale.

According to Dan Schiller, it was this logic that transformed capitalism, gave the momentum that popularized the Internet, and provided the ideological basis for a globalization based on neoliberalism, which he argues is oriented more towards profits than the needs of people. In other words, this information-networking logic has contributed to a digital divide in which the economic and social benefits of the network society have failed to reach large numbers of people in developed and developing economies. Notwithstanding the uneven development of the network society, multinational corporations were still effectively able to transcend space and time through the use of networkable technologies. According to Jeremy Rifkin, rapidly globalizing corporations such as Microsoft and Intel were able to develop and utilize networks not only to become more flexible in their production systems, but also to become increasingly free from the restrictions of place or territory and to become both global and virtual because their principal assets are information and knowledge.

In his trilogy, Castells also dealt in broad terms with the effects of digital networks upon identity, culture, social power and politics, and the corpus has become a valuable touchstone. Other theorists have developed more focused analyses in response to contemporary developments. Optimistic perspectives

came from more business-oriented thinkers such as Frances Cairncross who argued that the network society was not only good for capitalism, but also good for democracy because cheap information will mean that people will be able to communicate more freely with others across the globe. Influential business leaders such as Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, also went beyond a purely economic rationale for the networking of information technologies and maintained that a positive social potential went hand-in-hand with the allegedly beneficial business outcomes.

Less well known outside the universities were those thinkers who took a more critical perspective of the network society. David Lyon, for example, noted that the immense growth in the industries and the technologies of surveillance constitutes a threat to traditional civil liberties. Others such as Michael Dillon see the network society as providing the basis for new forms of network-centric warfare. These are technological forms, he argues, that made the September 11th attacks possible and also enabled the networked-based, high-tech military response to it. More abstractly, the accelerating speed and volume with which information flows through networks was argued by David Shenk to be creating what he terms *data smog*—a growing superabundance of information that limits our ability to fully comprehend the nature (the potentialities and the pathologies) of the network society. Lawrence Lessig has considered the effects of an overwhelmingly commercial and proprietary network society and observes that there is a growing danger that the enforced rights of those who produce and distribute material are constraining the ideas and creativity that are the mainstays of both a healthy economy and a vibrant society. Lessig maintains that an innovation-protected commons must be developed as a counterbalance so that ideas can flow as freely as possible. Lessig and others have argued the need for a network neutrality that has as few restrictions as possible in respect of content, equipment, and applications.

There exists a clear consensus that the network society is a concrete reality that creates and permeates change through every register of life in the developed and increasingly in less-developed parts of the world. Debates continue, however, regarding the nature of these changes and whether they are positive or negative (but they are never neutral).

What is also clear is that new changes in technology and the social responses to them (such as social networking, cell phone use, Internet blogging, file sharing, and so on) ensure that as the network society spreads yet further, the questions it raises will be increasingly complex—and our responses to them (intellectual, social, and political) will be correspondingly challenging.

Robert Hassan

See also Computer-Mediated Communication; Critical Theory; Digital Cultures; Digital Divide; Neocolonialism; New Media Theory; Postcolonial Theory

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NETWORK THEORY

See Actor–Network Theory; Organizational Communication Theories

NEW MEDIA THEORY

Although the practice of theorizing new media has a history as long as communication studies itself, the turn to new media theory has only formalized itself since the 1990s. The accelerated diffusion of digital media from telecommunications and information technology sectors in the 1990s has led media and communication studies to be defined by new objects of investigation. New forms of media demand exploration in their own right at the same time as the remediation of traditional media becomes open to investigation.

That new media studies has earned a place as a branch of communication theory also rests on claims that traditional media environments have been challenged not simply by technological innovations, but at an ecological level, consisting of substantial, qualitative changes rather than incremental developments to media environments.

From Medium Theory to the Second Media Age

One of the first such claims about substantial change due to media was made by Marshall McLuhan, inventor of the term *media*, in *Electronic Revolution: Electronic Effects of New Media*, an address to members of the American Association

for Higher Education in Chicago (and later reprinted in his book, *Electronic Revolution*). McLuhan argued that the effects of the electronic revolution in 1950s America were so great as to make educators displaced persons living in a world that has little to do with the one in which they grew up. For McLuhan, this revolution produced classrooms without walls as telecommunications and television brought a simultaneous information structure to electronic society.

McLuhan's formulations in the 1950s were to become prophetic for Internet utopians in the 1990s, who proclaimed that McLuhan's time had finally arrived with the inception of instantaneous information provided by the Internet. The editors of *Wired* magazine went so far as to say that McLuhan was wired long before the editors of *Wired* magazine were born.

However, despite attempts to reclaim McLuhan for Internet studies (Paul Levinson's work is an example), there is little in McLuhan's work that deals with the kind of revolution in electronic media that is claimed by new media theorists today, a revolution which is the shift from broadcast to networked forms of electronic media. This transformation is one that is internal to electronic forms of media.

Although many of McLuhan's observations about media globalization (the global village) and convergence (the relationship between mediums) have established some of the grounds for new media research, the media revolution that inspires the contemporary concerns of new media theory can be found in the investigation of a second electronic media age based on interactivity. The euphoria for an Internet-led new media age culminated in a range of texts in the mid 1990s that ranged from the journalistic utopianism of George Gilder, Nicholas Negroponte, and Howard Rheingold to the more theoretical analysis of Mark Poster and Sherry Turkle, each of which declared the end of broadcast and the rise of interactive networks. In *Life After Television*, Gilder announced the overthrow of the master–slave architecture of television by networked media in which everyone is able to be a broadcaster.

With television, on the other hand, the ability to shape, store, and manipulate television pictures had to be contained at the broadcaster since the technology of the time, due to economic and technical

constraints, simply could not be contained within the individual television set. However, the advent of new technologies—the transistor (1948), the microchip (1958), and the fiber-optic cable (late 1970s)—made analogue television technology redundant.

Theorists of the second media age argued that audiences and consumers simply would not tolerate the passivity demanded of them by television as soon as active participation in a networked and decentralized medium became technologically possible. In *The Second Media Age*, Mark Poster declared that the Internet would be the medium to provide an alternative to the severe technical constraints of the broadcast model, enabling a system of multiple producers, distributors, and consumers. A postbroadcast age would also mean the end of the traditional audience and the emergence of an audience of one for whom the personalization of content, whether this be with interactive television or bookmarking Web pages, would replace the mass culture of broadcast.

By the end of the 1990s, the second media age had become something of an orthodoxy that underpinned new media theory and the development of Internet studies and cyberstudies. New media theory turned much of its attention to the ontology of digital media as the defining characteristic that would come to supplant the historicism of a second media age.

Digitalization and Convergence

The historicism of a digital age is founded upon the promise of interoperability between all forms of media that rely on digital code. As digital formats for storing and circulating information become a basic standard that ranges across computing, media, and telecommunications, a digital ontology is seen to be the basis for a mono-media world.

In his 1999 book, *The Internet Challenge to Television*, Bruce Owens made a prophecy of convergence—that through digitalization, the Internet will be all, and television, telephone, and computers will converge on the Internet. But there are two versions of this mono-media thesis. Although some, such as Owens, Negroponte, and Gilder, see digitalization as the basis for convergence, others such as Henry Jenkins and Friedrich Kittler see the digital platform as the basis for interoperability between discrete kinds of media

for which digital code has simply enabled a common language. According to Kittler, digital media has become a master ontology that determines our situation. First it was film, the phonograph, and the typewriter that appropriated the power of the written text. Film and the phonograph record images and sounds, while the typewriter usurps the eye's control of the hand. Current electronic technologies are bringing media back together, and Kittler suggests that in the future, all media will be connected on a digital basis, completely erasing the very notion of medium itself.

For Jenkins, in his book *Convergence Culture*, the interoperability of new media provides much more active participation in media. He argues that whereas old consumers of media were more isolated, new consumers of convergent media are more socially connected because they can upload their own content and choose from a much wider array of fragmented information, including being able to choose between corporate media and grassroots media.

From an economic standpoint, Brian Winston has also argued that in recent years, digitalization and technological convergence has become a rhetorical justification for further deregulation in the communications and media industries by downplaying capital concentration as a cause. For him, mergers and takeovers are not just about plundering technological opportunities, they are also driven by the monopolization in a single industry or even a tendency for the rate of profit to fall in one industry, making diversification attractive.

From a technological standpoint, Winston is an interesting writer in the way he produces a kind of history of the present around digitalization by showing that media convergence has always been a reality of the history of communications. Winston argues that digitalization is not required for convergence. Rather there have been other sufficient means of convergence based on analogue signals that have allowed interchangeability between medium functions for many years. These are largely centered around the convergence between wired and wireless. For example, radio was first used for point-to-point communication, and the telephone was used as a form of network broadcasting in its early years. So today, Winston scoffs at the hubris of new media convergence that marvels that people can listen to the radio over their digital televisions or make telephone calls on their

computers. For Winston, the change over to digital is more comparable to the move from analogue amplitude modulation to analogue frequency modulation in radio 40 years ago than to the slightly earlier postwar shift from radio to television.

When Old Technologies Were New

Winston is, of course, only one among a stable of writers who have performed such a history of the present as a way of undoing contemporary media historicism in the style of Carolyn Marvin's classic text, *When Old Technologies Were New*. Others include Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey Pingree's *New Media 1740–1915*, James Carey's analysis of the telegraph, Stephen Kern's *Culture of Space and Time 1880–1918*, and Armand Mattelart's *Networking the World, 1794–2000*. The major lesson from these books relates to the way in which, particularly between 1880 and 1918, time-space compression intensified to a degree that has never been equaled. One can cite the invention of the telegraph as a decisive point in such acceleration, producing McLuhan's so-called cybernation of instantaneousness, an aural medium of information from everywhere.

As Carey argues, it was the telegraph that, more than any other technology, first marked a separation between transportation and communication. Jon Stratton argues that this separation led to the creation of the first kind of cyberspace. For Stratton, it is not the introduction of computers that defines cyberspace, but as increase in the speed of communication over distance to a point where the time needed for a message to traverse that distance is experienced as negligible by both sender and receiver.

Of course, the Internet and other digital technologies differ from the telegraph in their bandwidth and their ability to convey complexity, but it has done little to accelerate global time-space compression. And following Winston, digital media are not at all a prerequisite for generating an instant international context of social connection. One only has to watch a super-media event, such as the Olympics, to see how television can do this and why its liveness and its global reach provide a special kind of mediated visibility, or a gathering place, regardless of whether this visibility is provided by digital or analogue technology.

Ritual Theory

A second line of critique of digitalization and convergence as central to new media theory has been cultivated within ritual approaches to communication. The ritual approach offers an explanation as to why television and even newspapers and books have not declined in the face of the above trends. By examining how and why people interact with communication mediums, this approach suggests that attachments to mediums are not simply driven by efficiency and control over media that was pushed by the second media age theorists. Rather, attachment to media, both old and new, provides a constancy that individuals may find hard to attain in face-to-face relationships and other areas of everyday life.

For example, in her books Turkle explores forms of intimacy people have with digital mediums. In *The Second Self*, Turkle examines the way in which computer users relate to their PCs as though they have a mind and soul, and to some extent, interaction with such an entity replaces direct human interaction. In her later work on online identity, Turkle examines how we can use online communication to control how much we reveal of ourselves or, indeed, project altogether new identities. Although identity may become more fluid and decentered online, there is comfort in only having to interact with a medium rather than directly with other human beings, a comfort which creates the paradox that avatars are more willing to express intimacy online than they are offline. The fact that self-disclosure on the Web is an ambiguous performance arguably makes the Internet a seductive meeting place. However, such ambiguity depends on the lack of visibility that users have in earlier forms of the Web. For the most part, their ability to project an identity was limited to what they could type.

However, the development of Web 2.0 as a platform has transformed the nature of interactivity on the Web and opened up a universe of user-generated media. Whereas the page metaphor of Web 1.0 only allowed for one-way downloading of information and was therefore not that different to the consumption of broadcast media, Web 2.0 applications allow users to become autonomous producers. Blogs, YouTube, Wikipedia, eBay, Flickr, Second Life, and other such online social networking sites enable media users to have a broadcast experience. At the same time pre-Web 2.0 applications become

redesigned for their Web-usability, text documents can be saved as HTML, and images can be dragged and dropped between applications.

The significance of Web 2.0 is that, whereas broadcast generates an instant national or international context of social connection, there are few ways in which individuals can achieve meaningful interaction to make these global connections tangible. The fact that users can now work with the materials of broadcast media as a way of communicating expands the idea that media make possible a public sphere.

The stage, the cinema, and television are each spaces of appearance—where how I appear to others is the same as others appear to me—but ones in which the struggle for visibility are very unequal. However, Web 2.0 makes possible a mediasphere—something akin to Roger Silverstone’s notion of the mediapolis. Silverstone’s mediapolis is a site in which communication is multiple and multiply inflected. It is open to circulation of images and narratives and to a characteristic combination of moral and dramaturgic concerns. Unlike physical assemblies, however, the mediapolis easily finds a place at both national and global levels, an electronic gathering place that arises out of people speaking and acting together regardless of where they happen to be.

Finding a Methodology for New Media Studies

The concept of mediapolis, like Jenkins’s concept of media convergence as a meeting of corporate and grassroots media, suggests a much more open media landscape than new media theory addresses. Indeed, Anna Everett has suggested that this landscape has created a sensory plenitude, defined by the simplicity and ubiquity of clicking a mouse, video-game joystick, or Web-TV remote control. At least, it is the power and pleasure of the click that produces a consumer-driven on-demand environment of media services and gives the consumer an illusion of autonomy over new media. From the human–media interface, click theory points toward the need for new accounts of the relationship between users–audiences and media texts, which mass media paradigms are unable to accommodate.

From the macroscopic standpoint of media environments themselves, new media theory faces methodological challenges from a number of directions. One is the pace of change of the three sectors

relevant to the field: computerization, media, and telecommunications. Second is the difficulty, and perpetual infancy, of mapping the convergences between these domains, and third is the breadth of the interdisciplinary resources that are needed to survey the field. Medium theory offers some gestural insights into the relationship between old and new media, but it does not provide a methodology for examining the relationship between the coemergence of a vast array of new media in the one environment. Lars Qvortrup suggests that complexity theory can and should be applied to new media. For him, a basic methodological question is whether digital media can be reducible to a limited number of fixed features, which it cannot. Complexity theory is influenced by social determinism rather than by technological determinism in that it addresses media and media development in media evolution terms, implying that new media emerge in order to address emerging social complexity management problems. Thus, to understand the diffusion of new media, it is necessary to understand complex behaviors—of markets, individuals, and technologies—that have, in fact, a long process of evolution.

David Holmes

See also Actor–Network Theory; Organizational Communication Theories; Complexity and Communication; Computer-Mediated Communication; Digital Cultures; Globalization Theories; Informatization; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Medium Theory; Motivated Information Management Theory; Network Society

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NEW RHETORIC

See Argumentation Theories

NEW WORLD INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ORDER (NWICO)

The New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) was younger sister to a 1974 UN-sponsored proposal for a New International

Economic Order (NIEO). NIEO had advocated an equitable economic relationship between nations of what (at that time) were commonly described as the first and third worlds (denoting developed and developing economies respectively). NWICO was created to foster more equitable communications between developed and developing worlds. It represented a high-level, sympathetic response to criticisms that developing countries were culturally dependent on the West through their consumption of Western media technologies and products.

NWICO was articulated through various forums during the 1970s, culminating with the 1980 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference in Belgrade, which outlined the principles of NWICO:

- elimination of imbalance and inequalities in information flows of such products as news media, television programs, communications hardware;
- elimination of the negative effects of media monopolies on diversity of expression in media;
- removal of internal and external obstacles to a free flow and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and ideas;
- plurality of sources and channels of information;
- freedom of the press and information;
- freedom and responsibility of journalists and all professionals in the communication media;
- respect for each people's cultural identity and the right of each nation to inform the world public about its interests, its aspirations, and its social and cultural values;
- respect for the right of all peoples to participate in international exchanges of information on the basis of equality, justice, and mutual benefit; and
- respect for the right of the public, of ethnic and social groups, and of individuals to have access to information sources and to participate actively in the communication process.

NWICO was a component part of a dialogue between three distinct power blocs during a period of continuing Cold War between capitalist and communist nations. These blocs were the Soviets, the developed Western nations, and the developing world. The Soviets argued that information must

serve the interests of the state since the state is representative of the people. This principle was alien to the Western bloc, which advocated free flow of information and freedom of media from state interference. The Soviet principle conveniently overlooked the gap between ordinary citizens and party elites, while Western free flow rhetoric obsessed about state interference while ignoring the dangers for free expression of commercialized, private media. The developing world was hostile to Western rhetoric, which they suspected was a cover for Western media penetration of their markets and for the uncontested power of Western media over how developing countries were represented to the rest of the world.

NWICO critically addressed three dimensions of international communication: the imbalance of communication flows between first and third worlds, their content (which prioritized the developed world and undermined the developing world), and control of those flows (principally by Western corporations, in their own interests or those of political elites). The debate revolved around five critical contradictions. These were between (a) ideas of freedom and of sovereignty, for example, between the freedom of publishers to disseminate their media products around the world and the sovereign right of states to control information flows into and out of national territories; (b) ideas about media responsibility for the nation and about their responsibility to the people or, alternatively, a three-way contest between ideas of information as social development, information as political control, and information as social criticism; (c) notions of the freedom of the press, referring mainly to the rights of owners, and freedom of information, referring to the rights of individuals and groups to express ideas through media, to exercise control over media, and to access media; (d) a communication ideology of professional service that positions audiences as clients or consumers against a communications ideology of social participation that engages audiences as equal partners with the media in debate about public issues for the public good; (e) principles of communications equity, requiring some form of state or other intervention to achieve equality of access to expression, representation, and reception, and principles of communications choice, which guarantee freedom for audiences to make market choices between technologies, content, and consumption behaviors.

Directly campaigning against NWICO was the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the World Press Freedom Committee, the International Press Institute, and the Inter-American Press Association. They argued that implementation of NWICO would support government control over expression. NWICO supporters denied that this was the intention. The compromise result was UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication. Its purpose was to facilitate and channel bilateral aid to specific communication projects. This was close to the approach advocated by NWICO's opponents at a 1980 meeting in Talloires—that developing country media should cooperate with the private sector in the West in setting up, training, and maintaining media infrastructure and personnel.

References to NWICO continued until the late 1980s. UNESCO's 1983 General Conference referred to an evolving and continuous new world information and communication order that could bring about free, balanced dissemination of information. By 1987, UNESCO had ceased to promote NWICO, resorting (under economic pressure, following U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO in 1983) to an earlier rhetoric of free flow. But NWICO was not simply killed off by U.S. power politics. The growth of India and China, stronger media production in developing countries, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, the development of media contra-flows such as Bollywood movie exports, Al Jazeera, and telenovela exports from South America, all reduced concerns about dependency on Western media imports. Persistent worries about media commercialization, concentration, infotainment, and globalization of media industries, however, demonstrate the continuing relevance of many NWICO principles.

The UN General Assembly's endorsement of a World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2003 and 2005 was in some senses a natural successor to NWICO. WSIS recognized the significance of digital information and communication technology and committed participants to spreading global access to the Internet, bridging the digital divide, and establishing an equitable system of Internet governance. WSIS focused particularly on technology and equity of access and governance—on issues of imbalance and control rather than

on issues of content. Unlike NWICO, however, it sought partnership with private enterprise.

Oliver Boyd-Barrett

See also Critical Theory; Digital Divide; Flow and Contra-Flow; Free Flow Doctrine; International Communication Theories; Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency

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NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION THEORIES

The first scientific study of nonverbal communication was seen in Charles Darwin's book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. He argued that all mammals show emotions reliably in their faces. Today, studies on nonverbal communication range across a number of fields, including linguistics, semiotics, anthropology, and social psychology. Nonverbal communication plays an important role in everyday interactions with the different people we meet. The human body is so incredibly versatile that it can send thousands of nonverbal messages. When we encounter people, we usually look first at their face to see if their expression reflects what they are saying. Then we listen to the tone of their voice to check if there are any indications of the emotions involved, and finally, we listen to the

spoken words to get the actual meaning. Generally, we make judgments about the nature and behavior of persons based on their nonverbal and visual cues rather than on their verbal communication.

Most people have an intuitive sense about what nonverbal communication is. Often called body language, it is assumed to include gesture, facial expression, body movement, gaze, dress, and the like to send messages. But the notion of body language is fairly vague and omits a number of important communicative nonverbal elements, such as use of voice, touch, distancing, time, and physical objects as messages. It is the assumption that one cannot not communicate, a claim that has given rise to extended debate on what constitutes nonverbal communication. Now it is believed that all nonverbal behavior is communication. Judee Burgoon defines nonverbal communication as those behaviors other than words themselves that form a socially shared coding system—that is, they are typically sent with intent, typically interpreted as intentional, used with regularity among members of a speech community, and have consensually recognizable interpretations.

Nonverbal communication is both powerful and indispensable in communication. Our verbal communication would be ineffective if our nonverbal messages did not accompany them. No matter where we look, nonverbal communication is at the heart of every message conveyed or received whether in face-to-face encounters or over the telephone. In fact, nonverbal communication includes personal feelings, emotions, attitudes, and thoughts through body movements—gestures, postures, facial expressions, walking styles, positions, and distance—either consciously or involuntarily, more often subconsciously, and accompanied or unaccompanied by the spoken language. Thus, it can be said that nonverbal communication is the way people unconsciously telegraph their private thoughts and emotions through body movements—the way in which they fold their arms, cross their legs, sit, stand, walk, use their hips, eyes, and even in the subtle way they move their lips.

A pioneer in the field of nonverbal communication, Ray Birdwhistell, suggested that most human communication occurs through gestures, postures, position, and distance. He described a 65 to 35% split between actions and words. Albert Mehrabian, a well-known expert in nonverbal communication,

conducted a study on the relationships among the three main elements of communication: the verbal, the vocal, and the visual. The verbal refers to the words that are spoken, the message. The vocal refers to the intonation, projection, and resonance of the voice through which the message is conveyed. The visual depicts the nonverbal behaviors while speaking. Mehrabian noted the impact of communication across the three forms as verbal, 7% (words); vocal, 38% (tone of voice, inflection); and visual, 55% (nonverbal physical behaviors). The visual is the most controllable and perhaps the most unconscious element of the message from sender to receiver. If the message is consistent, all the elements get combined effectively. There is excitement and enthusiasm in the voice, correlated with an energetic, lively face, and body that exudes confidence and conviction about the message.

Bruce Perry states that human communication starts when words have no meaning. It starts by gazing, rocking, stroking, kissing, and humming. It is in these first nonverbal interactions that a human being is connected to another and the back and forth of communication begins. Thus, nonverbal communication is the core of all languages. Human beings have a remarkable brain-mediated capacity to make sounds and act as symbolic representations of other things. They are capable of making thousands of complex languages with millions of unique words.

When language does not develop in the context of caring relationships, we lose the beauty and meaning that words can convey. For each newborn, exposure to repetitive spoken language in a relationship provides the stimulus for neural organization that will allow that child to develop complex language capabilities—the capacity to understand and to communicate using words. This learning process requires that language be derived from social-emotional communication. The face, not the voice, is the major organ of human communication.

Only a fraction of our total brain is dedicated to verbal communication. Indeed, the vast majority of our communication with others is nonverbal, and a huge percentage of what our brains perceive in communication from others is focused (even without our being aware) on the nonverbal signals—eye movements, facial gestures, tone of voice, latency to delay in responding to a question,

the move of a hand, or tip of the head. Even as one area of the brain is processing and attending to the words in an interaction, more areas are continually focusing on, and responding to the nonverbal actions that accompany the words. It is through nonverbal communication that we learn the meaning of words.

Despite the important role that nonverbal messages play in our society, few people are conscious of the ways in which they respond to the nonverbal cues of others. It is ironic that people spend several years in learning verbal language, but almost no time is devoted to the study of the syntax or vocabulary of nonverbal behaviors. The result is that our ability to send and interpret nonverbal messages is generally inadequate.

Anthropologists Birdwhistell and Edward T. Hall were interested in the total process of communication, and their pioneering efforts and observations of body movements, gestures, postures, and the use of space laid the groundwork for the area of study called nonverbal communication.

The Role of Culture

Cultures differ radically in their use of space, touch, time, and artifact; in the symbolism of their attire; in their use of bodily and vocal cues—in short in all the nonverbal codes. For example, touching the feet of elderly people would be seen as showing respect to them in Indian culture, but the same act might be interpreted differently in other cultures. Communicators become more tolerant of others once they understand that unusual nonverbal behaviors are the result of cultural differences.

Although much nonverbal communication is based on arbitrary symbols that differ from culture to culture, a large proportion is also to some extent iconic and may be universally understood. Paul Ekman's influential 1960s studies of facial expression determined that expressions of anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise are universal. Nonverbal communication has many modes of communication, but based on several studies, the following mediums are popularly known as they are frequently used for conveying and understanding the messages. Each of these mediums has some unique properties that influence the communication behaviors.

Modes of Nonverbal Communication

Proxemics

Proxemics was first developed by Hall during the 1950s and 1960s. Hall's studies were inspired by earlier studies of how animals demonstrate territoriality. The term *territoriality* is still used in the study of proxemics to explain human behavior regarding personal space. Owen Hargie and David Dickson identified four such territories. *Primary territory* refers to an area that is associated with someone who has exclusive use of it—for example, a house that others cannot enter without the owner's permission. *Secondary territory*, if using the previous example, means that there is no right to occupancy, but people may still feel some degree of ownership of a particular space. For example, someone may sit in the same seat on a train every day and feel aggrieved if someone else sits there. *Public territory* refers to an area that is available to all, but only for a set period, such as a parking space or a seat in a library. Although people have only a limited claim over that space, they often exceed that claim. For example, it was found that people take longer to leave a parking space when someone is waiting to take that space. *Interaction territory* is the space created by others when they are interacting. For example, when a group is talking to each other on a footpath, others will walk around the group rather than disturb it.

Use of space varies because cultural definitions of the self are different. People of a particular culture arrange their space in a certain ways. Hall defines three basic types of space. *Fixed-feature space* consists of unmovable things such as walls and rooms. *Semifixed-feature space* includes moveable objects such as furniture. *Informal space* is the personal territory around the body that travels with a person and determines the interpersonal distance between people. For example, Anglo-American culture uses four discernible distances: intimate (0 to 18 inches), personal (1 to 4 feet), social (4 to 12 feet), and public (over 12 feet). It may be noted that the distance between communicators also depends on sex, status, and social role.

Haptics

Haptics is the study of touching behavior in nonverbal communication. Touches that can be

defined as communication include handshakes, holding hands, kissing (cheek, lips, hand), back slapping, a pat on the shoulder, and brushing an arm. Touching of oneself during communication may include licking, picking, holding, and scratching. These behaviors are referred to as adaptor and may send messages that reveal the intentions or feelings of a communicator. The meaning conveyed from touch is highly dependent upon the context of the situation, the relationship between communicators, and the manner of touch.

As a form of communication, haptics has received increasing attention in nonverbal research over the past decades. Our need for touch seems to be very strong. Touch can convey a myriad of meanings, ranging from care and concern to anger and violence. The power of communication through touch has been studied in several applied settings. If touching is so important and powerful, why is it often suppressed in our society? Perhaps, as our society is progressing, people substitute touch with other signs and symbols, such as language. In Indian culture, touching has a very wide range of meaning. Untouchability, a curse in Indian society, exists even today in certain parts of the country. In northern India, in certain relationships some family members cannot touch each other. Touching the feet of parents and older people in the family and relations is supposed to be the best way to show respect.

Oculesics

The study of the role of eyes in nonverbal communication is referred to as oculusics. Eye contact can indicate interest, attention, and involvement. Gaze comprises the actions of looking while talking, looking while listening, amount of gaze, and frequency of glances, patterns of fixation, pupil dilation, and blink rate. All these activities should be understood in their proper cultural contexts.

Chronemics

An interesting but often overlooked dimension of nonverbal communication is chronemics, or use of time. Our notions of time, how we use it, the timing of events, our emotional responses to time, and even the length of our pauses contribute to the communicative effect of time. The concept of time

varies from culture to culture. For example, in Indian culture, lateness and waiting might not be that important as it is in many Western cultures. Misjudgment and misuse of these different time systems can lead others to interpret nonverbal behaviors inaccurately. People in such cultures, where punctuality is considered not that essential, may face difficulties if they arrive early or on time. In addition, this will definitely affect their communication behaviors.

Following Hall and others, William Gudykunst and Stella Ting-Toomey identified two dominant time patterns: *monochronic* time and *polychronic* time. Monochronic time schedule (M-time) refers to cultures and contexts in which time is seen as being very important and it is characterized by a linear pattern. The emphasis is on the use of time schedules and appointments. Time is viewed as something that can be controlled or wasted by individuals, and people tend to do one thing at a time. The M-pattern is typically found in North America and Northern Europe. The other pattern is called the *polychronic* time schedule (P-time) where personal involvement is more important than schedules. The emphasis lies on personal relationships rather than on keeping appointments on time. This is the usual pattern that is typically found in Latin America and the Middle East.

Kinesics

Kinesics is the study of bodily activity in nonverbal communication. Birdwhistell is considered to be the originator of kinesics. Kinesics is also popularly known as body language. Kinesic behaviors include mutual gaze, smiling, facial warmth or pleasantness, childlike behaviors, direct body orientation, and the like. Birdwhistell proposed the term *kineme* to describe a minimal unit of visual expression, in analogy to a phoneme which is a minimal unit of sound. Birdwhistell based his theory on seven assumptions: (1) All body movements have potential meaning in communicative contexts—somebody can always assign meaning to any bodily activity; (2) behavior can be analyzed because it is organized, and this organization can be subjected to systematic analysis; (3) although bodily activity has biological limitations, the use of bodily motions in interaction is considered to be a part of any social system; (4) different groups will

therefore use gestures differently—people are influenced by the visible bodily activity of others; (5) the ways in which bodily activity functions in communication can be investigated; (6) the meanings discovered in research on kinesics result from the behavior being studied as well as the methods used for research; and (7) a person's use of bodily activity will have idiosyncratic features, but will also be part of a larger social system shared with others.

Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen conducted research on kinesics particularly on face and hands. They were interested in increasing understanding of the individual communicator, the nature of interpersonal interactions and relationships, as well as the quality of communication by studying kinesic elements. Researchers in the field of kinesics generally value face as the most expressive part of the body. In our daily interaction with people, it is the face that first draws our attention since it is directly observable. Facial expressions are highly flexible and changeable. They are connected with our emotions as well as with our speech. The face can encode a variety of communicative (conscious and intended) and informative (unintended) messages. We alter our facial expressions to make them relevant to particular situations, such as parties, weddings, funerals, formal occasions, and so on.

Thus, every part of the body, from the eyebrows to the legs and feet, can be manipulated, and this gives rise to endless possible combinations of features. Birdwhistell has even estimated that there are 250,000 expressions possible in the face region alone. Fortunately, not all of these minute differences in expressions are meaningful.

Physical Environment-Appearance

Environmental factors such as furniture, architectural style, interior decorating, lighting conditions, colors, temperature, noise, and music affect the behavior of communicators during interaction. Environmental conditions can alter the choices of words or actions that communicators use to accomplish their communicative objective.

Another visual dimension of nonverbal communication is the physical appearance of the human body. Elements such as physique, height, weight, hair, skin color, gender, odors, and clothing send nonverbal messages during interaction. For example,

research into height has generally found that taller people are perceived as being more impressive. Men and women are very conscious of their own appearance and that of others. In fact, physical attraction is often the key determinant of whether people will choose to become acquainted. It should be clear that physical appearance cues produce strong reactions in others, but physical appearance as a code is more limited than some of the other nonverbal codes. Thus, physical appearance is more effective in the beginning stage of interaction, and the first impression effects are generally important.

Paralanguage

Paralanguage (sometimes called vocalics) is the study of nonverbal cues of the voice. Vocalics is concerned with the use of the voice in communication. It focuses on how we say something rather than on what we say. It is, therefore, referred to as the vocal element of speech as opposed to the verbal element, which is the words and their meanings. Vocalics consists of several features. Vocal quality is the characteristic tonal quality of the voice, based on such factors as resonance, articulation, lip control, and rhythm control. Intensity, tempo, pitch, fluency and vocal patterns are the important dimensions of vocalics.

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See also Chronemics; Culture and Communication; Expectancy Violations Theory; Kinesics; Language and Communication; Paralanguage; Proxemics; Semiotics and Semiology

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OCULESICS

See Nonverbal Communication Theories

ONTOLOGY

Ontology is the branch of metaphysics that considers the nature of being, the philosophical investigation of being. The term derives from the Greek language: *on* (being; *onta* = beings) and *logos* (study of nature and properties of, logic, or theory). With respect to human communication theory, ontology is the study of what it means to be human, which shapes the background understanding for theorizing about human communication. Human communication scholars adhere to the perspective that what makes a person human is one's ability to communicate, to engage in oral discourse. Scholars may begin their investigations relying on different presuppositions, all of which influence their theoretical conclusions. All human communication theory stems from an ontological underpinning of what it means to be human.

History

The philosophical area of ontology dates back to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* recorded in antiquity. *Metaphysics* is a compilation of 14 books, filed by researchers as metaphysics because these books

followed Aristotle's earlier work *Physics*, a treatise on nature or birth and growth (*meta* = after; *phusis* = internal activity that makes something what it is). Interrelated foci in *Metaphysics* include ontology, theology, and universal science. First, ontology is the study of what certain entities have in common by virtue of being that entity—the study of being and existence. Ontology includes the definition and classification of entities, the nature of their properties, and the nature of change. Second, theology is the study of things that can be known that are nonmaterial, including topics such as the nature of religion and the world, the study of God, existence of the divine, and questions about creation. Third, Aristotle is critical of Plato's view of universal science. Aristotle is interested in the science of being as being and distinguished the first philosophy of ontology as that basic entity before one introduces the particular details of science (including metaphysical sciences such as cosmology and theology as well as physical sciences such as chemistry and physics). He examines being qua being as what is basic and common to all being, the being of being.

Following Aristotle's work, ontology was often conflated with metaphysics. Ancient and medieval philosophers would generally define metaphysics as including ontological issues. In the 17th century, metaphysics became a catch-all category for things that could not be categorized in another way: not ethics, not epistemology, not logic. Around this time the term ontology came to mean the science of being to formally differentiate the subject matter of ontology from metaphysics. The

word *ontology* was generated in the early 1600s to avoid ambiguities associated with the term *metaphysics*. One of the earliest uses of the term is attributed to Jacob Lorhard, who used the word *ontology* in *Ogdoas Scholastica (Diagraph of Metaphysic or Ontology)* in 1606 when investigating the relationship between science (material things) and religion (spiritual things).

The most basic ground of any theory is its ontological premise. What scholars study and how they explain the findings of their research reflects the assumptions they make about human nature. Any attempt to understand (theorize) an aspect of the world makes assumptions about the phenomenon—such as what exists in a particular domain, conditions of that existence, and relationships on which the phenomenon depends. Ontology examines being or existence as well as its basic categories and relationships. Ontology links theory back to the kinds of things that would have to exist for the theory to be true (i.e., characteristics of human).

There is no singular ontology—philosophers have generated various ontologies that hold different views of human nature. Different ontological systems have different categorical schemes. Ontologies may be deductive, systematic, poetic, or otherwise. An ontological perspective explains how various things are similar, different, compatible, incompatible, and so forth. Different ontologies propose alternate ways of understanding what it means to be human. The way a theorist understands and conceptualizes human communication depends on the theorist's ontological stance.

An ontological view conceives of or apprehends the world from a specific standpoint. Through a postmodern lens, various worldviews are different, but not superior to one another. A particular world view may be useful for some purposes, but either insufficient or overly complex for other purposes. Ontology helps explain how and why all forms of human communication are unique expressions. Different ontological grounds reveal different assumptions of what it means to be human and how communication shapes a person and therefore culture.

Ontological Issues in Communication Scholarship

The view one takes of human nature guides the creation of communication theory. A theory reflects

a certain view of what humans are and how they operate-behave. Different theorists adhere to different views of human nature. Different ontological positions generate different definitions used to understand human communication. This point accentuates the importance of defining one's terms in communication scholarship.

In constructing human communication theory, one's commitment to a particular ontology will influence one's epistemology and the attendant research methodology and protocol. To assist in understanding how this plays itself out, consider three different ontologies relevant to the study of communication: realism, nominalism, and social constructionism. There are numerous types in each of these general ontological categories represented in the work of various philosophers. In other words, there are numerous kinds of realist, nominalist, and social constructionist ontologies.

Realism is an ontology of properties. Realist ontology claims a reality of social objects or relations independent of human beings. Reality is completely independent from our ways of conceiving the world as represented in our linguistic practices. Claims about existence rest on the object's observable and physical properties as well as that the object exists independently of anything anyone says about the object.

The tenets of nominalist ontology are opposed to a realist ontology; nominalism is antirealism. Nominalism is a doctrine that focuses on particularities (rejecting abstraction) and concreteness (rejecting universals). To nominalists, various objects labeled by the same term have nothing in common but their name; the meaning is in the particular language selected to describe the experience or entity. In the move from an internal explanatory level to an external validation level, the same term can be used for entirely different things.

A social constructionist ontology claims that social constructs as artifacts of a particular culture or society are byproducts of human choice rather than emerging from nature or divine will. Social constructionists consider the way in which individuals and groups create their perceived reality. Reality is seen as an ongoing, dynamic process that is created, reproduced, and altered by people acting on their interpretations and perceptions. This approach is most commonly taken by human communication scholars in generating theory.

Each of the ontologies views constituencies in the world of human experience differently. For ontologists, the goal is to clarify presuppositions and principles about an entity to make that knowledge distinct and complete—to characterize a definiteness and stability about what it means to be human. Numerous issues are relevant to understanding what it means to be human. The following brief discussion will focus on issues of choice, behavior, experience, and context as conceived by realist, nominalist, and social constructionist ontologies. Theory will present insights based on a view of reality that reflects a particular ontology.

Choice

A central issue related to choice is the argument over whether people have free will, addressing whether one's behavior is determined by outside forces or whether, and to what extent, people create their communicative choices. Realist ontology views the world objectively: There is a world outside of our own experience and cognitions that can be examined. Order exists and is self-evident. Realists assume human behavior is determined by forces outside of individual control influenced by biology and the natural environment; people are reactive and passive. Human behavior is an automatic response to conditions and stimuli stemming from sociobiological forces. For example, communication biologists consider the neurobiological bases of individual differences in human communication.

Nominalists assert a free-will stance, assuming that humans can choose how to act. Humans are active, decision-making beings who can influence their future. Nominalists view the world subjectively, claiming everything outside of one's cognition is simply names and labels. People interpret experiences and create meanings that guide their thoughts, feelings, statements, and actions. We can change how we see relationships by changing how we think about them. Scholars interested in general semantics address this ontological stance, asserting that people can change the way they define and interpret an occurrence or event.

Social constructionists take a midposition between the extremes of realism and nominalism. Social constructionists suggest that people can make choices within a range or latitude of free will, whereby some behaviors are determined and

others are freely chosen. Reality is what we create together. People cannot be understood away from their relationships with others. This includes the possibility of negotiating meaning in actions and words and of altering culture. Coordinated management of meaning theorists recognize that people construct their own social realities and employ rules to act appropriately in certain situations. Knowledge of the world is constituted through communication with others.

Behavior

Various ontologies also take different stances regarding human behavior, disagreeing on whether there are stable dimensions or temporary conditions that affect one's behavior and communication patterns. Realists assert that people have unchanging traits that are predictable because people enact consistent characteristics across time. In studying leadership communication, trait theory reveals a realist stance, asserting that leaders are born with leadership traits. Nominalists argue that humans are dynamic and changing, that people go through various states during a day, week, month, and year. Leadership state theory exhibits nominalism, recognizing that a leader's behavioral style may change. Social constructionists adhere to aspects of both realist and nominalist ontologies, believing human behavior is characterized by both traits and states. Situational leadership theorists who grant that leadership behaviors change with respect to the meaning, situation, and the context in which one leads are social constructionists.

Experience

The stance on experience also varies across ontologies, considering whether human action is influenced by the individual, society, or both. Realists view human action as determined outside of the self; a person is similar to a pool ball ricocheting off the side rail cushions, driven by societal forces. For example, communication theorists who study nonverbal cues striving to enable the scholar to read accurately the meaning conveyed in a person's nonverbal gestures are realists. Nominalists emphasize that behavior is individualistic. Humans have free will and can choose how to act within various social situations. Scholars interested in

social networking sites such as Facebook may be interested in the incorporation of nonverbal cues specifically designed by a person to influence the experience of communicating with him or her on the site. Social constructionists assert that humans and their communication cannot be understood apart from their relationships with others. Act and potency emerge from this aspect of a human entity. Scholars interested in social identity issues that incorporate aspects of the individual and society convey this approach to theorizing about nonverbal communication.

Context

Context is also an important aspect of ontology that is relevant to human communication theory. This area considers whether situational factors do or do not influence one's communication. Realist ontologies assert that the best way to understand human life and action is by looking at universal factors; human behavior is governed by universal principles that determine one's action. For example, gender theorists who assert that there are strictly male and female communication styles sedimented in biology work from a realist ontology. Nominalist ontologies view behavior as contextual and rich with textured meaning. Communication and behavior cannot be generalized beyond the immediate situation. For nominalists, human behavior depends on the situation in which one finds oneself. Scholars who emphasize that the situation drives gendered communication are nominalists. Social constructionists believe that behavior is influenced by both universal and situational factors. From this perspective, gendered communication and role-taking behaviors are determined individually in conjunction with social norms and by the dynamic nature of the interaction.

Dating back to antiquity, various schools of thought have emerged regarding ontology, the study of being. These schools of thought understand the nature and characteristics of human existence differently. For communication theorists, self in relationship with others creates an interdependent social world. Ontology informs the study of human communication by investigating as first philosophy what makes humans, human.

Pat Arneson

See also Axiology; Epistemology; Inquiry Processes; Linguistic Relativity; Metatheory; Philosophy of Communication; Realism and the Received View; Social Construction of Reality

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ORDINARY DEMOCRACY

Ordinary democracy (OD) is the name Karen Tracy gives to communicative practices that occur in local governance groups; it references what actually happens in public bodies that are committed to acting democratically. As a theoretical idea, OD is most like Frank Bryan's concept of real democracy. Real democracy is what occurs in local-level direct democracy groups, such as town meetings where everyone gets to vote after a public discussion. OD is what occurs in local-level representative governance groups where elected officials make decisions following various kinds of input from their citizens.

OD's roots can be traced to Jane Mansbridge's ethnographic study of a town meeting in "Selby" Vermont. In her influential book, *Beyond Adversary Democracy*, Mansbridge examines the public meeting in one community as its citizens sought to problem solve cooperatively with each other, pursuing (partially) shared interests and making decisions about their community. In contrast to real democracy's focus on participant profiles (e.g., percentages of male-female attendees and speakers), the variation in meeting structures (e.g., morning vs. night meetings, bundling of town with school business, or not), and voting patterns, OD emphasizes talk. OD focuses on the content, style,

and structures of the talk that citizens and elected officials use as they meet and make decisions in their public meetings. School boards and city councils are prototypical sites of OD.

Unlike most notions of democracy—deliberative, participatory, or strong democracy, for example—OD is not a normative ideal. It is empirical; it can be seen and heard. When governance groups meet, ordinary democracy is what they are doing. Ordinary democracy includes communicative actions that uphold ideals of democracy and actions that challenge, appeal to, and subvert the ideals. In sites of ordinary democracy, such as school board meetings, citizens and elected officials regularly appeal to competing normative notions of democracy, most often to criticize the actions of others or to defend their own or to advocate for a particular course of action.

In a study of Western U.S. school board meetings, for instance, Tracy found that participants drew upon contradictory notions of democracy to advance meeting purposes that they favored and to derail those they did not like. In their meeting commentaries, citizens and elected officials aligned democracy with rule following so groups could accomplish what was fair, and they aligned real democracy with a willingness not to follow rules that were unjust. Participants argued for the importance of elected officials who represented their constituents, and they appealed to democracy to make legitimate the process by which elected officials could use their own judgment to oppose ill-informed majorities. Tensions between adversarial and unitary ideals of democracy also were highly visible in people's talk. Sometimes people argued for a meeting group working collaboratively to craft a solution that everyone could buy into. At other times, and often on the same issue, people argued that the group's conflict was inevitable; speakers should simply advocate their positions and let the vote settle the disagreement.

OD bodies face multiple dilemmas as they figure out how they ought to conduct themselves. In addition to the multiple meanings of democracy likely to be at work in most OD sites, school board OD groups also face challenges related to limited resources and their competing goals of equity and excellence. They also must deal with an institutional decision logic that puts educational expertise alongside the community will, without recognizing possible tensions.

Not only is OD centrally about citizens and elected officials talking with each other, but also it includes how local newspapers and other media outlets cover that talk and how citizens then draw on what is reported in media outlets to further meeting aims. OD constructs a deliberative circle that connects public meetings to local newspapers and then back again to public meetings.

An example of OD research is seen in an edited volume that brings rhetoricians and discourse analysts together to examine a moment of ordinary democracy that became a major community brouhaha. The moment, dubbed *Barbiegate*, involved an elementary school barring a third-grade girl from exhibiting her science fair project because it was judged racist. The project asked 30 children and 30 adults in a predominately White community which of two Barbie dolls (one Black, one White, in a pink or purple dress) was prettier. Most of the children selected the White doll. The father protested the school's action at the board meeting, the local and national news picked up the event, and at the subsequent meeting, spokespersons for civil liberties and African American groups came to offer their assessments of the reasonableness of past district actions and what should be done in the future. Some communication critics for this OD moment concluded that OD is an inarticulate, uninspiring mess—people need to do better. Others argued that it was a relatively well-functioning practice, doing a reasonable job in a difficult situation to manage the event's legitimate and competing aims.

In times of crisis, OD institutions face different challenges than do for-profit organizations. The common advice offered to businesses when they experience an organizational crisis is for the CEO to move quickly to make changes. For issues that involved decisions about which parts of a larger community will need to be negatively impacted, as happens in financial crises, moving fast is at odds with the logic of democracy. OD groups need to manage crises in a way that opens a space for citizen input. In sum, OD is a crucial site for vernacular discourse.

Karen Tracy

See also Citizenship; Deliberative Democratic Theories; Media Democracy; Public Sphere; Vernacular Discourse

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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Organizational communication is the process by which language and social interaction promote coordinated action toward a common goal. Organizational communication theories are explanations developed by researchers to describe and account for how organizational communication occurs in practice. Nascent theories of organizational communication have existed for millennia, but were introduced more formally in the first half of the 20th century following the industrial revolutions in Europe and the United States. Since then, the perceived importance of communication in promoting organizational effectiveness has grown, while conceptions of what it means for an organization to be effective have broadened considerably. Theories of organizational communication have developed from narrow conduit models aimed solely at improving the bottom line of corporations to more diverse formulations that emphasize the importance of participation by multiple stakeholders in the development of public, private, and nonprofit institutions.

Managerialism and the Conduit Model

Western industrialization brought with it a keen interest in the role of communication in promoting organizational effectiveness. Up through the 1960s, organizational communication (and organizational studies, more generally) was an eager accomplice

to the seemingly inevitable expansion of bureaucracy and the rationalization of Western society. The foundational research on leadership and organizations in the United States was funded by grants and contracts issued by large corporations and the U.S. military.

With few exceptions, the organizational communication theories that were developed during the first half of the 20th century reflected a conduit model of communication that saw the process solely as the transmission of information (based on an engineering perspective) and sought to identify communication breakdowns that impeded productivity. These theories reflect classical views of organization as a top-down, management-controlled activity for which downward communication was paramount, and effectiveness had mainly to do with understanding and following orders.

Human Resources and Employee Participation

By the 1950s, a number of factors had conspired to disrupt and challenge this wholly transmissional view of organizational communication. World War II and its aftermath caused many to have second thoughts about the moral superiority of expanding bureaucracy and technology, deployed to perfection in the Nazi death camps and on the wrecked cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At the same time, labor movements in the United States and in Europe increasingly challenged the unwillingness of so-called captains of industry to afford workers a greater voice in decisions that affected their livelihood. The theories that developed during this time period went beyond downward communication to focus on horizontal communication (among peers, as documented in the *Hawthorne Studies*) and upward communication (of employee suggestions and opinions). These new theories characterized employees as human resources whose active input and agency were essential to organizational effectiveness.

Viewing employees as active participants in organizational decision making led researchers to focus on the relationship that is most paramount in employees' work lives—that which they have with their supervisors. One of the most researched forms of organizational communication is the superior-subordinate relationship, and this work has been highly theoretical (e.g., leader-member exchange,

upward influence). Central to these theories is the notion that this relationship is complex, is subtle, and always involves multiple goals. Superiors must be clear about performance expectations, but tactful to maintain a good working relationship. Subordinates must be forthright about their ideas and suggestions, but not seem insubordinate. What emerged from this work is that the quality of this relationship is a critical factor shaping employee morale, commitment, and productivity.

Two Master Metaphors: System and Culture

Accompanying this movement toward greater employee participation was a growing recognition in the late 20th century that organizational environments had become exceedingly more turbulent and complex. This complexity was not well managed—or well explained—by transmissional models of hierarchical organization. The received notion of an organization as a pyramid of roles and reporting relationships sustained through orders delivered through an unequivocal chain of command was challenged by different, more holistic models borrowed from biology (systems) and anthropology (culture).

Systems Theories of Organizational Communication

As top-down hierarchical models weakened their grip and new communication technology suggested many new opportunities for connectivity among individuals, what emerged was a new conception of coordination that replaced the idea of a stable organization and focused instead on the process of organizing. Karl Weick, a social psychologist and influential organizational theorist, first introduced these ideas to organizational studies in 1969, and they were immediately picked up in organizational communication. From this point on, theories no longer characterized communication as something that went on inside an organization, but maintained instead that communication was the very process by which organizing happens.

Systems theories are themselves a highly diverse group of approaches. Early versions were structural-functional in nature and revisioned organizations as comprised of a series of interlocking inputs and outputs and designed to promote efficiency

through self-correction. Later theories broadened this perspective to account for a more turbulent external environment and the potential desirability of disequilibrium in the service of nonlinear, innovative, and discontinuous change (e.g., when an institution embraces a new vision or strategy). Most recently, system theorists in communication have turned their attention to the self-organizing properties of living systems, drawing upon cutting-edge research in complexity science.

A large number of organizational communication theories owe a debt to the systems approach. Theories of group interaction and decision making, of organizational change, and most specifically of organizational communication networks can be traced to this perspective. Moreover, as more advanced methods of network analysis have developed, the practical utility of these theories to both describe and transform patterns of organizing has risen dramatically. Finally, the growing awareness of terrorist organizations has elevated the idea of organizations as semiautonomous, distributed networks to the global zeitgeist.

Cultural Theories of Organizational Communication

Despite the growing practical utility of the systems perspective, a number of organizational communication scholars remained dissatisfied with what they perceived as its enduring functionalist and managerial bias. These theorists were less enamored with a narrow view of organizational effectiveness or profitability and were more interested in treating organizations as communities with diverse stakeholders and multiple bottom lines. Borrowing from the vocabulary of anthropology, these theorists cast organizations as unique cultures and saw researchers as ethnographers whose aim was to produce thick descriptions of organizational communication.

One societal reason for the sudden rise of the cultural approach was the remarkable success of Japanese manufacturing companies in taking over U.S. markets in the 1970s. In their efforts to explain this phenomenon, many organizational theorists attributed this success to the unique Japanese culture and its emphasis on quality and consensus. In the United States and elsewhere, theorists and practitioners began to scrutinize

corporate cultures for potential points of leverage. Organizational culture change was itself a cultural buzzword in the 1980s, with its attendant emphasis on shared values, language, and practices.

Treating organizations as cultures naturally invites questions of membership and identification. One of the more researched areas of organizational communication theory is organizational socialization and assimilation, with particular emphasis on how newcomers become (or fail to become) members. Some authors frame this process rhetorically and have explored how individuals come to identify with institutions, investigating the critical moments or turning points in this relationship. Others have approached it as an interpersonal process aimed at reducing individual uncertainty and developed theories of both how organizations seek to socialize individuals and how newcomers seek out information to learn about the organization's culture.

Finally, the organizational culture approach was reflective of a broader movement in social theory, characterized by many as the interpretive turn. Significant dissatisfaction with traditional scientific method (including theory development, hypothesis testing, and data analysis) led a critical mass of scholars across most disciplines to pursue a different approach to inquiry, one that favored immersion over detachment, narrative over formal logic, and qualitative over quantitative methods.

Critical Organizational Communication Theories

Recall that the first formal theories of organizational communication were managerial in tone and aimed at eliminating breakdowns and promoting the successful flow of information in the service of productivity. Since then, these initial theories have received increased criticism, some practical (the world has become too complex for conduit or hierarchical models) and others ideological (conceptions of organizing that exclude employee voice or the impact of organizations on their environments are immoral and unethical).

This latter concern crystallized in the late 20th century in the form of critical theories whose aim was to identify instances of power and domination and to emancipate individuals from such abuses. These theories are different in tone and form from

the others discussed in this entry inasmuch as they developed from a very different lineage—that of critical and cultural studies in Europe. Stanley Deetz's landmark book, *Democracy and the Corporate Colonization of America*, influenced many theorists in the field to conceptualize organizing in terms of the expression of power, domination, and resistance. Others have gone on to apply these ideas across a wide range of categories, including race, gender, class, and their various intersections.

Critical organizational communication theories also claim the interpretive turn as crucial to their history, but feel for the most part that ethnographers do not go far enough with their descriptions and interpretations of organizational life. Critical theorists are more attuned to the political aspects of organizing, and their work urges us to see the hidden forces of domination (e.g., hegemony) that exist in taken for granted forms of organizing and communicating.

One of the more intriguing contributions of critical organizational communication theory and research has to do with conceptions of self-discipline, or how individuals and teams can be encouraged to police themselves through a process of concertive control. From this perspective, overt power is unnecessary as members are encouraged to buy into corporate visions and values, which then work as hegemonic controls on their thoughts and actions. This perspective shows the potential dark side of what is typically seen by members as positive, such as self-managed teams or on-site day care. In many ways, this hidden form of power is the most pernicious in that it is most difficult for employees to identify or to challenge.

Theories of Organizational Culture and Performance

Early in the adoption of the culture metaphor to organizational studies, Michael Pacanowsky and Nick Trujillo wrote an important essay linking the concepts of culture and performance. This was a key move because borrowers of the culture concept invariably focus on cognitive attributes such as assumptions and beliefs and spend far less time examining behavior—that is, rituals and practices. The performance framework directed attention specifically at communication behavior and inspired many other writers and researchers to

explore this frame. Key to this approach has been a focus on organizational story telling as a primary means for defining cultural identity. A related stream of work focuses on the semiotics of organizing—how nonverbal elements such as architecture reflect and affect definitions of culture. Finally, some scholars have looked directly at ritual behavior in organizations (e.g., safety briefings on airplanes, orientation sessions for new employees, annual holiday parties) as rich sources of meaning (and also of domination).

This approach to organizational communication as cultural performance bears unique promise for investigating an increasingly global subject matter. Organizational culture scholars see all attempts at organizing as representing a unique cultural nexus that marks the intersection of values and practices drawn from institutions, industries, and national cultures. Seen in this way, a careful mapping of the cultural performances of any particular organization will reveal both global and local influences and will reveal how they interact in a particular practical context.

Finally, the cultural performance approach is important because it eschews a disembodied, overly cognitive view of culture and instead places the human body back at the center of organizing. From this perspective, bodily discipline is at the core of organizing processes, and the ways in which bodily diversity and resistance are handled say a great deal about culture. This work has been a significant inspiration for students of feminism and ethnicity, most of whom see gender and race as cultural performances. As postcolonial theorists argue, hierarchy has a different meaning for people who have experienced its abuses throughout their lives. A strong advocate of the embodied approach was Dwight Conquergood, who championed an embodied ethnography that sought to deemphasize the visual in favor of an immersive approach that activated the rest of the senses (i.e., hearing, feeling, smelling) as a basis for understanding culture.

Two Influential Metatheories: Structuration and Sense-Making

According to most authors, the central problem to be addressed in social theory is the relationship between the individual and society. Historically, theories have tended to overemphasize one and

caricature the other; either the individual is all-powerful or society is. This duality is itself a reflection of the classic philosophical tension between free will and determinism. How free to act is the member of any society or organization?

This question is crucial for the field of communication because communication is the means by which institutions are created and sustained and is how individuals can transform them. If one accepts the perspective that organizations are constituted wholly through interaction, then communication becomes the interactive prism through which the individual and the social group are continually constructed. This broad perspective on organizational communication is captured by two popular metatheories that have been adopted by scholars in the field: Anthony Giddens's structuration theory and Karl Weick's theory of sense-making.

Structuration Theory

Structuration theory was developed with the aim of transcending an unproductive debate between social theories that constructed either society or the individual as overly powerful. Central to Giddens' formulation is the idea that social structures are both made by human actions and simultaneously work to constrain action. This is called the duality of structure. The unusual term structuration is meant to soften the perception of social structures as rigid and to instead regard them as perpetually produced, reproduced, and transformed through human action. Structuration theory has proven useful to many communication scholars in their efforts to describe the social construction of organizations and the power dynamics inherent in this process.

One of the areas in which structuration theory has been most useful to organizational communication has been in the conceptualization and study of communication technologies. Technologies are ripe for this approach because their successful implementation depends heavily on the social or cultural context. Seen this way, the adoption of any technology—from hospital CT scanners to a new warehouse inventory system—is an occasion for structuring. What this means is that people bring existing rules and resources to bear on their activities and beliefs during the implementation period, in turn shaping how the technology will be

regarded and used. Moreover, the actions taken during the implementation process then become part of the cultural context to be drawn upon by future actors.

Although structuration theory has had many critics, what it does best is move attention away from purely mentalistic or social views of organizing and focus instead on social interaction as a continuous interplay between reproduction and transformation of culture. In so doing, it moves communication to center stage.

Sense-Making Theory

In his conception of organizing, Weick sought to provide a bridge between the system and culture metaphors and to focus on how collectivities of individuals use language to create meaning over time. Weick describes the process of organizing as the incremental reduction of environmental uncertainty through talk. Seen retrospectively, he argues that we do not fully understand what we have said and made until after the fact. Weick's theory of sense-making has been effectively applied in a wide variety of contexts, including orchestras, nuclear power plants, and firefighting. Similarly to structuration theory, Weick highlights the persistence of particular social constructions and the consequences of failing to consider these guiding assumptions more mindfully. His most recent work on high-reliability organizations underscores the consequentiality of communication for human safety and security.

Current conceptions of organizational communication are increasingly focused on discourse—actual interactional processes. That said, discursive theories are diverse in kind and intention. For example, Gail Fairhurst distinguished between a close analysis of patterns of talk (which she calls little d discourse), considerations of whole systems of thought (Big D discourse), and work that seeks to attempt to connect the two. What is most compelling about this approach is its focus on everyday work interactions, revealing how talk reflects, reproduces, and occasionally transforms meanings and courses of action.

James R. Taylor and his students at the University of Montreal have spent decades working with Giddens' and Weick's metatheories in an attempt to reclaim their key ideas for a theory of organizing

that is more fully communicative. In their work, they describe communication as both site and surface of organizing and explore the oscillation between text and conversation as constitutive to sense-making and therefore of organizing. For the Montreal school, texts are attempts by human beings to memorialize and fix interpretations in the form of (for example) rules, documents, and charters, while conversations are occasions for open-ended discourse that both makes use of existing texts and develops new ones.

But perhaps the most original aspect of the work of the Montreal school—and of its most recent proponent, Francois Cooren—is its use of Bruno Latour's actor-network theory to challenge an ideology of communication that took hold during the interpretive turn and is perpetuated in the work of Weick and Giddens. Specifically, they argue that narrative is the template for all organizing, not only the kind engaged in by human beings, and that nonhuman objects are inscribed with their own agency reflective of their histories. Swords, guns, speed bumps, desks—indeed all objects—compel action; similarly, language consists of discursive objects that can have a life of their own quite apart from human subjectivity and intention. Theoretical work by both Cooren and Fairhurst reflects a critical realism that calls for a thorough account of preexisting institutional forms and material conditions that shape and constrain discourse.

Future Directions

Organizational communication theories mirror the flow of society. Whereas 20th-century theories sought to support a particular kind of capitalism practiced by a particular form of nation-state, 21st-century theories share only some of these interests. Although the study of communication and productivity can and should continue, business success can only be achieved today in global context. This means that the cultural variations and environmental complexities described above must now be essential parts of any theoretical construction. Moreover, this also means that we must find a way to expand our theories to include non-Western voices and experiences.

At the same time, societal interests have expanded from an isolated view of organizations to a more situated perspective that takes into

account the importance of not-for-profit organizing and the quality of life in communities. This means that organizational communication theories can and should continue to expand to include all kinds of organizing. Moreover, these efforts reflect a deeply felt commitment on the part of many scholars to conduct more problem-centered research focused on persistent social challenges such as justice, safety, and security.

Finally, it is quite likely that future theories of organizational communication will take a broader view of nonhuman agency. There is an emerging realization that social constructionist theories of sense-making are overly narrow and anthropocentric. What is now being called for is a reconsideration of the nature and role of materiality in organizing—one that situates human agency as important, but not the only kind. Human-machine interactions will be a key focus of organizational communication theory in the 21st century.

Eric M. Eisenberg

See also Actor-Network Theory; Constitutive View of Communication; Critical Organizational Communication; Institutional Theories of Organizational Communication; Interpretive Theory; Leadership Theories; Organizational Control Theory; Organizational Culture; Organizational Identity Theory; Organizational List Theory; Organizational Socialization and Assimilation; Organizing, Process of; Sense-Making; Structuration Theory; System Theory

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ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL THEORY

Theories of organizational control examine the process by which one party attempts to influence the behavior of another within a given system. Organizational control is an inherently communicative activity that consists of verbal and physical actions designed to overcome resistance and exercise authority over others. Supervisors might rely upon verbal commands (e.g., telling someone exactly what to do), written directives (e.g., giving workers a set of rules to follow), or even peer pressure (e.g., coworkers reinforce the importance of following organizational norms) to control the actions of their subordinates. Collective effort (e.g., organizing) cannot be accomplished without individuals relinquishing some degree of autonomy in order to work toward a common objective. Communication scholars study organizational control processes to understand the strategies and resources organizational leaders draw upon to convince their members to work together.

Complicating the organizational control process is the fact that managers and workers often have competing interests. Managers typically want to maximize the productivity of their subordinates in exchange for the lowest organizational cost. In contrast, workers may seek out ways to maximize their individual compensation while exerting the least amount of personal effort.

As superior and subordinate members negotiate for their particular interests, they create, reproduce, and transform the organizational context in which they interact.

To understand the strengths and weaknesses of various organizational control strategies, it is important to first establish a framework for examining this topic from a communication perspective. Second, three approaches to the study of organizational control will be examined to illustrate how different scholars make sense of this process. Finally, five different management strategies will be compared against each other to illustrate the evolution of organizational control practices over time.

The Double Interact of Control

Phillip Tompkins and George Cheney provide a three-part framework for examining organizational control from a communication perspective, which they term the double interact of control. The first two steps of this control process are based on the basic interaction model of communication often taught in introductory courses: (1) *A* sends a message to *B*; (2) *B* provides feedback to *A*. Tompkins and Cheney add a third step to this model to create a double-interact sequence. The first part of the double interact of control is described as the direction step: (1) *A* (the organizational leader) gives an instruction or direction to *B* (the subordinate). The second step in this exchange is called evaluation: (2) *A* examines *B*'s feedback to the initial message in order to determine how the direction was interpreted. The final part of this process is the discipline step: (3) *A* provides *B* with an incentive for complying with the initial direction. If *B* has responded appropriately, he or she might receive some sort of reward. However, if *B* has performed in an unsatisfactory manner, *A* will provide some sort of punishment in an attempt to correct *B*'s behavior.

The significance of the double-interact model is that it places communication central to the process of establishing and maintaining a system of organizational control. This model provides scholars with a framework they can use to examine and identify specific communication strategies used during particular steps of the organizational control process.

Approaches to the Study of Organizational Control

Organizational control is a broad and interdisciplinary research area. However, there are three distinct lines of scholarship that have had a particularly significant influence on communication research.

Simple Versus Structural Control

Economist Richard Edwards describes two different approaches to organizational control: simple control and structural control. Simple-control strategies require the intervention of a person to direct member behavior and maintain order in the system (e.g., a crew boss). In contrast, structural control strategies move the control process out of the hands of individual supervisors and into the physical or discursive environment of the organization itself (e.g., machines, rule systems). Edwards' two categories differentiate between interpersonal and mediated strategies of managerial influence. Simple control provides members with a clear source of authority to respond to and react against. However, structural forms of control depersonalize the managerial process and embed authority into the system itself. Structural control complicates member resistance efforts because there is no clear source of authority for workers to communicate with or to challenge.

Normative Versus Rational Control

Management scholars Stephen Barley and Gideon Kunda offer a slightly different approach to the study of organizational control. They categorize management strategies as either normative or rational. Normative-control processes motivate and influence member behavior by encouraging the development of strong personal relationships within the work environment. Organizational leaders use the communal and social aspects of the organization to persuade their subordinates to adopt attitudes and behaviors supportive of managerial objectives (e.g., happy workers are productive workers). In contrast, rational-control strategies influence member behavior by providing workers with well-designed tasks, clear objectives, and reasonable incentives (e.g., a carefully trained worker is a productive worker). In a rational-control system, order is maintained and

collective effort achieved when members understand their roles in the larger system and/or lack the resources necessary to effectively resist managerial objectives. Barley and Kunda's approach highlights ways that various social and task communication strategies can serve as sources of power within the organizational environment.

Obtrusive Versus Unobtrusive Control

Communication scholars Tompkins and Cheney differentiate between obtrusive and unobtrusive organizational control strategies. They argue that obtrusive strategies rely upon external sources of influence to direct member behavior and accomplish organizational objectives (e.g., rule systems, machinery, supervisors). These control strategies are imposed upon the individual from the external environment. Obtrusive-management techniques do not presume organizational subordinates are willing or active participants in the control process. In contrast, unobtrusive-control strategies require organizational members to play an active rather than passive role in their own management. Organizational subordinates are encouraged to forge a close bond or identification with the system as a whole. Unobtrusively controlled workers embrace the organization's values as their own and use them to make organizationally appropriate decisions. Tompkins and Cheney's approach to this topic highlights the potentially interactive nature of the organizational control process. Communication scholars might draw upon this perspective to examine how member identification might be used as both a mechanism of organizational control and a strategy of member resistance.

Strategies of Organizational Control

There are a wide variety of methods organizational leaders might use to influence the behavior of their members. The five strategies listed below are commonly referenced within the organizational control literature.

Simple Control

Simple control requires the direct intervention of an authority figure to accomplish all three aspects of the control process. A supervisor provides the initial direction to the worker, evaluates his or her

performance, and then administers some sort of disciplinary action (reward or punishment). This control strategy relies upon the strength of the relationship between the supervisor and the subordinate to maintain order in the system. It is also a fairly obtrusive management strategy; the worker is not required to internalize or actively participate in the control process. This can be a powerful management strategy because the supervisor is directly involved with the entire process (e.g., the manager sees and hears everything). However, this system can become compromised if the organization becomes too large or complex to control through line of sight management. As a result, simple control systems tend to work best in small organizations.

Technical Control

Technical control relies on the intervention of some physical device (e.g., machine, computer software) to substitute for the presence of a supervisor. Technical control strategies became particularly popular during the Industrial Revolution, when technological innovations and the mass production of goods encouraged organizations to grow in size. Rather than rely upon a manager to tell employees how fast to work, a machine (e.g., a conveyor belt) can direct the pace of the production. Technological devices can also evaluate the degree to which members are deviating from their assigned tasks or violating office policies (e.g., software that alerts management when a worker visits a restricted Web site). Workers might even receive disciplinary information from an inanimate device rather than from a supervisor (e.g., automated e-mail warnings sent to workers when they fail to submit reports on time). Technical control enables managerial messages to be mediated through external devices, limiting the ability of workers to question or resist these directives. Technical control can be an effective management strategy when the work performance is relatively repetitive and the supervisor's span of control is too broad to monitor all subordinates through direct observation.

Bureaucratic Control

Bureaucratic control strategies rely upon rule systems to influence member behavior and facilitate collective action. Technical control may work well

for regulating the behavior of some organizational members, but it is not necessarily an effective strategy for influencing the behavior of knowledge workers or managerial staff. Instead, organizational leaders may attempt to direct the behavior of these workers through the creation of rule systems that carefully define how to perform specific tasks and make decisions (e.g., employee handbooks and training programs). Bureaucratic rule systems may also be used to evaluate member compliance with organizational directives (e.g., standardized performance measures). Finally, organizational policies can discipline member behavior (e.g., bonuses determined by a predetermined formula rather than left to managerial discretion). Although supervisors may still be physically present within the work environment, bureaucratic control strategies reduce the time and effort they need to spend managing their subordinates. Even when there is no supervisor present, the impersonal force of a carefully designed rule system extends to all corners of the organization and provides a consistent and rational basis for managerial control.

Cultural Control

Cultural control strategies influence member behavior by drawing upon the communal and social aspects of organizational life. One weakness of bureaucratic control is that it is not possible to have rules for every situation. Cultural management strategies address this control challenge by persuading workers to make organizationally appropriate decisions even when there is no rule system in place to guide them. Organizational leaders encourage employees to embrace organizational values as their own and use them to guide (direct) their behavior within the work environment. Cultural control persuades subordinates to forge strong personal connections with their peers and feelings of loyalty toward the organization. Cultural control is an unobtrusive managerial strategy because the locus of control moves away from the external structure of organization (rule systems, mechanized devices, supervisors) and becomes internalized within the member him or herself. Culturally controlled members identify with the organization and monitor their own behavior (evaluate and discipline) to ensure they make organizationally appropriate decisions. This is a particularly strong management technique, but it requires that members have the

opportunity to interact regularly with each other to maintain a cohesive sense of community within the work environment.

Concertive Control

Concertive control is an extension of cultural management strategies. However, concertive control relies on participatory organizational techniques, such as team-based management, to promote a strong feeling of ownership and empowerment among the workers. In a concertive system, members work in concert with each other to achieve organizational objectives. Members are not only empowered to control their own behavior for the benefit of the organization, they are also encouraged to take responsibility for the actions of their peers. Everyone in the team is simultaneously a supervisor and a subordinate. Communication scholar James Barker argues that concertive control may emphasize worker participation and empowerment, but it is also one of the most restrictive and powerful forms of organizational control. The identification members feel with the organization and each other makes it particularly difficult for these individuals to resist managerial control efforts. Additionally, because these members are empowered to create their own rules and regulations, they also know where there may be weaknesses in the system. As a result, members work together to close the gaps and further reduce their own opportunities for resistance. Ironically, concertive control systems illustrate that the more freedom workers have to participate in their own management, the more controlled they can become.

Loril M. Gossett

See also Corporate Colonization Theory; Critical Organizational Communication; Identification; Institutional Theories of Organizational Communication; Leadership Theories; Organizational Communication Theories; Organizational Culture; Organizational Socialization and Assimilation; Power and Power Relations; Sense-Making

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ORGANIZATIONAL CO-ORIENTATION THEORY

Developed by James Taylor and his colleagues from the 1990s to the present, organizational co-orientation theory shows how the process of everyday conversation is the basis for organization. Building on insights from linguistics, discourse, and organizational theory, this theory shows that organizing starts when two people interact about a topic of mutual concern, but that it goes well beyond this simple base. This approach to organizations continues a line of work that highlights the importance of communication in the process of organizing. This entry provides background on the theory and explains its main ideas.

Background

The idea of co-orientation is adapted from an important essay by Theodore Newcomb in 1953, which suggested that interaction involves two communicators orienting toward a topic or object of common concern. The communicators, identified by Newcomb as *A* and *B*, have attitudes toward each other and toward the topic of interaction, designated *X*. This triad forms a small co-orientational system called *A to B re X*, which means *A* is communicating to

B about *X*. This three-part system may be symmetrical, or balanced, or it may be asymmetrical and out of balance. For example, two coworkers who like one another and share a common attitude toward their boss will find their co-orientation symmetrical, but they will experience imbalance and a strain toward symmetry if they have different attitudes toward the manager.

Newcomb's essay is singularly evocative for a student of organizational communication because organizations are complex systems involving many sets of co-orientation. Seen from this larger perspective, the simple three-part model raises more questions than it answers. The first, and most obvious, is the actual nature of the interpersonal dynamic. Newcomb alluded to some of the factors that might be in play, such as the frequency of interaction. But writing when he did, Newcomb had no methodological tools to investigate the empirical basis of interaction in talk.

Newcomb's article was published only 2 years after the posthumous appearance of Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* and 2 years before John Austin's William James lectures at Harvard (published only in 1962, again posthumously, as *How to Do Things with Words*). Both these authors focused their attention on actual talk. By doing so, they made the telling point that communication, at the level of interaction, is intrinsically asymmetrical. Speech is how one person acts on another—exerts influence on him or her to think or behave in some way. Language is not merely a medium for information transmission or for expressing an attitude (although both are involved). At its simplest, Newcomb's three-part system must be expanded to include exerting a claim to authority on the part of the speaker: asserting (or failing to assert) something about the world, what to do about it, and who should do it. To return to our example, the coworkers not only have certain attitudes about their boss, but they use talk to express, explore, and expand their views, attempting to influence others in the process.

As Gregory Bateson had noted in 1935, there are three possibilities of co-orientation (though he did not use this term): symmetry (which, unlike in Newcomb's reading, implies competing claims to authority and thus tends to lead to conflict), complementarity (which implies the submission of one actor to the other), and reciprocity (which supposes

a multilayered system of exchange, leading to a more differentiated kind of relationship). Both Newcomb and Bateson saw acts of communication as, to use the former's expression, states of a system. But Newcomb's version lacks the complexity of Bateson's in that equilibrium, for the former, means no more than symmetry of attitude. Bateson's conceptualization, on the other hand, opens the door to a more differentiated analysis of social dynamics. To use Lewin's famous term, the notion of a field of forces structured through interaction takes on additional subtlety. The coworkers in our example not only may change their views through interaction, but also will define their relationship in what they say about their boss and other topics of mutual concern. Further, what they say and do is influenced by and in turn influences a variety of other factors present in the organizational situation.

The other profound limitation of Newcomb's formulation was the restriction to two actors. Suppose we add a third actor. As Theodore Caplow would later point out, the door immediately opens to coalition formation: two against one. There is no hint of this aspect of communication in Newcomb, even though the groundwork for this addition of a strategic dimension to co-orientation had already been laid by Von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern in their 1947 exposition of the mathematical theory of games. In game theory, a player make decisions about how to act or what to say based on the moves of the other player. When both do this, one has a dynamic system of adaptive interaction.

Despite these obvious questions, however, the organizational treatment of co-orientation theory remained dormant, except for occasional references, until a sequence of papers and book chapters appeared, beginning in 2000. In their 1983 chapter, Marshall Scott Poole and Robert D. McPhee briefly discuss co-orientation, but note that because "measures of co-orientation are cognitively based . . . they do not describe interaction in detail, nor even how members create, maintain, and use co-orientation" (p. 206). The elaboration proposed by Taylor and colleagues aimed to address directly this limitation and can be seen as one element among others in their attempt to ground organizational analysis in a theory of communication that places agency, its construction in interaction, and its role in organizing at the center. In this effort, they drew on new sources that

include speech act theory, conversation analysis, and narrative theory.

Expanding the Idea of Co-Orientation

Taylor began by noting that the advantage of co-orientation theory for organizational communication researchers is that it potentially, with considerable elaboration, links microcommunicational process (specific interactions) with macro-organizational structure (the overall organization). Co-orientation could, in other words, be given a more precise operational interpretation as a tool of organizational analysis. For this to happen, a number of deficiencies in the original concept of co-orientation would have to be repaired. For one, the object would no longer be defined by attitude. Instead, the object gets defined within a setting of exchange of possession (you give me something, and I give you something in return), involving change of location (back and forth), and is thus the enabler of a transaction. Objects, in this sense, refer not only to goods and chattels; they include transfers that can only be accomplished using language such as promises, requests, compliments, judgments, commitments and vows, and explanations and justifications. Since to speak is to act, agency (and the identity it implies) is established by and within communication. In their talk, our illustrative coworkers exchange actions, judgments about their boss, promises to another about what they each will do, requests, and so on.

Second, objects are not limited to an external world. A conversation may reflexively take itself as its object ("What do you mean by that remark?"). In doing so, it constitutes itself as the object of a transaction since it highlights not only what was said, but also the intention behind it, and thus, by implication, the rules of the transactional relationship governing the exchange. In other words, communicators talk about their talk and about their respective parts in the conversation. The conversation itself has a structure constituted during interactive talk so that the conversation comes to conform to certain rules which serve as a tacit, or silent, frame. For example, if the two coworkers disagree about the boss, they may have a few things to say about each other, and as they do so, they create or substantiate certain rules for this kind of conversation.

Communication thus constructs itself from the inside, a property called indexicality. The conversation is its own frame, which is a value-laden context, a property that is known in the literature as reflexivity, something that reflects itself. Expanded across many conversations, this is precisely how the organization itself is brought into being. In other words, the organization is constructed through numerous interactions across time.

Third, although A-B-X is an acceptable model, within limits, when it is applied to two-person interactions, it is inadequate for explaining more complicated patterns of exchange in which several agents are involved. It is, for example, singularly uninformative about the phenomenon of hierarchy and the exercise of authority, although these are a commonplaces of all organizational communication. What two coworkers think about their boss and what they choose to say to one another about this person is just a small part of the much larger system of interaction including the boss herself and other workers already organized into a system of relationships that developed over time through communication.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, Newcomb's treatment ignores the possibility that one of the actors, A or B, is the organization itself. In this case the transaction links an individual and a collective entity (e.g., through an employment contract). Furthermore, since an organization is commonly taken to have an attitude, by common accord (e.g., company X is said to resent the intervention of certain authorities), the concept of attitude is itself made problematic. If a company can have an attitude, the concept of attitude must itself derive from how it is expressed and its communicational usage and not from a psychological state. A company, after all, has no psychological state.

Taylor's attempt to build on the elementary A-B-X unit to arrive at an image of more complicated networks of interacting is best thought of as a work in progress since as yet he has offered no definitive treatment on the topic. In the following, some of the directions this exploration has taken will be considered.

Formative Ideas

Imbrication

Imbrication means essentially layering, linking the tiles on a roof or the scales on a fish or the

strata of a geological formation. If, in an organization of some complexity, one group or division finds itself in a controversy with another (a not-infrequent occurrence), then its members are transactionally related to each other in two ways: individually and institutionally as members of a group. People must co-orient within groups, but groups must co-orient with other groups as well. Intragroup co-orientation, however, is formally isomorphic with (meaning that it matches) intergroup co-orientation except that in the latter case co-orientation is no longer between individual A communicating with individual B, but rather group A co-orienting to group B with respect to object X.

Since communication implies transaction, the groups must talk to each other. Groups, however, by definition cannot talk or write or do any kind of communicative work: They have no voice of their own. Thus intergroup communication always occurs in more than one register or level—that is, intergroup communication occurs via particular and multiple interactions among individuals affiliated with those groups. Intergroup communication is at one and the same time interpersonal A-B-X and in a different way intergroup or interdivisional A-B-X interactions. For groups to engage in what are commonly referred to as turf wars, therefore, they must do so through the mediation of human agents, who act for them as spokespersons.

Imbrication, thus conceived, then raises another question: how does a group or division or organization, a collective A, co-orient with its own members, the individual Bs? Again, since the collective A has no innate capability to interact with anyone, it can only do so through its agents. But since those agents are also themselves individuals within the organization, how can they be both spokespersons for the collective while being also merely members of it? Again, it would seem, register is involved. But how are we to explain this odd effect of register?

Conversation and Text

Taylor's answer to this question is to recall the grounding of all communication in language. Communication, or at least organizational communication, is a mixed mode of conversations and texts. Roughly, conversation happens in the present and is ephemeral; text is some kind of a durable

record of conversations and other communicative forms. However, these two are closely related in that speech is already a text in immanence: Given contemporary technology, it can, for example, easily be filmed or otherwise recorded and transcribed to produce a paper record of traces of conversation (agreements, minutes of meetings, reports, etc.). Conversation is, however, by its very nature a feature of a situation that is defined by local features of time and space: here and now. Text, once produced in a form suitable for transport, easily transcends time and space to link may localities and many time zones. It offers a semipermanent memory that contrasts with the fallible recollections of participants to the original conversation. The expression of the collective attitude, however, for it to be known at all, must be authored, which transforms it into text. It subsequently can only be made present by its progressive incorporation into the conversations of members or the group as a verbalized text. Since the text inscribes the authority of the collective, when it is effectively made present within the group, it confers on its agent or spokesperson (who was also perhaps its author) a borrowed sheen of authority. In this way, the imbrication that is implied by a layering of A-B-X transactions is realized concretely by the conversation-text interaction. Texts and conversations influence and create one another.

Text and Collective Agency

But how is authority justified? Taylor's answer to this question is to equate conversation with the phenomenal experience of a lived encounter and text as what objectifies it by codifying it, thus fixing it in ways that contrast with the ephemeral smoke of talk. As Taylor and Van Every explain, the co-orientation model can be seen as structurally identical to the deep theory of narrative, which also postulates an object of value and an orientation of actors to it. The attributions of symmetry and complementarity of narrative theory are, however, different. In narrative theory, symmetry implies opposition: protagonist versus antagonist. Complementary interaction, which is seen as literally defining communication, instantiates or makes concrete the legitimacy and qualification of agents, who act for their society. Thus the construction of an organizational text simultaneously accomplishes

two goals. It allows the organization to become a protagonist in interaction with other groups, and it delineates the roles of its human agents, who in turn may be authorized to recruit a variety of human and nonhuman helpers. By authoring the text of the organization, the hierarchy of roles typical of the organization is given reality and its agents legitimated. One consequence of such a radical revision of co-orientation theory is to make it appear that, as in nuclear physics, symmetry of attitude repels and complementary attitudes attract: There is no strain toward symmetry. On the contrary, symmetry is the problem.

Clearly, the theory of organizational co-orientation remains at this point an intriguing collection of concepts waiting to be given a more systematic elaboration. It is to be hoped that future researchers will fill in the many missing connections.

James Taylor

See also Co-Orientation Theory; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Organizational Communication Theories; Speech Act Theory; System Theory

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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizational culture can be defined as the shared assumptions, values, beliefs, language, symbols, and meanings systems in an organization. This approach views organizations as a set of loosely structured symbols that are maintained and cocreated by a pattern of individual psychological factors and various interactional factors (such as language, behaviors, espoused values and physical artifacts) that shape shared (and unshared) values, beliefs, and assumptions within a given organization.

This entry overviews the history of the concept, the interpretive and management approaches, and the way organizational cultures vary by level and type. A discussion of cultural management reveals a focus on the inculcation of values and norms through communication processes of organizational identification visioning and framing. The entry closes with ongoing controversies about the theoretical approach.

History

The organizational culture movement rose in the early 1980s in response to previous system-oriented

explanations. Researchers began to move beyond the transmission model of communication to instead examine how relationships, cultures, and organizations are constituted by communication. This linguistic turn signified not only a methodological shift from studying communication as a measurable outcome, but also a fundamental change in the way organizations were interpreted and known. Communication came to be viewed not just as another organizational variable to control, but as an important phenomenon in and of itself. From this point of view, researchers began to see how meanings do not reside in messages, channels, or screens, but they rather are socially constructed through interaction and sense-making activities.

Management and Interpretive Approaches

Organizational culture stems from two different camps. The management approach focuses on the way organizations can control and improve their corporate culture. From this approach, culture and communication are things the organization has. The interpretive approach, in contrast, views and studies organizations as cultures constituted by communication. Communication is what the organization is.

In the 1980s, managers began to notice that organizations with strong cultures—such as Disneyland, Coca-Cola, IBM, and Japanese car manufacturers—were extremely successful. This spurred the notion that by being able to engineer an appropriate corporate culture, managers could increase productivity. A number of groundbreaking management books encouraged American corporate leaders to focus on organizational values, visions, rites and rituals, and leadership. Perhaps most popular was Tom Peters and Robert Waterman's *In Search of Excellence*, which featured organizations that were extremely successful at the time and found that they had in common strong cultures with close customer relations, employee empowerment, clear missions, and a flat organizational hierarchy.

Pioneering players for the communication study of organizational culture drew on Clifford Geertz's interpretivism. An interpretive approach examines organizations as tribes and views the familiar as strange, wondrous, and exotic. Specialized meaning

is not waiting to be discovered, but is socially constructed through organizational values, folk tales, rituals, and practices. The interpretive approach frames the organizations as a stage or a text. Understanding comes through analyzing performances, scripts, and props from the point of view of participants.

Cultural Levels and Types

Cultural Levels

Organizational cultural levels include national-regional cultures, professional cultures, corporate cultures, and subcultures. At the macrolevel, leaders are aware of the national or regional context. The values and norms of a company based in Argentina, where it is normal for employees to take an afternoon siesta, will be much different than those in Japan, where long hours are testament to employee loyalty.

Professions have unique cultures. Engineers value precision, managers value leadership, and salespeople value good publicity. Such values are taught in graduate school and reinforced by day-to-day activities, rituals, and ceremonies. Corporations have distinct cultures as well. Disney is well known to value fun, performance, and creativity; 3M corporation rewards employee risk taking (as evidenced by the invention of post-it notes), and IBM values consistency.

Subcultures emerge across hierarchical levels, departments, and social groups—sometimes for reasons as simple as a group of employees attending the same church or joining the company softball team. High-ranking executives may value posh presentation, as evidenced by their business attire and fancy lunchtime reservations. Union workers may value hard work, as evidenced by ritualized overtime and boxed lunches.

Types of Culture

Cultures also vary by type. Power cultures are found in organizations where power is centralized in several founders, managers, or executives. Power cultures have easily identified leaders who make quick dramatic changes based on intuition. Such cultures thrive on personal loyalty with reward and punishment structures often reflecting favoritism and perceived loyalties.

Role cultures are bureaucratic and emphasize logic, rationality, achievement, and efficiency. Policy manuals and one's predefined role are key constituents of meaning. Role-culture employees are status conscious and competitive. Such cultures are especially resistant to change and often do not adapt well to new environmental conditions.

In achievement cultures, the task is the primary organizing feature and team decision making is valued. Such cultures are characterized by flexibility, high levels of autonomy, and few formal structures. Control and coordination tend to be ad hoc, aiding innovation and challenging quick response, especially in times of crises.

Finally, person-support cultures are egalitarian, emphasizing personal growth and development as equally important as business objectives. Such cultures value and invest in employees over the long term. Decision making is collective and based on multiple needs.

Leading Organizational Culture

A good cultural leader is charismatic, playing the roles of cheerleader, nurturer, and coach. Cultural leaders strategically consider how to manage intrinsic values such as employees' underlying beliefs, assumptions, and unconscious mental frameworks. Leaders manage values through understanding and communicatively shaping external factors through strategic use of everyday language, rituals, and vision statements. Culture is implicated in both what employees and leaders say they do (espoused values) and what they actually do (values in use). Cultural leaders determine espoused values through visioning and help determine values in use through framing.

Visioning

Visioning refers to formal mission or goal statements—the espoused values of an organization. Organizational visions reflect the organization's future. For years, the vision of Bill Gates at Microsoft was to put a computer on every desk, in every home, all running Microsoft software.

Visions serve a coordinating function, providing a framework that allows organizational members to make sense of the particular tasks that they are responsible for performing. A vision is designed to

inspire, motivate, and create a sense of purpose that organizational members can buy into. Furthermore, a vision is meant to complement ongoing activities and behaviors in the organization.

Framing

Framing refers to communication that leads others to accept one meaning over another. Framing is accomplished by cultural leaders' strategic use of a variety of organizational symbols, including metaphor, stories and myths, rituals and ceremonies, jargon, and strategic use of artifacts. All of these symbols are created and maintained through communication.

One of the most complex organizational symbols is the metaphor, a word or phrase that shows a subject's or program's likeness with something else. Examples of metaphors may include suggesting that a new program is only a Band-Aid on the problem—or a baby step. These metaphors draw attention to some aspects of the situation and hide other aspects. The Band-Aid metaphor connotes a plan that is simplistic, plastic, and short term, while the baby-step metaphor connotes hope and new beginnings. The metaphor used frames the situation in very different ways.

Stories and myths provide vivid images or social maps about how things should be done. Whether or not they are really true, stories teach valuable lessons and warn others about potentially dangerous topics and behaviors. Stories also justify beliefs and paths of action—they explain why certain behaviors are more acceptable than others.

Rituals, rites, ceremonies, and celebrations symbolically pattern and define organizational values. Rituals are informal routine traditions, such as the boss walking around and saying good morning to every employee. Employees engage in personal rituals to define themselves, such as a Disney employee doing a cartwheel to differentiate herself or himself from other employees. Social rituals are standardized performances that affirm relationships among members of organizations, such as going out to lunch with the same group each day. Task rituals are repeated activities—such as the weekly team meeting—that help employees perform their jobs.

Rites and ceremonies are dramatic planned sets of activities that bring together various aspects of an organizational culture in a single event. Rites of

passage—such as moving into a bigger office—mark entry into a different hierarchical level. Rites of integration, such as holiday parties, affirm and enhance the sense of community in an organization. Rites of degradation, such as being put on probation, punish members and show disapproval. Enhancement rites, through activities such as employee of the month, show praise and glory. Renewal rites, such as retreats, aim to revitalize.

Jargon, catch-phrases, and slogans also communicate organizational values. Such symbols bring about a familiar, insider meaning and differentiate one group from another. Slang is useful and interesting precisely because usually it is not controlled by management. However, cultural leaders use specialized terminology to strategically change meaning, as evidenced in the following examples: clients versus customers, janitors versus custodians, secretary versus office manager, a house versus a home.

Finally, organizational artifacts—or the physical features of an organization such as the building, the office layout, or the types of products offered—say a lot about organizational culture. Simple material items and structural elements, such as the shape of a boardroom table, communicate the degree to which an organization values creativity, control, teamwork, and hierarchy. By varying such symbols, leaders can engage in cultural control.

Unobtrusive Cultural Control

From a cultural approach, employees are controlled through organizational identification, considered to be loyalty, commitment, feeling of belonging, and pride in a certain group. Cultural leaders aim for identification by creating a team atmosphere, recognizing employee contributions, talking up the company, and providing frequent integration and enhancement ceremonies (e.g., retreats, parties). Because identification is strongest when there is something to identify against, leaders may also purposely create a company enemy (e.g., the big three American automakers vs. the Japanese).

Through identification, employees adopt the core values of the organization. When employees adopt organizational values, management does not have to tell them what to do. They do it anyway. This type of unobtrusive control is very effective and is associated with increased morale, increased

loyalty, and less need for constant supervision. However, because unobtrusive control is invisible, it is very difficult for employees to resist potentially unfair company structures. So unobtrusive control also raises ethical concerns.

Ongoing Controversies

Researchers differ in regard to whether they view organizational cultures as unified wholes, differentiated subcultures, or an ambiguous set of fragments. Scholars with an integrationist perspective look for ways that cultural members have consistent values that are in consensus. When conflict or inconsistency is discovered, it is considered evidence of culture deterioration. As such, organizational change is conceptualized in terms of establishing or returning to a unified self. Integrationist studies are often written for a management audience and move quickly from description to prescription.

A differentiation perspective examines inconsistency and how organizational subcultures hold different values and beliefs. This approach unveils power, acknowledges conflict, and attends to differences in opinion. It examines inconsistency between espoused values and values in use, differences in opinion between labor and management, and considers how different organizational symbols contradict each other. Differentiation researchers often take a critical point of view and examine how marginalized peoples maintain qualitatively different cultural realities than do privileged groups.

The third approach—fragmentation—focuses on ambiguity, contradiction, and a multiplicity of interpretations. Values and beliefs are dispersed among myriad organizational task and hierarchical groups. Scholars from this perspective—many of whom consider themselves postmodernists—examine layers of meaning, accumulation, and consumption. They examine how gaps and silences are just as important as visible beliefs.

There is ongoing disagreement about the value of the varying perspectives. Nevertheless, drawing together the organizational culture theoretical approach is its focus on communication as central for understanding, managing, and constituting the organizing process.

Sarah J. Tracy

See also Constitutive View of Communication; Culture and Communication; Framing Theory; Identification; Interpretive Theory; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Organizational Control Theory; Social Construction of Reality

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ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY THEORY

Organizational identity theory (OIT) attempts to address how employees' self concepts shape and are shaped by the attachments they make in the workplace. Grounded in symbolic interactionism, OIT considers how meaning, language, and thought constitute our sense of belongingness in organizations. It also considers how the ongoing process of reestablishing identity facilitates patterns of control in organizations. Studied in multiple organizational disciplines from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives,

research on OIT conceptualizes identity as process and product of interaction. Scholars of social psychology had long studied identity emergence in group settings and identification with individual targets. The organizational identification construct was developed and popularized by George Cheney and Philip Tompkins in the 1980s.

Workplaces are not just places in which labor is divided and tasks accomplished. Participation in organizational life is an important way in which individuals perform and reinforce their preferred senses of who they are. Actors are often depicted as either profoundly committed or extremely alienated from the social institutions in which they participate. Yet in an era of increasing complexity, instability, and fragmentation, our ties to organizations are often characterized by insecurity and approach-avoidance tendencies. Performance of group and/or organizational characteristics is one way members attempt to manage this ambivalence. By accommodating or resisting societal meanings for various identity characteristics (what it means to be a doctor, a plumber, an organizational change consultant), members may align themselves with preferred senses of self and distance themselves from characteristics that threaten self-esteem.

Like many social-psychological theories, OIT begins with the assumption that people manage relationships and tasks in part by creating models of the self, the world, and the self in the world. Often defined as a set of core, central, enduring characteristics, identities are comprised of social categories of group membership people use to make sense of who they are in relation to others in their environment. These categories may refer to domains within and beyond organizational boundaries. For example, depending on the individual and his or her environment, an employee's self-concept may be informed by several discrete or overlapping categories, such as accountant, only female member of accounting division, nonprofit volunteer, mother, and lesbian. Membership in these categories may be more or less obvious (e.g., race and ethnicity vs. sexual orientation) and inside or outside the awareness of fellow organization members.

Identities are not given or innate, but are socially constructed through interaction. As such, workplace identities are accomplishments made

possible by ongoing performance, but identities are never permanent and must be re-accomplished through ongoing interaction. For example, a person's identity as a lighthearted flight attendant for Southwest Airlines becomes difficult to sustain if this employee resigns from the company. The meanings of these categories are accomplished through interaction in a variety of institutional domains (e.g., government, family, school, church), all of which have organizational elements of their own. Similarly, one's self-concept may also derive meaning from the salient and stable characteristics of the organizations in which one is a member. And people consider some characteristics more salient, or prominent, in their self-concept than others. So the hypothetical accountant mentioned above may consider her church membership more salient to her identity than her role as an accountant in a software development firm, or for that matter, her sexual orientation. Her presentation of self to others is informed by these characteristics as is others' communication with her. Importantly, some identity characteristics are bound to be valued more or less than others in a given sociocultural context. The domineering characteristics of an army drill sergeant, for example, are more valued in a military setting than in a day care center.

Organizational identification refers to the behavioral process through which preferred identities are accomplished through participation activities that lead to self-evaluation. Individuals identify with an organization when they make behavioral decisions with the perceived interests of the organization in mind. Others have characterized identification as a feeling of oneness with the organization. Scholars have applied OIT to a variety of practical concerns, including organizational socialization, turnover, employee empowerment, gender, aging, sexual harassment, self-directed teams, occupational safety, temporary workers, employee newsletters, organizational policy, computer-mediated organizational communication, employee resistance, organizational tensions and contradictions, emotion labor, and organizational humor.

Recently emerging dialogic approaches to OIT emphasize the ways in which identities are created through talk. These approaches give considerable attention to the challenges associated with managing work identities and the consequences of this

identity work. The communicative process of performing identities day in and day out are considered fundamental to an ongoing effort to sustain individual and collective narratives regarding who we have been, who we are, and who we are becoming as employees and as organizations. The meanings associated with particular organizational identities are never fixed, but rather are vulnerable to change, so identities are always being constructed and reconstructed in discourse, usually in relation to other, often competing identities. For example, flight attendants make sense of their identity in relation to pilots, and firefighters construct themselves through comparisons to police officers and emergency medical technicians. Dialogic approaches are particularly useful for explaining why and how attempts to achieve a secure, satisfying sense of who we are at work are often elusive and even counterproductive. Our attachment to particular notions of who we are may actually reinforce and exacerbate anxieties and insecurities, enabling unintended and often counterproductive consequences. Finally, dialogic approaches have begun to show some initial promise as a lens for understanding the role of identification in conflicts and overlaps among the multiple identities that mark public and private life.

Cliff Scott

See also Identification; Identity Theories; Organizational Communication Theories; Organizational Control Theory; Social Identity Theory; Symbolic Convergence Theory; Symbolic Interactionism

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ORGANIZATIONAL LIST THEORY

In just the past 2 decades, the homely list has been elevated to the object of communication analysis—indeed, as no less worthy of our attention than are conversations and public speeches. Given our increasingly hurry-up culture, our obsession with tips and proficiency, and our need for easy-to-grasp requirements and procedures, lists are now a familiar kind of communication in our lives. Whether it is the local newspaper informing us about the key steps to take to protect our homes before leaving on vacation, or a self-help book about things to look for in a life partner, or a Web site such as wikiHow that offers over 42,000 how-to articles styled in the form of recipes for performance, we are constantly exposed to lists and are expected to use them. In addition to receiving them, we constantly organize others by generating lists for them to abide by, and we self-organize by the lists we make for ourselves. We also respond to the authority of others by accepting protocols that they have designed for us.

Lists are such a routine part of our day-to-day communication that we often merely accept them as a requirement. Part of their power is their very commonplaceness; they may be tacked on the refrigerator or sent to us in an e-mail, but like other social technologies, they become tacit influences once accepted. Larry Browning and his colleagues' research shows that while we resist lists because no one wants to be a bureaucratic automaton, we still conveniently forget their authoritative origins and incorporate and reframe them as our own autonomous thinking when we find them helpful.

Lists have not until recently enjoyed being the focus of communication research. For example, when this author made a presentation about them to a linguistics department in Scandinavia a few years ago, the faculty unanimously opposed studying lists as a kind of discourse because so many requirements were already being laid on them in list form, and they did not want to further legitimize this form of control. “We don’t want to get that started!” they insisted. But lists as a genre of persuasion simply will not go away. It makes sense to view lists as a topic that merits understanding and to explore what we gain or lose from them

and how we respond when others make them a requirement for us.

The theory of lists as communication is part of the larger reconceptualization of organizational communication in the last 25 years from merely being the conduit for messages in the organization, to a more potent view that the communication in the organization is the organization, that it makes up the structure itself. This reconceptualization is based largely on the Aristotelian persuasion model, that the purpose of all messages is influence, and any communication in an organization (nonverbal, charismatic, conversational, etc.) has the potential to influence the person—to affect how they see themselves and how they perform their work. The communication-is-the-organization movement was bolstered by the development of Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, which made the claim that organizations are essentially composed of frameworks (lists) and interactions (speeches, discussions, conversations). Browning conceptualizes the list by expanding on Walter Fisher's idea of technical rationality and makes it the opposite of, equal of, and complement to the story. If the story is changeable, interesting, and historical, the list is current, reliable, and defensible.

Conceptualizing the list as a kind of organizational communication opens up the study of technical programs in organizations, which include any organizations focusing on precise, measurable goals, whether they be change programs, process improvements, or product development. These achievements are reduced to lists in change programs for clarity's sake; the list can reduce the argument over priorities and direction. Everett Rogers' diffusion of innovation research shows that people are more likely to innovate when the technology lacks complexity; lists, at their best, reduce complexity and provide abstract and precise directions about what to do.

Jennifer Ziegler's research on lists extends and departs from Browning's conceptualization. She extends it by defining the list in the same way as Browning and enumerates the kinds of things that exemplify lists in a table of examples. Her research departs from Browning's general conceptualization of list theory by doing an in-depth study that shows how the guidelines for fighting fires in the U.S. Forest Service are best understood in the context of the larger enduring occupational and

political culture of firefighter and firefighter managers and the Department of Agriculture in which it operates.

Ziegler's work has a broader application to other professions whose communication revolves around emergency conditions. For police, soldiers, and firefighters, for instance, the requirement for operating reliably in crises makes lists of procedural rules especially important. Ziegler illustrates that point with the classic "Wildland Firefighters' 10 Standard Fire Orders," adopted by the U.S. Forest Service. They include such things as general rules about knowing what the fire is doing, firefighter protection rules about keeping an eye out for escape routes and safety zones, and communication rules for staying in direct contact with managers and peers at all times. In a series of side-by-side comparisons, Ziegler documents the evolution of these 10 rules over a 60-year period from the end of World War II to 2007 and shows that the list, far from offering infallible, ironclad commands, actually changes over time, though the number always remains 10. For example, following World War II, firefighting rules took on the look of military orders and emphasized the teamwork typical of a military unit. Then, still later, the fire orders got criticized for being sometimes contradictory. How, for example, can one achieve the goal of fire containment and simultaneously ensure firefighter safety? Worse still, following the rules did not necessarily achieve both goals. After one fire in which several firefighters died, the postfire analysis concluded that they had broken 8 out of 10 rules, yet in another instance where everyone had survived, the postfire analysis showed that all 10 of the rules had been broken. Ziegler says that the Forest Service continues to struggle with the issue of how much to emphasize rule following versus individual judgment in chaotic conditions, including establishing the priority of the rules in any given circumstance. Her analysis reminds us that didactic lists have their limitations. The theme of Ziegler's analysis is the constant struggle over what is a priority (safety or firefighting) and what deserves attention at any given moment in the face of a forest fire.

We offer two examples of research on lists in hospitals. The first, from Eric Eisenberg and his colleagues, comes from a qualitative analysis of a hospital's emergency department (ED), which accounts

for over half of hospital admissions in the United States. This analysis noted that when triaging a roomful of new patients, ED doctors typically render their written diagnoses in list form. Why? Because given the hectic overload conditions they often face, efficiency is at a premium. Lists allow patient information to be coded quickly and later read quickly by other staff members. Also, doctors are not required to become essayists under moments of great stress. Lists obviate the need for narrative coherence, complete sentences, grammatical correctness, and other formalities. They also help staff members to professionally distance themselves from patients and to enjoy some assurance that their diagnosis and initial treatment will meet the test of litigation should they be questioned in a court of law. But this ordering of the contact with the patient actually begins with a story told by the patient. Patients (and their families) arrive at the ED with a story, and the doctor's task is to translate the patient's story into an actionable list. When the patient's story adds up to a consistent medical diagnosis, the recognizable set of symptoms is coded as a good story. When the patient's report is not a good story, it does not comply to a clear actionable list. For example, if a psychosomatic patient complains that everything hurts, the ED doctor might assess that if everything hurts, nothing really hurts, and that the patient is simply attempting to increase his or her priority in the triage or be given a drug prescription to blot her- or himself out.

As the patient leaves the hospital ED, the exit requires a story as well. Was the patient released from the ED and sent home? Admitted to the hospital as a regular patient? Or did the patient end her or his hospital stay by dying? Each one of these exit types requires a story of explanation.

In our second example from hospitals, Atul Gawande analyzes the difficulty in getting professionals to follow a checklist. He documents Peter Pronovost's efforts as a change agent to get hospital professionals to follow a checklist in the intensive care unit. The need for such a list is supported by the number of transactions hospital professionals have with patients in intensive care over a 24-hour period. One set of doctors acting as observers in Israeli intensive care units found that patients there require 178 actions from a hospital professional per day. Although following checklists carefully has been proven to greatly reduce

costs and loss of life in intensive care units, many hospitals are reluctant to use them. They are seen as simply one more paperwork requirement in an already overloaded system. In a Detroit hospital that was underfunded and overloaded, one doctor told another not to bother with the list, but rather to take care of the patient.

The checklist is also vulnerable to nonuse because of the power politics of the hospital. Doctors remain committed to the clinical knowledge of their profession and see the list as an obstruction to their judgment and yet another impediment in a busy day. In one instance, a hospital tried an experimental procedure for guarding against infections by empowering nurses to directly intervene in instances where the doctor failed to follow the list and to make an issue of it with the hospital's hierarchy if the doctor did not take the nurses' direction. During the test period, the infection rate went from 11% to zero in that hospital. The study continued for another 15 months, and the analysis showed this extra attention to the checklist had prevented 43 infections, eight deaths, and saved the hospital \$15 million. The checklist appears to provide two main benefits: It helps with memory recall, especially at moments when the doctor's attention is directed toward immediate problems, and it makes explicit, at a minimum, what is expected to happen in a complex medical process.

Gawande compares the intensive care unit to an airplane as he makes the argument for the list in this story. In the 1930s, with an awareness of a coming war in Europe, the U.S. Army tested a number of airplanes for potential acquisition by the army. Boeing's Model 299 was a prototype for the army's next generation for the long-range bomber. But as the plane lifted off for its public test flight at Wright-Patterson Air Field in Dayton, Ohio, it turned once in the air, and as a wing tipped, the plane fell back to the earth, killing two of the five aircrew aboard. The army's follow-up analysis of the accident showed that the complexity of the plane was too much for a single pilot to manage and that the commander of the test plane, with so much to do, failed to follow one procedure that brought the plane down. The analysts thus concluded that the plane, to fly safely, needed a checklist that two or three pilots could share and double check. This plane went on to become the

B-17, the reliable and secure plane that gave the Allies the advantage in the air war over Europe in World War II.

Gawande asserts that the complexity of the intensive care unit deserves the same attention to checklists as the famous B-17—that there is too much to do to leave to individual mastery and expertise. The evidence for complexity in the intensive care unit is strong; one study of 41,000 patients in the intensive care unit identified 1,222 injury-related diagnoses and 32,261 unique combinations of these diagnoses for medical teams to attend to. The diversity of types of protocols is, in Gawande's words, like having 32,261 different types of planes to land. And although the list cannot give direction on how to respond to these combinations, it can provide some stability and assurance that safe steps have been taken, all the while creating conditions for the doctor to use her or his clinical skill.

The final example of lists moves from organizational emergencies to marital struggles. An astonishing document titled "Conditions," drawn from Walter Isaacson's recent biography of Albert Einstein, reveals how his personal relationships and his work commitments both intertwined and conflicted in at least one moment of his life. In this written document, Einstein set boundary conditions with his depressed wife from whom he was at that time profoundly estranged. He sent her a 159-word list—paraphrased here—that directed as follows:

- where in the house she could go (not into his room),
- what objects she could handle (none on his working desk),
- what she could say (do not berate me in front of the children),
- whom she could say it to (you will speak to no one in the larger community about me, unless completely necessary),
- how she should spend her time (you will feed and clothe me promptly), and
- what expression of feeling she could expect from him (you will expect no emotion from me).

Einstein's communicating this agreement to his wife in list form is typical of effective lists in that they look like a formal contract, add to clarity, and while there may be disagreement about the list or

even resistance to it, it can be the base line for performance once established. Note that by forming such a list Einstein intends to establish absolute authority. And by laying down rules in advance, he intends to decrease both misunderstanding and the need to have any further communication with his wife. In accepting the list, she becomes the person in the relationship at fault if any rules are broken. Like other good lists, it is coolly explicit and designed to cover all circumstances. The agreement also allows Einstein to behave as he had throughout his adult life, which was to focus on his work without interruption. He and his wife were soon separated.

Although Einstein's list establishes a hierarchy in a troubled marriage from a different era, agreements between partners in contemporary relationships are not uncommon. Ironically, at a time of great cultural shift, such as now, when we see a relaxation in the rules of formality on who can hold what kind of job, the hours they keep, and how they are permitted to dress, we see an equally strong counter trend toward people—both at home and at work—having lists for doing everything. These combined trends suggest that James Orton and Karl Weick's theoretical work on simultaneous loose-tight properties—which argues that every point of looseness in a system is typically offset by a countering point of tightness—holds true for the relative importance of lists in personal and work life.

Larry D Browning

See also Constitutive View of Communication; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Organizational Communication Theories; Organizational Co-Oriented Theory; Organizational Culture

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ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION AND ASSIMILATION

Organizational membership is a significant part of modern life. Individuals affiliate with organizations for social connection, religious worship, philanthropic involvement, and most certainly, to earn a living. When individuals join an organization, they typically receive some measure of training or orientation which socializes them to the organization. Organizational socialization is the process by which newcomers learn how to fulfill their roles, are introduced to others, and become familiar with the policies and norms of the organization. Organizations socialize new members to enhance their effectiveness and to maintain the organization's culture and operations. A desired outcome of socialization is newcomers' assimilation to the organization. When members assimilate, they become familiar with the culture and assume their roles as participating members of the organization. Therefore, organizations introduce newcomers to the "way things are done around here" with the dual purpose of easing coordination of activities between new and existing workers and of shaping newcomers into members who will safeguard the well-being of the organization.

Studies of socialization in the late 1890s were focused on how individuals could be civilized for the overall benefit of society. By the 1920s, sociologists viewed a civilized society to be a natural condition and were less concerned about problems related to social order. In the 1930s, researchers began to consider how individuals could be better trained by management or socialized to assume organizational roles. Socialization research continued to examine and promote best practices that enabled managers to shape newcomers into loyal, productive members. Most studies were applied and did little to theorize socialization and assimilation experiences.

In 1979, John Van Maanen and Edgar Schein introduced a model depicting the three primary processes (dimensions) of organizational socialization. The first dimension relates to the functional area in which newcomers enter and are socialized into the organization. Accordingly, recruits become connected to a particular function within the organization (e.g., human resources, production, accounting). The second dimension, inclusionary, involves the social aspects of assimilation. As newcomers become recognized for their contributions and are accepted, others seek their opinions and social participation. Thus, newcomers become more integrated into the social fabric of the organization. The third dimension, hierarchical, involves moving up the hierarchy of the organization. The model—and much early socialization research—assumes newcomers enter at lower levels in the organization and ascend the hierarchical ranks as they assimilate. The model is a useful conceptualization of how members move from positions of peripheral importance to roles that are core and higher in the organization.

Van Maanen and Schein also argued that organizations have a powerful influence on assimilation based on how they socialize newcomers. They proposed a typology of six bipolar tactics organizations use to socialize newcomers. Formal (vs. informal) methods separate newcomers from existing members to undergo training and orientation classes. Collective (vs. individual) tactics group recruits for socialization, exposing them to common learning experiences. Sequential (vs. random) methods require that the newcomer complete a lock-step series of classes and/or adjustment experiences. Fixed (vs. variable) strategies specify a set

timetable for moving from one socialization experience to another. Serial (vs. disjunctive) tactics provide mentors or more experienced peers to train the newcomer. Investiture (vs. divestiture) tactics provide supportiveness, affirming the newcomer's incoming identity, skills, and other attributes.

Research indicates that the collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture tactics are commonly clustered and thus are termed institutionalized socialization. Institutional socialization encourages newcomers to adapt to an organizationally specific role and is related to higher levels of job satisfaction and identification with the organization. The opposite set of tactics (individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture) form individualized socialization in which newcomers learn about and adjust to the organization on their own. These tactics are associated with role innovation (adapting the role to suit the desires and needs of the incoming member), as well as role ambiguity and increased stress.

Stage models are used to conceptualize socialization through steps in the integration process. They are a useful heuristic offering insight into the various qualitatively different stages newcomers experience as they assimilate. Although several researchers developed similar models beginning in the 1970s, in the field of communication Fredric Jablin's integrative-synthetic model is the most frequently cited. Jablin's model includes four stages: (1) anticipatory socialization, which includes vocational socialization (learning about the world of work and about vocations) and information seeking prior to joining a particular organization; (2) encounter, which includes processes experienced as newcomers join organizations; (3) metamorphosis, described as settling into the organization and role; and (4) exit, processes associated with members leaving their organizations. Although stage models have been criticized because they depict assimilation occurring in discrete stages, the premises on which they are based—that definable experiences impact individuals prior to entry, as newcomers enter organizations, as they adjust and assume participating roles, and prepare to leave—have helped researchers define and focus their theorizing and research.

In the field of communication, three theories commonly used to explain socialization and assimilation are uncertainty reduction, social exchange,

and social identity theories. First, socialization provided by the organization is designed to reduce newcomers' uncertainty associated with assuming their roles in their organization. Newcomers' need to reduce their uncertainty also has been used to explain information seeking behaviors by newcomers. Newcomers weigh social costs associated with admitting their lack of knowledge causing them to select either overt or covert means of gaining information. Social exchange theory proposes that given a choice between two alternatives, individuals choose the alternative that is more rewarding. The theory explains how potential members are first selected into membership, then for social- and work-based relationships, and finally for promotion and retention, based on their perceived ability to provide more value than other potential candidates. Social identity theory specifies that individuals' social identity is partially derived from organizations with which they affiliate. Therefore, individuals are motivated to affiliate and assimilate into an organization when they believe the association is beneficial to their desired projected personal identity.

In the 1990s, scholars such as Connie Bullis, Paige Turner, Ruth Smith, and Robin Clair criticized traditional conceptualizations of organizational socialization and assimilation and related research. Among their concerns were (a) the one-sided managerial focus of socialization research, primarily focused on developing productive members; (b) research directed toward developing generalizable models of assimilation, ignoring individual experiences; and (c) conceptualizations and research privileging socialization that occurs within the boundaries of the organization, thereby discounting individuals' attempts to individualize (customize to suit their own needs) their roles. Contributing to the controversy is the inconsistent use of the terms assimilation and socialization. Some researchers use the term socialization to include not only actions of the organization, but also member adjustment. They argue the distinctions are unclear and that the term assimilation denotes molding individuals into corporate clones. More traditional theorists including Michael Kramer and Vernon Miller disagree, arguing for the distinction between the terms and against narrow depictions of current research. In the last decade, while the controversies related to assimilation and socialization have not disappeared, research

in the area has expanded to include more diversity in perspectives, focus, and objectives.

Karen K. Myers

See also Organizational Communication Theories; Organizational Culture; Organizational Identity Theory; Social Exchange Theory; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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ORGANIZING, PROCESS OF

Karl Weick's theories on organizing are broadly influential across multiple disciplines and considered foundational in organizational communication. His book, *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, published in 1969 and revised in 1979, is considered a classic in the study of organizations and has been translated into multiple languages. Weick provided researchers with a way of thinking about organizations that was innovative both for its useful application of systems theory and for its insightful description of the process of sense-making, observations still relevant today as organizational environments are ever more turbulent. Weick notes that change, rather than stability,

is the rule. Organizational communication scholars appreciate Weick's theories as an intellectual bridge between a linear, hierarchical, rational view of organizations and a participative and improvisational view, allowing room for mystery and aesthetics. Across his more than 170 articles and five books, Weick has maintained an interest in the process of organizing, focusing on sense-making and how organizations reduce equivocality and enact their environments.

Equivocality Reduction

Equivocality refers to inputs that are indeterminate, inscrutable, ambivalent, or questionable. Inputs are not equivocal because they lack meaning, but because they are incredibly rich and may be interpreted in multiple ways; they are difficult to classify because they fit numerous classifications. People organize in order to reduce, manage, or remove equivocality. One reason that communication scholars are attracted to Weick's work is that he sees language as a resource for authoring as well as interpreting reality. People both generate and interpret reality; hence, organizations construct their problems and enact their environments. Ultimately, the more equivocal the inputs for an organization, the greater the degree of complexity and diversity required of the organization. This is known as requisite variety. Most organizations today cope with vast amounts of confusing data in a rapidly changing world, so Weick urges organizational members to complicate themselves by embracing an appropriate degree of complexity. Weick's model of equivocality reduction is process oriented, and communication is key since the process takes place largely via the intersection of personal sense-making and social interaction.

The Enactment Model

Organizations do not simply operate in environments that exist independently; environments are not out there waiting to be perceived. Members enact environments through their actions and patterns of attention. Two kinds of enactment are bracketing, when organizational members isolate some changes or inputs for closer attention, and ecological change, when actors do something that changes the environment. In short, managers

rearrange, single-out, unrandomize, and order their surroundings such that they create their own constraints. Weick advocates more mindful observations as a way to more fully see, comprehend, perceive, and label data and information.

Weick goes on to say that all processes subsequent to enactment work on edited raw materials and whatever events have been bracketed or extracted for closer analysis. Members then engage in selection, a collective sense-making process where they narrow equivocality by labeling their experience, by deciding what to deal with and by deciding what to ignore or disregard. In this process, actors select both schemes of interpretation as well as specific interpretations. Selection processes are composed in order to transform equivocal, raw data into information.

Finally, organizational members retain some interpretations for future use, what Weick calls retention. Retention is a story, a telling of what the equivocality was about. What is retained then sets the stage for future enactment and selection rules and processes. Note that the model of enactment-selection-retention appears to be a straightforward, linear model, but this may be misleading. Organizations are typically coping with any number of equivocal messages, and there are a plurality of cycles, rules, enactments, beliefs, events, and inputs at any given moment.

In both the selection and retention stages, Weick notes that these processes depend on double interacts. An act occurs when a member says or does something. An interact occurs when there is a response to the act. A double interact occurs when there is further response or adjustment. These processes result in assembly rules and behavior cycles. Assembly rules are the operating procedures or corporate wisdom which help the organization choose what to do to maximize goal attainment and may be found in employee manuals or oral traditions. Behavior cycles facilitate the selection and retention process.

Ultimately, organizations evolve as they make sense of themselves and their environments. Yet organizations fall apart and need to be re-accomplished. When people go home at night and the organization is interrupted, what does it fall back on or revert to? Weick's presumption is that the stable component in organizations is the double interact. This is why he focuses on relationships in

organizations more than on individual talent or performance.

Loose Versus Tight Couplings

Weick notes that the communication connections within organizations vary in intensity. In an organization, there are subsystems. Two systems joined by few common variables or weakly connected common variables are loosely coupled. Practically, this means that if one variable is disturbed in one system, the effect on the other system will be limited. Loose coupling is often advantageous; the multiple goals of an organization can be coordinated without extensive communication or consensus, providing potential for both flexibility and stability. Furthermore, loosely coupled systems are better able to withstand jolts from the environment. Weick notes some of the dangers in too tightly coupled organizational systems in his analysis of the tragic accident at Tenerife when two jets collided, killing over 300 people.

Sense-Making

A key idea in Weick's sense-making approach includes the concept of retrospective sense-making. Weick points out that we cannot know what we think until we have seen what we have said.

While organizations (and individuals) might prefer to think of themselves as quite rational, making decisions after much careful thought and planning, Weick suggests that organizations act first and make sense of it later. Actors can only interpret actions that they have already taken. This is key to enactment because, once again, only some actions and interpretations are retained. Managers need to know only enough about what they think to act, so sufficiency becomes more important than accuracy. Weick suggests that chaotic action is better than orderly inaction. Common ends and shared meanings come about not after much careful planning, but after effective organizing action. Weick also points out that there is a difference between decision making, which prompts managers to place blame, and sense-making, which encourages a view of good people struggling to make sense of complex situations. The sense-making is social and ongoing.

Some of Weick's case studies have proved quite instructive as well as fruitful for other scholars, including his study of the Mann-Gulch Fire in

which he observed the tragic deaths of wildland firefighters who could not drop their tools to outrun the fire heading uphill, and his study of the 1973 Skylab crew who shut out NASA for 24 hours in order to gain some much needed autonomy. With regard to the firefighters, he sees a graphic, if tragic, representation of the ongoing tension between stability and innovation. Sometimes actors give too much credence to past experience. Weick suggests that they learn to treat memory as a pest.

What seems consistent across many years and publications for Weick is that he advocates a living forward that is unsettled, emergent, and contingent, while recognizing that people are more comfortable with establishing coherency after the fact.

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See also Co-Orientation Theory; Organizational Communication Theories; Organizational

Co-Orientation Theory; Sense-Making; Social Construction of Reality; Social Interaction Theories; System Theory

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PALO ALTO GROUP

The Palo Alto Group included the early members of the Mental Research Institute (MRI) in Palo Alto, California. Basing its work on the writings of Gregory Bateson, the group consisted of Don Jackson, Paul Watzlawick, John Weakland, Janet Bavelas, Carlos Sluzki, and of course, Bateson himself. These authors produced major writings that sustained a highly influential perspective that forms the basis of much communication theory today.

The germinal ideas of the Palo Alto Group were introduced by Bateson in an anthropological book published in 1936, titled *Naven*. Three crucial elements advanced in this book form the basis of the Palo Alto Group's perspective, which involves (a) patterns of interaction, (b) the creation of relationships in communication exchanges, and (c) the power of cumulative interaction. Bateson identified two important patterns of interaction—symmetrical and complementary, defined later in this entry. Symmetrical interactions consist of similar moves, while complementary ones consist of opposing, but interdependent ones. These patterns of communication help us understand the regulation of interpersonal and intergroup relationships. This notion is bolstered by Bateson's second point, the idea that a system of relationships is an ongoing process revealed by moment-to-moment observable exchanges of communicative behaviors. The third idea was that cumulative interaction has power by creating a differentiation of behavioral expectations in a relationship over

time. This Bateson called schismogenesis. Specifically, complementary and symmetrical relationships are established through forms of interaction that become ritualized over time.

The main theoretical implication of Bateson's ideas was a relational perspective on human communication that contrasted with the individualistic approach that was then dominant in social interaction studies. In other words, the behaviors of individuals derive from their interactions, not the reverse. Consistent with this principle, because social interaction patterns cannot be derived from individual behaviors or individual self-reports, relational communication researchers must study the systems of relationships by observing the sequences of specific reactions of one individual to another. Bateson stated that a double description is necessary to describe a relational pattern. He used the analogy of human binocular vision to illustrate the way in which a relational pattern is defined: As two eyes in combination generate a binocular view, the combined actions of two or more people interacting generate patterns of relationships.

Bateson's research association with the members of the Palo Alto-based MRI in the 1950s promoted his ideas in the fields of psychotherapy and systemic family therapy. Historically, the definition of a specific communicative situation, the double bind, was one of the better known applications of the Palo Alto Group's perspective on the complexities of human communication. A double bind is a dilemma in communication in which a person receives two or more conflicting messages;

with such contradictory messages, the individual is seen as in error regardless of how he or she responds, unable to comment on the conflict, resolve it, or escape from the situation. A double bind generally includes different levels of meaning in a series of related messages, and these messages can be stated or implicit within the context of the situation or conveyed by tone of voice or body language. Convinced that serious complications exist when frequent double binds are part of an ongoing, committed relationship, some Palo Alto Group authors attempted to explain the development and maintenance of serious psychopathology, such as schizophrenia, based on double bind theory. Although abundant multidisciplinary research about schizophrenia disqualified the Palo Alto Group's explanation, the notion of a double bind was used to emphasize the power of context as well as the impact of simultaneous levels of meaning in human communication.

But it was not until the publication of *The Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes* by Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson in 1976 that communication scholars became fully aware of the contribution of Bateson's perspective to the human communication field. Expanding on Bateson's work, this book provided an integrated and accessible communication approach to studying human relationships and had a pronounced influence on the field of interpersonal communication. The Palo Alto Group perspective, as represented in *The Pragmatics of Human Communication*, offered an alternative view of communication to the traditional view, focusing on communication itself—that is, on the observable behavioral process of interaction, rather than on the cognitive, intrapersonal variables of the individuals participating in the interaction. From this perspective, the behaviors of communicators should be the primary data of communication-based theories.

Five axioms proposed in *The Pragmatics of Human Communication* form the central core of the Palo Alto Group perspective. The first axiom—one cannot not communicate—underscores the social context of communication, indicating that in an interactional situation any behavior can serve as a message because it can be read by others and can influence them to respond in certain ways. Even silence, which one might take as noncommunication,

can be seen by others as a statement of some kind, whether intended or not.

The second axiom is that every communication has a content and relationship aspect such that the latter classifies the former and is therefore a meta-communication. This axiom is based on the distinction between a report level of a message and a command level. The report function is the content, and the command function tells one how to read or understand the content. In other words, the command function defines some aspect of the relationship at the moment.

The third axiom, human communication involves both digital and analog modalities, refers to the duality of message codes. This means that messages are expressed simultaneously in two forms. One code, the digital, clearly expresses information, while the other, analogic, expresses feeling or tone. The analogic code is always the context for how to understand the digital one. The digital code is often language, and the analogic code is often nonverbal.

The fourth axiom is that the nature of a relationship is dependent on the punctuation of the partners' communication. Punctuation in this axiom refers to the different ways an ongoing sequence of communicative behavior can be framed or organized by the participants or by external observers. The meaning of the message is strongly influenced by how the communicative sequence is framed.

The final axiom refers to Bateson's ideas of symmetry and complementarity as two general patterns of relationships, as defined above, based on the similarity or difference of the communicational exchanges. These two forms were proposed as prototypes of a necessary paradigmatic shift from single message variables to transactional level measures of communicative patterns.

The Palo Alto Group not only has had considerable impact in the area of interpersonal communication studies but also has applications in the study of such diverse fields as couples interaction, individual and family therapy, physician-patient interaction, organizational relationships, and communication in families of persons with mental illness. The MRI model of brief therapy has been the main and most successful representative of the ideas of the Palo Alto Group; these ideas are presented in *Change: Principles of Problem Formation*

and *Problem Resolution*, one of the most translated and widely used texts in the world of brief psychotherapy. A number of communication theories have been inspired by the Palo Alto Group, including the coordinated management of meaning, relational communication theory in its various forms, and various interpersonal and group communication theories.

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See also Coordinated Management of Meaning; Cybernetics; Group Communication Theories; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Relational Communication Theory; Relational Control Theory; System Theory

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PARALANGUAGE

The term *paralanguage* (or *vocalics*) refers to the vocal but nonverbal dimensions of communication that characterize the utterance of verbal sequences—for example, stress, pitch, rate, rhythm, volume, and presence of pauses. Vocalizations require the presence of voice, which can be variously modulated; therefore, each utterance has specific paralinguistic properties. Theories on paralanguage have been included consistently in the canon of communication theory since the 1950s.

Each of the properties of paralanguage can be examined by structuring the related variables within a system of contrasts. In this way, researchers have been able to study contrasts and degrees of articulatory characteristics, such as pitch direction, pitch range, loudness, tension, resonance, nasalization, labialization, advancement or retraction of the tongue, and so on. As a general rule, these properties can be heard, but sometimes they can also be seen (such as in lip reading) and even felt (such as in communication methods for deaf and/or blind people). Moreover, as Fernando Poyatos stated in the 1970s, authors of literary texts can refer to paralinguistic characteristics through punctuation marks and/or descriptions of people's behavior.

Research on paralanguage emerged in the 1950s with the pioneering study by George Trager. Trager developed a classification system consisting of the voice set, voice qualities, and vocalization. The voice set is associated with the context in which the speaker is speaking; it includes such aspects as culture, age, gender, and mood. Voice qualities embrace volume, pitch, tempo, rhythm, articulation, resonance, nasality, breathiness, hoarseness, and accent. The whole of these characteristics gives each voice a unique print.

Vocalization, the last of Trager's categories, includes vocal characterizers, vocal qualifiers, and vocal segregates. Vocal characterizers express emotions during speech, for example, laughing, crying, and yawning. Vocal qualifiers are the different styles of delivering a message—for instance, yelling or whispering. Vocal segregates are short nonlexical utterances, such as uh-huh, which notify the speaker that the listener is listening and help both emitter and receiver to regulate and maintain the dialogue.

In the 1960s and 1970s Trager, Charles Hockett, Isamu Abe, and William Thorpe considered paralanguage analogous to the symptomatic signs and expressive vocalizations of certain animal species. Interestingly, the fundamental and widespread phenomenon called frequency code is common to both animals and humans. In the same period, Dwight Bolinger also stated that in human communication high or rising fundamental voice frequency marks questions and conveys social messages such as deference, politeness, submission, and lack of confidence. On the contrary, low or falling fundamental frequency marks statements

and conveys social messages such as assertiveness, authority, aggression, confidence, and threat.

Indeed, among animals as well as humans the fundamental voice frequency can indirectly convey an impression of the size of the signaler. Among animals, size is closely related to social status, and among humans it is related to adulthood. In fact, overall body mass is correlated with the mass of the vibrating membrane, which produces vocalizations, and the mass of the vibrating membrane is inversely related to the emitted frequency. Thus, among humans as well as among other animals, an antagonist can produce vocalizations as low as possible in fundamental frequency to give the impression of being adult, large, and dangerous; vice-versa, vocalizations can be produced as high as possible in fundamental frequency to give the impression of being small and nonthreatening.

Following from his studies on animal and human communication, David Crystal also conceived paralinguistic behavior as a significant point of overlap between human and animal communicative systems. However, in spite of this, he claimed that the paralinguistic system is very similar to the linguistic one. Indeed, he demonstrated that paralanguage is characterized, in various degrees, by all the 16 design features that Hockett identified in verbal oral language.

According to Michael Argyle, paralinguistic features can express emotions (e.g., through whispering, muttering, giggling, snickering, sobbing, and crying sounds), convey attitudes, and communicate personality traits. Albert Mehrabian noted that the subtle use of vocal inflections can confer special significance to verbal messages, for instance, a sarcastic connotation. In the 1980s, Miles Patterson pointed out that paralanguage, as part of nonverbal communication, can regulate the course of interactions, express intimacy, and exercise social control or dominance. This view emphasizes the question of intentionality. Some scholars adopt the receiver orientation in regard to intentionality: Ray Birdwhistell as well as Paul Watzlawick and his colleagues claim that intentionality is not a relevant characteristic of communicative behavior because each behavior is communicative in itself.

In contrast, other scholars, including Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen, suggest that only those acts are communicative that the sender consciously intends to transmit to a receiver. This conception

could lead to labeling most nonverbal behaviors as noncommunicative, including paralanguage. On the contrary, Mehrabian stated that, in certain kinds of conversation, body language and paralanguage are much more accurate indicators of emotions and meaning than the words themselves.

However, there is a significant difference between reacting to a behavior and logically thinking about it. Indeed, data received by the ears are directed to the orbito-frontal cortex along two different pathways, one made by high speed neurons and the other by slow speed ones. High speed neurons lead to the amygdala and brain stem, which are involved in producing and responding to nonverbal signs. Slow speed neurons lead to the neocortex, where thoughts arise. As the high speed neurons reach their target long before the slow speed neurons, reactions can originate before thoughts.

This involvement of ancient centers and paleocircuits of the nervous system, which evolved before the advent of speech, has induced some scholars to interpret paralanguage as a communication residue. Thomas Sebeok, Alfred Hayes, and Mary Bateson, for example, classify paralanguage along with nonvocal modes of communication under the general heading of semiotics.

Alessandra Padula

See also Interpersonal Communication Theories; Language and Communication; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Semiotics and Semiology

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PATH-GOAL THEORY

See Leadership Theories

PEACE THEORIES

Human history abounds with wars of conquest. For much of our modern era, war has been viewed as a legitimate, if not natural, way to settle disagreements between states. Even those who are strongly opposed to war often acknowledge that war may sometimes be justified or necessary. Scholars' attempts to establish when nations have the right to go to war led to the development of just war theory, which specifies when use of force is justified, for example, when innocent life is in imminent danger. As the destructive power of weapons has grown and the scale of wars has increased, however, it has become critical to find ways to limit or eliminate the use of war as a means of settling disputes within and across national borders. This takes on added urgency when considering the power of nuclear weapons, the use of which would threaten the very survival of the planet.

With militarism and aggression unleashing more violent conflicts across the globe, affecting not only the millions of people directly caught up in the conflict, but also the regional and global stability, the concept of peace has gained the attention of political leaders, scholars, and ordinary people

alike. As a value-laden concept, peace has resisted attempts to define it clearly, a task complicated by the fact that approaches to studying peace have been both interdisciplinary and international in focus. This entry reviews some of the most prominent conceptions of peace and examines some of the peace processes that developed as a way of building peace in intractable conflict situations.

Conceptions of Peace

The term peace (and equivalent concepts in other languages) has been a part of the everyday vocabulary of many cultures for thousands of years. The Greek term for peace, *ireni*, refers to an absence of antagonistic conflict. The English term is derived from the Latin word *pax*, which is literally a pact to end or avert hostilities. Dictionary definitions of the English word *peace* emphasize an absence of war and overt violence, although the *Oxford English Dictionary* also includes definitions related to freedom from civil commotion, quarrels, or dissension between individuals; mental and spiritual turmoil; and even disturbing noise.

Although Western conceptions of peace tend to emphasize an absence of the negative, Eastern approaches conceptualize peace from a more positive stance, giving emphasis to characteristics such as harmony, unity, and balance. For example, the Chinese equivalent of peace is written as a combination of the characters for harmony and equality. The Hebrew *shalom* and Arabic *salaam* mean whole or undivided. Many indigenous conceptions of peace, including those of Native Americans in North America, focus on harmony between human beings, the rest of the natural world, and the larger cosmos.

In the 20th century, the term peace was often given a passive connotation, most likely because it was associated with the philosophy of pacifism, the belief that war of any kind is morally unacceptable and not worth the human and social cost of destructive violence. Pacifists emphasize nonviolence, with many believing that it is inappropriate to take up arms even in self-defense. For pacifists, peace is imbedded in an attitude toward humanity, focusing on a spirit of love, compassion, and forgiveness. Although peace as nonviolence can be passive, pacifism literally refers to the making of peace (from *pace* and *facere*). The work of

Mahatma Gandhi and subsequently Martin Luther King, Jr., gave peace a more proactive connotation. They advocated nonviolent action in the form of individual and mass resistance. Both Gandhi and King led pacifist movements that sought to overcome social injustice through nonviolent social change, in some cases advocating a revolution against established social order.

Although the causes and effects of war have been studied by social scientists since the latter part of the 19th century, it was not until early in the 1950s that a concerted effort was made to build a coherent knowledge base that could inform policy makers about the causes and effects of peace. The establishment of the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo in 1959 by Johan Galtung, a major figure in developing the field of peace studies, served as impetus for theoretical developments and scholarly research about peace. Around this same time, other research institutes were founded, including the Center for Conflict Resolution at the University of Michigan, led by Kenneth Boulding and Anatol Rapoport, and the Canadian Peace Research Institute, led by Norman Alcock and Hanna and Allan Newcombe. In 1980 the United Nations established the University For Peace in Costa Rica, and the United States Institute of Peace was founded in 1986 with funding from the U.S. Congress. New publications emerged, such as the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (started in 1957) and the *Journal of Peace Research* (started in 1964), and by the 1980s new academic programs, such as the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, began to offer advanced degrees in peace and conflict studies. In recent years, a plethora of new peace centers and conflict resolution programs have been established around the world, with peace centers now existing on every continent. In the United States, most major universities now offer courses, programs, or degrees with an emphasis on conflict resolution and peace studies.

One of the main theoretical issues in peace research is the conceptualization of peace. K. Boulding, in his 1969 article *Toward a Theory of Peace*, presented a continuum ranging from war to negative peace to social harmony. He distinguished between conflict and war and pointed out that being at peace does not preclude all conflict. He argued that our goal should be a stable peace, a

situation in which the probability of war is so small that it plays no significant role in people's lives.

Although most theorists recognize that social harmony may be an unrealistic goal, especially for societies emerging from a period of violent conflict, there is general agreement that negative peace is not sufficient for peace to be self-sustaining in troubled societies. Although cessation of violence is necessary for peace, agreements that lead to the simple cessation of hostilities, such as cease-fires, temporary truces, and the like, do not create, by themselves, sufficient conditions for genuine peace. In UN Security Council discussions in 2001 about what constitutes peace, it was proposed that the ultimate purpose of all peace operations is sustainable peace, defined as the capacity for a sovereign state to resolve by means other than war the natural conflicts to which all societies are prone.

Galtung, who was among those who believed that the concept of peace should not be limited to negative peace, introduced the notion of positive peace. Galtung took inspiration from medical science, which views health as not only the absence of disease, but also as a condition in which the human body is strong enough to resist diseases. In a similar vein, he believed the study of peace should go beyond preventing war and should consider how societies could create conditions that resist the use of violence to settle disputes. Thus, positive peace addresses ways to promote cooperation, integration, and supportive relationships. Several peace processes have been developed to support positive peace.

Peace Processes

The United Nations document *An Agenda for Peace* distinguishes between the activities of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. Peacemaking is a diplomatic effort in which third parties mediate between official representatives from the conflicting parties to bring an end to the violence and reach a peace agreement. Peacekeeping is a third-party intervention by military forces (with some exceptions) to separate the fighting parties and provide security in order to give peacemaking a chance. Peacebuilding is a long-term process that often occurs after violent conflict has slowed down, come to a halt, or an agreement has been reached to end a stalemate. Peacebuilding

activities can also occur prior to a settlement, targeted toward preparing the population for life after conflict.

Thus, one can view peacekeeping as a primary means to contain the ongoing violence, peacemaking as a way to negotiate political and strategic issues, and peacebuilding as the process that seeks to address the sources of hostility and build local capacities for conflict resolution. Peacebuilding attempts to establish confidence and trust between opponents, improve communication across conflict lines, and assist in developing cooperation and peaceful coexistence.

The peacebuilding concept has since come to be used for two very different strategies. The UN approach to peacebuilding focuses on macrolevel intervention, involving third-party assistance to reconciliation efforts, institution building, and political as well as economic transformation. Complementary microlevel approaches are aimed at the improvement of relations between the parties and/or contextual or cultural transformation. Although both approaches draw on Galtung's notion of positive peace, the remainder of this entry will focus on peacebuilding and peace processes that take place at the microlevel.

Whereas most people might associate peace processes primarily with official negotiations, the steps to building peace can take many forms. Harold Saunders, a former diplomat, suggests that peace processes involve politics, diplomacy, negotiation, mediation, and dialogue in both official and unofficial arenas. Joseph Montville, a former U.S. State Department official, coined the terms Track I and Track II diplomacy to distinguish between traditional diplomatic activities and unofficial, informal activities between members of conflicting parties. Track I diplomacy is conducted between official representatives of the state (or representatives of entities functioning in a state-like capacity to represent their side in the conflict). It may include heads of state, state department or ministry of foreign affairs officials, and other governmental departments and ministries. Track I diplomacy may take place bilaterally (between two states), multilaterally (when several states might be party to the conflict), and even regionally or globally through intergovernmental organizations. Much of the work of the United Nations is considered global Track I diplomacy. Although Track I

diplomatic efforts may be used coercively to force changes in behavior, as when sanctions are applied to a nation, it is normally used persuasively, involving negotiation and compromise. Track I diplomacy is primarily a tool for reaching mutual agreements that bring an end to conflicts or at least a stop to the violence. It usually involves a third party, such as the United Nations, to help bring about a signed agreement between the states or parties involved in the conflict.

Track II diplomacy, consisting of dialogue between nonofficials, attempts to address the causes of the conflict by bringing people together to examine perceptions, stereotypes, distrust, and other factors that underlie different positions. Known by a variety of names, including citizen diplomacy, people-to-people diplomacy, multitrack diplomacy, consultation, interactive conflict resolution, and back-channel diplomacy, such approaches attempt to provide an environment that is free from the pressures and restraints of official diplomacy. By creating a space for dialogue that is nonjudgmental and noncoercive, taking place in a safe setting, the hope is that participants will feel free to share perceptions, fears, and needs and will explore ideas for resolution that go beyond official positions. Track II processes are designed to encourage mutual understanding of each party's perceptions and needs, the creation of new ideas for approaching the conflict, the adoption of a problem-solving orientation, and the development of relationships across conflict lines.

Track II diplomacy frequently involves third-party facilitated workshops sponsored by nongovernmental organizations. Track II activities may include former or even current officials acting in an unofficial capacity, but typically they bring together nonofficial, but influential members of the parties, for joint analysis of the conflict and collaborative problem solving. Participants may be parliamentarians, journalists, members of think tanks, academics, peace activists, business leaders, community leaders, educators, or heads of nongovernmental organizations. In general, an attempt is made to involve individuals who are within the mainstream of their societies and close to the political center. Their role as unofficial representatives of the larger society, along with the academic setting of the meetings, allows the participants freedom to examine alternative perspectives and

explore new ideas. The third-party members are usually knowledgeable and skilled scholar-practitioners without a specific stake in the conflict and are trained to facilitate dialogue and problem-solving activities.

Although there are many types of Track II approaches, perhaps the most developed is the interactive problem-solving workshop model originally proposed by John Burton, Herbert Kelman, Ronald Fisher, Edward Azar, and others. Carefully selected representatives from all sides of the conflict are brought together with a third-party panel, which typically includes conflict scholars, usually from different disciplines within academic institutions. Panelists, who come together with the participants for intensive discussions over a period of several days, seek to help the group analyze the sources of the conflict and develop possible solutions. The primary purpose of problem-solving workshops is to open unofficial communication channels between the parties in preparation for and/or as a complement to official negotiations. They provide a low-risk, low-profile forum in which representatives of the parties can analyze their conflict and engage in problem solving. Meetings are often organized within an academic context, allowing participants to take part in discussions without the implication that they are recognizing or legitimizing the other. An attempt is made to shift the focus away from presenting and defending entrenched positions and toward encouraging new ways of thinking about the conflict that induce the participants to approach it as a shared problem.

Problem-solving workshops and other types of Track II diplomacy have been taking place between Israelis and Palestinians for years and are credited with contributing to the breakthrough achieved in the Oslo Accord of September 1993. The workshops made this result possible by developing a core group of committed individuals prepared to negotiate productively by providing new ideas for negotiations, increasing each party's awareness of sensitivities and perspectives of the other side, and creating a better political atmosphere for official negotiations. Similar results have occurred in other intractable conflicts, such as Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Guatemala, and Cyprus.

Perhaps the longest, continuous example of Track II diplomacy is what Harold Saunders calls the public peace process that characterizes the

Inter-Tajik Dialogue, which was begun in 1960 under the auspices of the Dartmouth Conference Regional Task Force. Bringing together government negotiators, highly informed citizens outside government, and citizens at the grassroots, the meetings began at a time when a vicious civil war had just reached its peak of violence. After official negotiations produced a peace agreement marking a formal end to the civil war in Tajikistan, participants in the dialogue initiative served in the Commission on National Reconciliation, tasked with overseeing the implementation of the agreement. Today, several dialogue groups continue to work in six regions of the country.

Building Sustainable Peace

In recent years, peace processes have expanded their focus beyond conflict resolution, which seeks to end violence and stabilize the situation, to conflict transformation, which attempts to make structural and cultural changes that will build sustainable peace, characterized by the absence of physical and structural violence and discrimination against less privileged groups. Although recognizing some situations requires a quick and direct resolution of the conflict as the primary goal, there are many cases where simple resolution approaches may be too limiting. Particularly in cases where parties have an extensive shared history and the potential for meaningful future relationships, processes that focus primarily on stopping the immediate conflict may miss the potential for wider constructive change.

The need to create a different future is especially important where there are repeated and deep-rooted patterns of destructive conflict. These cases call for transformational change that addresses the root causes of the conflict, makes necessary adjustments in political and social processes, and builds the institutions that will implement the changes. A broad set of activities including capacity building, reconciliation, and restorative justice are employed to address underlying problems and to change the patterns of interaction that were characteristic of the conflict period. Efforts are made to create mechanisms that allow cooperation and ongoing dialogue among the parties, allowing groups to manage their conflicts through peaceful means. An important part of this process is designing new

dispute-resolution systems that minimize the destructive patterns from past times, replacing them with new forms of dealing with disagreements and differences. The hope is that conflict will not reemerge.

John Paul Lederach, who developed the most comprehensive approach to conflict transformation, views peacebuilding as a long-term transformation of a war system into a peace system that reflects the values of peace and justice, truth and mercy. In his view, conflict transformation seeks to address conflict in ways that both reduce violence and increase justice in human relationships. Reducing violence means addressing both the content of the dispute and its underlying patterns and causes. Increasing justice is accomplished by ensuring that people have access to political procedures and voice in the decisions that affect their lives. In Lederach's approach, the attempt is to build constructive change out of the energy created by conflict, moving conflict away from destructive processes and toward constructive ones. Lederach proposes a pyramid approach to peacebuilding, with elite leaders and decision makers at the top; leaders of social organizations, religious groups, top journalists, and humanitarian leaders in the midlevel; and grassroots community leaders at the base. A comprehensive and transformative peace process should address complementary changes at all these levels.

Elise Boulding, in her book *Cultures of Peace*, writes about the war-nurtured identity that characterizes Western civilization in which history is presented as a chronicle of wars, battles, military conquests, and the rise and fall of empires. Conflict, violence, and aggressive behavior have become ingrained in the very fabric of our society. Boulding believes we must develop instead a peace culture that promotes mutual caring, emphasizes appreciation of difference, encourages stewardship and equitable sharing of the earth's resources, and offers mutual security that sustains the well-being of all. Although such a description is considered by some to be utopian, it nevertheless provides a vision for the type of transformation toward which peacebuilders continually strive. Peace theories do not offer us a concrete path to reach that place called peace, but they point to the hard work that is necessary to keep alive the hope of sustainable peace.

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See also Conflict Communication Theories; Dialogue Theories; International Communication Theories; Media Diplomacy

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PERFORMANCE ETHNOGRAPHY

Performance ethnography is simultaneously a tool that allows researchers to extend their theoretical knowledge about expressive communicative behavior and action and a tool for the practice of performance theory, critical theory, and interpretive

theory, designed to reveal and foster awareness of self, communities, and social worlds. Even though performance ethnography is a recent development in qualitative research methodology, its roots date back to the 1970s writings of Victor Turner and Richard Schechner and perhaps as early as the critical theater of Bertold Brecht. However, it is only in the 1990s and early 21st century that a body of methodological, epistemological, and theoretical literature on performance ethnography has developed, thanks in large part to figures such as Dwight Conquergood and Norman Denzin.

In a not-so-distant past, ethnography was exclusively synonymous with participant observation (or fieldwork). Participant observation was a strategy of data collection, and to a great degree, that is all there was to be said on that account; researchers impartially and impersonally recorded notes—a mountain of notes over time—and then found a way to organize them and write them up. The write-up part of fieldwork was hardly worthy of consideration or reflection. One just had to know how to do it, and concern for style—choices between different modes of representation, writing genres, and distribution media—was simply not an issue.

Today, ethnography has changed, and no forms embody that wind of change more than performance ethnography. Drawing upon the body of methodological, epistemological, and theoretical knowledge largely classifiable under the themes of reflexive ethnography, postmodern ethnography, or critical ethnography, performance ethnography encompasses all the qualities and characteristics of its cognate ethnographic specialties and adds a key focus on the sharing of ethnographically derived knowledge through performative representation. Performative representation is intended as creative and productive knowledge.

Before surveying the various principles of performance ethnography and discussing its scope, it is important to reflect on the performative nature of performance ethnography. To do so, it might be useful to start from the most frequently asked question on this topic: “Is performance ethnography necessarily a staged, theatrical production?” The answer, according to most, is no. Even though performance ethnography is historically built on the principle of sharing knowledge with audiences by way of staged theatrical performances, performance ethnography may take on alternative shapes

as long as its mode of representation is performative. Therefore, performative ethnographic writing or performative representation by way of film or documentary production, poetry, monologues, various alternatives to staged theatrical productions, and similar embodied modes of communication may very well be categorized as performance ethnography.

Theoretical Foundations

The fundamental idea behind the genesis and evolution of performance ethnography is that human beings are naturally a performative species. It is thus not the idiom of *homo sapiens* that performance ethnography models itself by, but instead that of *homo performans*. The nature of performance is that of revelation: In performing for oneself and others, one reveals oneself. Performance ethnography, therefore, is meant to reveal selves and social words to communities of citizens in hope of fostering awareness, reflection, and critical consciousness. In performing, therefore, not only do we reveal ourselves, but also we make ourselves in the process—both as individuals and as communities.

There exist several different (though not competing) approaches to the idea of *homo performans*; these are grounded across the social sciences, but primarily so in social anthropology, communication, performance studies, and to some extent in sociology. All of these principles are reflected in the various styles of performance ethnography. As Soyini Madison discusses, the key theoretical principles underlying the idea of performance touch upon performance as experience, as social behavior, as language and identity, and as performativity.

As Turner and Edward Bruner have argued, a crucial component of performance is experience. Life begins with experience. It is through experience, indeed, that moments of everyday life are sensed, storied, interpreted, reflected upon, and ordered into a feeling of coherent social existence. Experience may be routine and taken for granted, but at times the body and self are awakened to experience something unusual and worthy of focused attention. This peak moment, or perhaps more simply this moment of heightened consciousness, brings about deeper awareness of feelings, expectations, norms, and values. It is for the most part these moments of heightened awareness that are the subject of outward

expression in performance ethnography. But whereas for Turner performance is a revealing expression of experience, for Dwight Conquergood and Mikhail Bakhtin the reverse is true: It is performance ethnography that has the potential of generating a revealing experience.

Defining performance as social behavior—a second approach—highlights different dynamics of the process. When we say that social behavior is performative, we are basically suggesting that it is driven by dramatic action and interaction. For Bruner, for example, this means that rituals, tales, and dramatic forms of expression are expressive tools used by people to articulate and create social meanings. For Kenneth Burke, on the other hand, dramatic action is expressive of social situations comprised of acts, scenes, agents, purposes, and agency. For Schechner, performance as social behavior includes three processes: that of gathering, that of expression, and that of dispersal. Finally, and perhaps most notably, for Turner, performances as social behaviors include cultural performances as organized programs of expressive activity (such as a staged theatrical performance) and social performances as ordinary, daily interactions (such as daily rituals and routines). Both cultural and social performances, and thus both ethnographic performances themselves and their data, according to Turner, are structured on the basis of the succession of breach, crisis, redress, and reintegration.

Performance as expressive action often focuses on the creation and management of impressions. As Erving Goffman found, all interaction has this dramatic feel to it because a crucial component of social existence is the maintenance of social bonds, deference to the sacredness of self and others, and respect for social norms. Self and identity, therefore, are revealed and shaped through performance. Since much of our dramatic action makes use of linguistic and language-like semiotic resources, language plays a key role in performance. As John Searle and John Austin have established, the very intentionality of speaking is performative; thus, through acts of speaking, we create our social worlds.

Finally, discussions of performance cannot be complete without reflections on performativity. Drawing inspiration from Goffman, Searle, and Austin, Judith Butler explains that the very ways in

which we express ourselves bodily in everyday life is but a repetition of acts enacted before by others. In repeating those acts, we perform them: It is as if we cite them, recognize them, reinforce them, and at times even challenge and disrupt them.

Building upon these theoretical ideas, concepts, traditions, and metaphors, performance ethnographers engage in two types of work. First, they participate in social worlds (through fieldwork) and thus carefully dissect the various performances—either based on experience, ritual, gatherings, play, modes of communication, bodily awareness, and the like—that are the subject of their data collection. Second, they apply their theoretical knowledge on performance to the process of representation of the knowledge they have acquired. The latter is the object of the next section.

Performative Aspects

Few, if any, figures are as central to the historical development of performance ethnography as Conquergood. Throughout his career, Conquergood shaped critical ethnography in the direction of performativity by way of theoretical and methodological reflection, as well as ethnographic fieldwork and performance practice. According to Madison, four themes are central in Conquergood's work and in performance ethnography generally: process and performance, the body and scriptocentrism, dialogical performance, and cultural politics. What follows will examine these depths briefly and then lead to a final discussion of performativity in the process of writing and representation.

Performance ethnography, according to Conquergood and others, focuses on processes rather than structure-like entities. A focus on process pulls researchers away from concerns with measurement, prediction, and manipulation of states and structural characteristics. Performance ethnography thus focuses on the constant emergence of social realities in tension and growth, in the building and sharing of stories, and in the becoming of self and community. An emphasis on becoming allows the performance ethnographer to look at life as constant production, practice, action, and doing.

No understanding of the constant evolving of life can exist without first comprehending the centrality of the human body in both subjectivity and

sociality. Performance ethnography aims to bring the body back in by rejecting the traditional privileging of the detached mind, of impersonal writing, of ghost-like representations, and of the invisibility of the researcher. Performance ethnography also aims to displace the centrality of writing—what Conquergood calls scriptocentrism. Writing is most certainly important and necessary, but so are orality, bodily presence, and other nonverbal modes of representation such as the visual (e.g., in photographic representation). Performance ethnographers embody the knowledge they have acquired either through staged representation, storytelling, or through other forms of expression that reveal a carnal, emotional, and personal presence.

Performance ethnography is dialogic. Everyday living and interaction unfolds through dialogue, and performance ethnographers use dialogue to both acquire knowledge and share it with others. Emphasis on dialogue is also important to deemphasize scriptocentrism. Listening, as opposed to writing, allows the performance ethnographer to avoid the voyeuristic tendencies that both fieldwork and the writing up of ethnographic reports often entail. Instead, by listening, one can better connect with others and move beyond appearances. Dialogue also allows for deeper engagement and involvement—both on the part of the researcher and the audience member. A dialogic performance, therefore, is a way of learning with people rather than just learning about them.

Finally, as Conquergood and others such as Denzin and Madison argue, performance ethnography is a way of engaging in cultural politics. Performance ethnography should never be taken as merely an opportunity for diversion and entertainment. Commitment to social equality and the eradication of injustice is central to most performance ethnographic work. Indeed, the idea of bringing ethnography to audiences other than the usual academic suspects—and thus decentering writing as the privileged mode of knowledge sharing—is what drives experimentation in forms of representation. Imagery and symbolism in performance ethnography are thus intended to drive toward change: Narratives are aimed at the intersection of the personal and the political, the local and the global. More significantly, performance ethnography seeks transformation by constructing possibilities, transgressing rules and boundaries,

interrupting chains of oppression and injustice, interrogating ideologies, and antagonizing hegemones. Conquergood calls this performance kinesis, or in other words, subversion.

The Sensuousness of Ethnographic Representation

As mentioned earlier, it is important not to come away from an introduction to performance ethnography with the idea that unless there are curtains, a stage, scripts, a stage manager, a director, and actors, there is no performance ethnography. Enacting an ethnography through theatrical productions is certainly important, but the practical realities limiting performance ethnographers are such that the staging of performance at a place like a community theater is not always possible, ideal, or desirable. For this reason, a great deal of performance ethnography takes place through unconventional theater-like representations including performance in settings other than the theater (e.g., in the classroom), writing, and filmic and documentary production.

Communication scholar Della Pollock in particular has been very influential in the development of performative writing. Performative writing may constitute the basis of the production of a performance ethnography to be staged, or it may simply work as a script waiting to come to life through reading and narration. Performative writing has unique characteristics that separate ethnographic writing from conventional, academic writing. Performative ethnographic writing is relational, evocative, embodied, and consequential. This means that performative writing allows performance ethnographies to be full of care and compassion and to be accessible, interesting, generous, passionate, and connected with a sense of community. Performative writing translates into ethnographic work that is sensuous, descriptive, imaginative, dialogic, narrative, and not overtly analytical. Performance ethnographies read as fully embodied—that is, clearly reflective of the writer's presence in the text and performance. Embodied writing capitalizes on impressions, experiences, memories, body movement, doubts, anxieties, and weaknesses. And finally—and here things come full circle—performative writing is a mode of representation that allows performance ethnography

to transcend the limitations of the process of writing up notes for a passive audience. A performance ethnography is consequential because its preferred mode of representation hails, invokes, demands, screams, and struggles for change.

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See also Critical Ethnography; Cultural Performance Theory; Culture and Communication; Performance Theories; Performative Writing

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PERFORMANCE THEORIES

Performance theories represent a diverse research field. Performance theorists seek to understand how human beings make culture through the view of communication as performance. Performance is not exclusively seen as drama or entertainment, although theatrical performances are included as well, but performance is just as much the making of oneself as a tourist, acting appropriately in an elevator, or deciding to tattoo one's body. As noted by theater theorist Richard Schechner, performance theory may involve everything from performances in daily life—ritual, play, sports, political behaviors—as well as human and animal behavior patterns, to name just a few areas that may fall within the umbrella term of performance theory.

Performance is not exclusively faking it or putting on a mask, but rather, as suggested by Victor Turner, a form of making it. Performance has, in this manner, become an umbrella term for understanding human communication. This notion of performance has led to what now frequently is referred to as the performance turn. The performance turn has, as we shall see, had a profound impact on communication scholarship and also

has infused various disciplines such as cultural studies, linguistics, critical theory, tourism studies, and anthropology.

History of Performance Theories

Performance theory is by no means new and can be traced both to cultural performances in antiquity as well as to more modern times. Contemporary performance scholars such as Judith Hamera and Soyini Madison point to the elocution movement, with its roots in North American and European cultures, as a modern tradition that can be understood as an early form of performance.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, public speaking in the European context was considered an art form, a formal discipline called elocution, as well as a social event. The public speaker sought to entertain, educate, inform, or persuade an audience who came to the event to listen, experience, and be inspired by the speaker. In this manner, the public speaking event was an important social practice that joined people together. Central in the European movement was a desire to demonstrate eloquence through the speaker's articulation, inflection, accent, voice, and gesture. Also, the speaker's ability to convey emotions such as anger, sorrow, joy, and disgust was considered a sign of communication eloquence. Audience responses from laughter to cheers to insults were other vital parts of the ritualistic aspects of the event. Today, traces of this form of audience participation can be found in some European contexts such as the communication practices of the British parliament where cheers and disagreements are frequently voiced.

Elocution as an art form and discipline bears a strong resemblance to oral interpretation and has found its institutional roots in primarily speech communication and theater departments in the United States. In this tradition, the speaker or performer is trained to interpret and dramatize a piece of literature. Performance is the display of communication skills that brings written material to life. This approach has recently extended itself to other disciplines such as history. Within the United States as well as within Europe, living history, for instance, is performed by people in period costumes who act out or improvise historical events. Although they stay close to the historical accounts, they dramatize these to help educate (and entertain) audiences

about how life was lived at that particular place and point in time. The performance enhances visitors' experiences and, as such, it adds an interesting aspect of what performance scholars see as a form of staged authenticity to the event.

Although the work of scholars within performance studies such as Turner and Schechner have cemented the field of performance studies as an academic discipline, performance theories have increasingly become intertwined with work within the social sciences to articulate theoretical frameworks of social and relational processes as performances. Consequently, performance theory is today a contested term. In its current formulations, performance theory is generally inspired by post-structuralist thought and frequently connected to a more activist agenda such as queer and feminist politics and theory.

Performance theories, while diverse, are in this entry divided into three sections. First, performance theories where the display of communication skills is at the center of their work will be examined. This includes, for instance, theater performances and is frequently associated with what more generally is thought of as the performing arts. The second section will discuss performances of culture and performances in society. It will go beyond particular skills to the notion of performance as a culturally coded behavior. This section will primarily draw on work by sociologists, anthropologists and scholars within critical, cultural communication studies. The third section will focus on performance and communication—most notably, the performance of language. Its disciplinary roots are primarily found within linguistics and communication studies.

Theater and Drama Approaches

Performance has had close links to theatrical performances. This link can be traced historically to Plato and fictional representations in general; the main focus here is on the performance turn as it has taken place from the 1960s onwards. Elin Diamond positions the performance turn in light of earlier notions of performance. First and foremost, the “new” performances sought to raise consciousness among the audience. This move was, Diamond argues, greatly influenced by the experimentation that characterized the post-1960s

period. The new performances took place outside of the established theatrical structures. The actor's authority was questioned, the spectator was in focus, embodied in the concept of the “spect-actor,” and theory was created through the performances. Several of the writings inspired by this period have appeared in key journals such as *Performing Arts Journal* and *The Drama Review*.

Performance theorists are particularly indebted to the work by theater theorist Schechner and performance anthropologist Turner. Schechner sought to develop a performance theory that explained the relationship between what he framed as aesthetic and social drama. Although the social activist uses techniques from theater to support the activities of social drama, the theater person uses social life as the inspiration for the production of aesthetic drama. In his anthropological fieldwork with the Ndembu people, Turner framed the concept of social drama as a tool for social anthropologists.

Theorists associated with play and carnivalization also are key to this turn in performance theories. Two theorists are particularly pertinent: Dutch cultural historian Johann Huizinga and Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. Huizinga highlighted the role and function of playful activities in particular as they take place during leisure time and framed humans as *homo ludens* or players. He saw playful activities as a means to deconstruct traditional structures. Similarly, Russian theorist Bakhtin discussed what can be considered subversive forms of play in the concept of the carnival, most notably in his study of Francois Rabelais. Bakhtin argued that during carnival times existing laws are suspended, and for a brief moment, new relationships among individuals are played out. To this extent, Bakhtin saw the carnival as a testing ground for new social structures.

The work of performance artists deserves mention. A particularly pertinent example comes from performance practitioner and theorist Judy Chicago who, in the 1970s, created several important works and additionally began performance arts programs in Southern California. Chicago's ability to bring women's experiences into the art discipline was made manifest in *The Dinner Party* and *The Birth Project*. These pieces inspired scholars in communication studies such as Sonja Foss to highlight the feminist rhetorical dimensions inherent in her work. Chicago stressed the ability of performance

works to recreate authentic experiences of femaleness otherwise lost in patriarchal cultures.

More contemporary groups such as the Guerrilla Girls continue to blend performance with cultural politics. Strategically wearing a gorilla mask, the Guerrilla Girls poignantly make us aware of gender discrepancy in the art world. The Guerrilla Girl performance is in opposition to the established patriarchal art scene and calls for a new understanding of women's many contributions to the performing arts. These performances, then, seek to challenge stereotypical notions of femininity and embody a type of theory-in-the-making.

Sociological and Anthropological Approaches

Performances are the organizing principle of social life. Psychologists and sociologists were quick to note that all social behaviors are, to some extent, performed. This notion that social behaviors are performances has now gained widespread acceptance in anthropology and cultural studies.

One of the more influential theorists in regard to culture performances is Erving Goffman, who used the metaphor of performances to develop a dramaturgical model for social interaction. In his most acknowledged work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, published in 1956, Goffman posed that we are all performers. Performances are based, Goffman argued, on taking up a role that also includes a set of expectations as to how to perform it, and implicit in this, a relationship with either an actual or perceived audience. Goffman developed the notion of front and backstage to suggest different performances. An example that demonstrates both the concept of the role as well as front and backstage performance could be the role of the host when hosting a dinner party. Although hosting a dinner party involves cleaning, cooking, and frequently stressful times related to preparation, this backstage experience is minimized or perhaps entirely invisible when the hosts, with big smiles, open the door to their guests. The guests may enjoy the company of a calm and relaxing host, a clean house, and gourmet food without any mention or glimpse of the stress preceding it. To this extent, they support the hosts' front stage performance.

Goffman noted that noncommunication, or what he referred to as dead-eyeing, also is a performance strategy. Dead-eyeing typically unfolds in

public spaces when no attention is the most polite and tactful communication strategy. Goffman pointed to various examples of this such as the elevator ride, where both posture, lack of eye contact, and silence help communicate that the individuals are not interested in communicating at all. The context helps shape which rules the performer rightfully can undertake.

Social anthropologist Turner has brought his focus on performances into methodological considerations as well. The fieldworker is also, in Turner's framework, a participant. The fieldworker can no longer view observations as neutral or objective, but must rather see her or his own spectatorship as influencing the performance that takes place. Dwight Conquergood has exemplified this in five fieldworker positions. The fieldworker may be a custodian (who collects performances), an enthusiast (who seeks easy generalizations), a skeptic (who stands superior and aloof to the culture studied), a curator (who takes the stand of a tourist), and finally the preferred mode of a dialogical performance. In the dialogical performance, the fieldworker aims to bring together different voices, world views, and beliefs so that they can converse with each other. The result, Conquergood poses, is a never-ending performance.

Communication scholars Kristin Langellier and Eric Peterson have demonstrated the role of performances in their work on personal narratives. The personal narrative situates performances as framed, reflexive, and emergent. Within this view, framing takes place to suggest that participants take the communication in a special way. Performances are reflexive because the performer is both performer and audience member, and the performance act is a doing and a redoing. Finally, in the redoing something new may emerge. Langellier and Peterson demonstrate how performances unfold in storytelling within the family context. Family storytelling is an embodied activity for doing family and may extend itself into other settings as well such as birthday parties, anniversaries, and funerals. In this manner, storytelling is an ongoing and retrospective performance.

Linguistic and Communication Approaches

Linguistic and communication approaches to performance theories grew out of semiotics—most

notably Ferdinand de Saussure's work on semiology and Roman Jakobson's insistence on breaking any speech event into different elements. According to Jakobson, a sender delivers a message to a receiver; the message is understood within a particular context and mediated to the receiver within this context as well. The poststructuralist challenge and most notably the work done by deconstructionist Jacques Derrida laid the groundwork for contemporary adaptations of performance theories within linguistics and communication. Much of the scholarship written from the perspectives of linguistics and communication can be found in the journal *Text and Performance Quarterly*.

The work of Kenneth Burke is also important to performance theory. Burke's pentad illustrates performance in day-to-day activities. His five main principles are act (what took place), scene (the background of the act), agent (performer), agency (the means used to achieve the goal), and purpose (the goal). This line of thinking has been developed further by linguist John Austin in his developments of speech act theory. Austin became one of the most influential writers for considering language as a performance or rather as a performative.

Speech act theory was developed by Austin and later by John Searle. In lectures presented at Harvard in 1955 and published as *How to Do Things With Words*, Austin outlined a theoretical framework in which statements are not only constatives but also performatives. Whereas a constative can be evaluated in terms of truth or falsity, performatives are evaluated in terms of their success or failure. Austin nuanced his theory in what he referred to as locutionary speech acts (the very utterance of an act), perlocutionary speech acts (the consequential effects such as, "If you don't eat your vegetables, you won't get dessert") and illocutionary speech acts (the act performed in saying the locution). Because illocutionary speech acts rely on conventional force, these have been of particular interest to communication scholars. An example of an illocutionary speech act includes "I now pronounce you husband and wife" or "I hereby name this child Emily Turner." An act is performed (marriage and christening) at the very utterance of the words.

The use of performative verbs such as "I do" or "I name" require, Austin argued, a particular

set-up. A marriage act, for instance, requires that the person making the announcement is licensed to make it and the persons wanting to perform the act (the couple) eligible to do so. In the United States, this implies in most cases a heterosexual couple. A speech act can, then, fail to perform if the context is missing or the conventional script has been misplaced. The illocutionary performative "I do take this woman to be my lawfully wedded wife," when made by a lesbian couple, fails.

As a student of Austin, Searle continued to develop speech act theory. Although Searle saw speech acts as rule-governed behaviors, he also saw the very utterance of words as an act. The result of Searle's work became a shift from recognizing only particular acts as performatives (such as the illocutionary speech acts that draw upon conventional force) to an overall recognition and interest in the ways in which language is performative.

Key to this development was, however, Derrida's work on citationality. To Derrida, performatives succeed by virtue of the fact that they are always viewed as citations or what he calls their iterability. Derrida claimed that the power of the performative springs from the fact that it can be performed free of context. Consequently, a marriage act does not need to be performed in the church, but it can happen as a drive-through wedding or on the beach. Derrida's reworkings gave communicators a new sense of agency. Because Derrida pinpointed that citations are never perfect, a slippage between the performer and the act, between the act and the one acted upon, leaves room for agency. To view speech acts as citations has created the possibility for more critical perspectives on communication practices.

One of the main contemporary adaptations of both Austin and Derrida is found in the work of North American rhetorician and philosopher Judith Butler. Butler reworked Derrida's ideas and brought the notion of performativity to the forefront of her scholarship on gender performances and hate speech. To Butler, gendered subjects are constituted by linguistic, ritualized acts and thus, gender itself is a performative. One of her favorite examples is the midwife's announcement at the birth of a child: "It is a girl"—an announcement that sets girling, Butler argues, into effect. Although there is no escaping the gendered interpellation of the child as, in this case a girl, inspired by Butler,

communication scholars have proceeded to successfully deconstruct the notion of gender as a natural category and to point to its rhetorical and discursive construction.

Following in the footsteps of Austin and Derrida, Butler also adds critical insights into discussions on hate speech. Hate speech or injurious speech sets out to injure and stigmatize its recipients. Words such as *slut* or *nigger*, for instance, call upon strong social conventions and a long history of sexism and racism. Since citations are never perfect, ways of counteracting the intended injury exist. A classic example is the word *queer*. Whereas *queer* has been used to condemn a group of people, it is now being used against its original purpose when individuals proudly name themselves as *queer*. Injurious speech is appropriated and resignified to open up new understandings. The injury is momentarily displaced, and a space is created from which individuals can talk back.

Ongoing Conversations

Performance scholars go on theorizing communication on and off stage as a form of performance. From classical and folk performances to online blogging and tourism, performance scholars use the performance metaphor to rethink communication, subject, and agency. Methodologically, performance theorists have given rise to more ethnographic approaches to the study of communication while also highlighting the role that the researcher plays as a performer of sorts.

Charlotte Kroløkke

See also Cultural Performance Theory; Culture and Communication; Dramatism and Dramatistic Pentad; Narrative and Narratology; Performance Ethnography; Performative Writing; Poststructuralism; Semiotics and Semiology; Speech Act Theory

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PERFORMATIVE WRITING

Performative writing is a methodology of communication research in which the form of the writing enacts the very academic argument the author seeks to propose—that is, the how of the research mirrors the what; the form communicates the thesis of the writing. This entry will discuss the central elements of performative writing and detail how this innovative writing form serves communication theory development and enables authors to show the utility of communication theory in practice.

Performative writing has a complex history, stemming from literature, creative writing, and performance studies. Often conflated with movements in autobiographical performance, autoethnography, and personal narrative, performative writing shares commonalities with a broad range of methods and perspectives; it is distinct, however, in regard to its focus on craft. Within each of the other methods noted above, the central goal is on the content and form of evidence the methods bring to bear (i.e., the use of the personal as a basis for argumentation).

Although performative writing makes use of the personal, it is more concerned with the actual form of writing, seeking to craft an argument that embodies the very content of the project. In other words, regardless of the topic, performative writing is writing that evokes the content, that puts into action the content to both explain and to enact that which the author writes. In this way, the writing does, as John Austin's speech act theory might also suggest, the very thing that is being articulated. The writing acts and accomplishes the content of the speech, embodying the argument. There are several characteristics of performative writing that capture this method of writing:

- *Crafted*. Performative writing pays special attention to craft. Although all writing forms are stylized, performative writing considers the application of language to be of central concern. As a form that seeks to put ideas into motion, to engage the reader on intellectual, emotional, and bodily levels, writers ensure that all uses of language are careful, that all details are aimed toward keeping the tension between the word and the audience active. For instance, if the essay seeks to understand apprehension, the writing will be apprehensive, will seek to garner that emotional sense in the body of the reader.

- *Constitutive*. Performative writing seeks to evoke, to bring to mind, and to produce (not just report) knowledge within the reader. For instance, an essay on dialogue might literalize as a dialogue to show the complexity, value, and constitutive nature of such communicative engagements. Common communicative topics such as conflict, diversity, pedagogy, and/or performance may very well be enhanced by writing through the issue, creating a form on the page that evokes and produces new ways of knowing that can be gained only by undergoing the reading and interaction with the text.

- *Empathic*. As a style of writing, the work seeks to be empathic—that is, the writing seeks to connect with and draw on the emotions of the audience. As opposed to distant research that recreates divisions between knower and known, between speaker and those the speaker speaks to, performative writing relies on creating empathy as an emotional connection that draws the reader into the argument. In this way, the writing becomes dialogic as the audience draws connections between themselves and the text.

- *Citational*. Performative writing is citational; embedded in the text are allusions and carefully crafted entry points into other texts, worlds, and ways of knowing. Such writing is composed through the function of citation—uses of repetition, reiteration, and reenactment each contribute to make the moment on the page larger than the specific contexts of the moment. By drawing on repeatable tropes, the writing serves as metaphor and metonymy for systems and larger structural forces. For instance, if a writer seeks to critically engage with systems of racism and imperialism, she

or he may write a personal account of such experiences in an effort to cite or demonstrate the commonalities between their experiences and larger systems of power and domination. In this way, the writing cites those systems through the performatives embedded in her or his own life stories.

- *Playful*. Performative writing is playful not only in style, but also in subject. This is to say, the writing not only uses playful tropes, but seeks to playfully disrupt common ideas, language, and modes of thinking. For instance, if an author sought to disrupt commonly held beliefs about teaching in the basic communication course, he or she might play with the word *basic*, drawing out the implications of language and how that language constitutes what that course means in a department's curriculum, in a teacher's understanding of his or her own teaching, and of how students come to see their obligations in that course. By playfully engaging in such word play through a variety of contexts, an author could draw sharp attention to how language produces understandings in powerful, yet mundane, ways.

Communication theory uses performative writing in both large- and small-scale ways. Some authors use this specialized form of writing to evoke an image in an introduction or to draw to a close some theoretical argument; others craft whole books through this form of writing. In each, the use of performative writing puts theory into practice, places ideas in motion, and produces knowledge. The benefit to communication theory will only grow as more and more authors embrace this interactional and energetic form of writing communication scholarship.

John I. Warren

See also Autoethnography; Narrative and Narratology; Performance Theories; Speech Act Theory

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PERSUASION AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE THEORIES

Persuasion—the activity of creating, reinforcing, or modifying beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors—is a major underlying motivation for human communication and the fountainhead of communication studies. During Greece's golden age from the 5th through 4th centuries B.C., a group of teachers known as the sophists instructed students in the art of persuasive speaking and penned academic essays examining a wide range of topics related to social influence. More significantly, Aristotle, arguably history's greatest scholar of social influence, wrote his landmark treatise, *Rhetoric*, wherein he defined rhetoric as the faculty of discovering all the available means of persuasion. For him, such means included appeals based on logic, emotion, and the qualities of the persuader.

Although a number of scholars followed the rhetorical tradition through Roman, Renaissance, and later eras, the advent of controlled laboratory experiments on persuasion did not occur until more recently. Such work was fueled in part by an attempt to understand the effects of propaganda used during the World War I and World War II. Carl Hovland, part of a group commissioned by the U.S. War Department to study ways to resist Nazi propaganda, was a prominent figure in the development of this research tradition. After World War II, Hovland directed the Communication and Attitude Change Program at Yale University. Unlike scholars using a rhetorical approach, his program studied persuasion by implementing social scientific techniques, including laboratory studies and statistical measures of attitude change. Although he died at an early age, Hovland and his contemporaries helped bring about an approach that has generated an ocean of studies and theories on the nature of persuasion, one far too deep and

expansive to explore in a few short pages. With that in mind, this entry provides approximately chronological glimpses of some of the more significant theoretical contributions and controversies in the social-scientific history of persuasion. It highlights a variety of explanatory approaches, beginning with theories of reinforcement and conditioning.

Reinforcement-Conditioning Theories

Theories of persuasion attempt to explain how persuasion works. The dominant approach for doing so in the 1940s and 1950s argued that attitudes and behaviors are shaped through the use of positive and negative reinforcement. Two methods include operant and classical conditioning. Through operant conditioning, articulated by B. F. Skinner, behaviors increase when they are rewarded and decrease when they are punished. Thus, for example, a child who receives laughter after cussing is influenced to cuss again, while one who gets reprimanded is influenced to stop.

Through the second method, classical conditioning, a stimulus originally unable to bring about a response is made to do so by repeatedly pairing it with another stimulus that is able to elicit the response. In the classic example, Pavlov's dogs were presented with certain sounds at mealtime, until eventually the sounds caused the dogs to salivate, even in the absence of food. Similarly, in classic persuasion studies, researchers found that a person's attitude toward certain groups, products, or issues could be shaped by pairing such attitude objects with pleasant or unpleasant adjectives, odors, and sounds.

Of course, reinforcements are not always immediately present. Incentives, for example, are anticipated rewards that might be used to influence people. The next section returns to Hovland and his colleagues, who incorporated incentives into their perspective.

The Yale Communication and Attitude Change Program

Hovland and his associates at Yale suggested that attitudes—relatively enduring evaluations of someone or something—guide behavior. As such, if one

wants to change people's behavior, one should focus on changing their attitudes. The Yale group focused primarily on examining four sets of factors, including those related to the source of the persuasive message, the message itself, the channel by which the message is transmitted, and the receiver of the message. By way of example, such research indicated that attitude change is more likely when sources are perceived as being credible (i.e., trustworthy experts), likeable, attractive, and similar to their audience. Research in this tradition also suggested that messages tend to be most persuasive when they (a) present two sides of an argument while refuting the opposing side, (b) present stronger arguments first or last and weaker arguments in the middle of the message, and (c) use fear appeals that are moderate in strength.

Based on their investigations of these and other variables, Hovland's group reported that, although the variables influence persuasion, their effects are not strong. Consequently, their model—known as the message-learning approach—suggests that persuasion occurs when the information in a message is learned or processed through a series of steps, with each step less likely to occur. Specifically, the message must gain attention, be comprehended, be accepted, be retained, and be acted upon. Incentives are also important in this process. Specifically, persuasion is more likely when there are incentives for each stage of this process. For example, people pay more attention to trustworthy sources than to untrustworthy ones because they imagine the consequences of doing so will be more rewarding.

In addition to articulating this process, Hovland and the Yale group stimulated other important strains of work related to persuasion. Perhaps the two most notable were inoculation theory and social judgment theory, the next topics.

Approaches to Resisting Persuasion

Building on the Yale group's findings regarding the persuasiveness of messages that present two sides of an argument while refuting the opposing side, William McGuire developed inoculation theory, an approach for making people resistant to the persuasive arguments of others. The theory is based on a biological metaphor. Specifically, in the same way that being exposed to a small dose of a virus defends a person against subsequent exposure to

the virus, a person can be defended against future persuasive appeals by being exposed to (a) the threat of an opposing argument and (b) a refutation that weakens the impending argument. For instance, a parent might tell a child, "When other kids tell you that sniffing inhalants is cool (threat), remember that glue and paint fumes kill brain cells, which is not cool (refutation)." Under the right conditions, inoculation is a robust treatment with important applications.

A second resistance approach, psychological reactance theory, was articulated by Jack Brehm. According to this theory, people value the freedom to choose their behaviors. When attempts to persuade them threaten such freedom, people become motivated to reassert their freedom, sometimes maintaining their behavior and sometimes changing their behavior in the opposite direction of the position advocated in the persuasive message. As such, a pushy car salesperson might induce a customer to go to another dealership or to buy a different make of car.

Social Judgment Theory

Soon after pioneering the message-learning approach, Hovland collaborated with Muzafer Sherif on social judgment theory, which illustrates how people's prior attitudes cause them to distort, judge, and respond to persuasive messages. The theory argues that on any given topic there are a range of possible positions, and for any given person, there is a most preferable position on that range. This position, known as the anchor point, serves as a benchmark by which persuasive messages are judged. Thus, two people with different anchor points will likely perceive and judge the same message in different ways. For example, a zealous vegetarian is likely to reject a message advocating an all-meat diet, while an ardent carnivore is likely to embrace it. In fact, the theory predicts that a message falling near a person's anchor point, or latitude of acceptance, will be distorted favorably and perceived as closer to the person's anchor position than it really is (assimilation effect). In contrast, a message falling too far away from a person's anchor point (i.e., inside a receiver's latitude of rejection) will be distorted negatively and perceived as farther from the receiver's anchor position than it really is (contrast

effect). As such, persuaders are best advised to advocate a position that is discrepant from the receiver's anchor, yet still close enough to the receiver's anchor to trigger the assimilation effect. Finally, the theory asserts that the more ego-involved a person is in an issue, the wider his or her latitude of rejection, making such a person difficult to persuade.

Consistency Theories

In a classic study published in 1959, Leon Festinger and James Carlsmith asked undergraduates to spend an hour moving pegs on a board, a tedious task designed to be boring. Later, half of these students were offered \$20 and half \$1 to tell people who were posing as future participants in the study that the task was actually enjoyable and interesting. Then, the students were asked to report how enjoyable and interesting they actually found the task to be. Of course, reinforcement-conditioning theories would predict that students receiving a larger reward should evaluate the task most favorably. In fact, however, those offered \$1 were significantly more favorable in their reports.

These results were explained using Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory, one of several consistency theories. At its most basic level, cognitive dissonance theory—along with siblings such as Fritz Heider's balance theory and Charles Osgood and Percy Tannenbaum's congruity theory—suggests that all of us are driven to be consistent. When our attitudes and/or behaviors are not in alignment, we experience psychological angst (i.e., cognitive dissonance) and are driven to reduce it. We might do so by changing our attitude or behavior or by engaging in rationalization or a number of other tactics detailed in the theory. For example, in the study just mentioned, students believing one thing (the task is boring), but professing another (the task is intriguing) should be motivated to reduce the dissonance created from this inconsistency. Those receiving \$20 can rationalize the dissonance away by telling themselves they had good reason for advocating a position inconsistent with their true belief. Those receiving little or no reward, however, were left with the alternative of changing their attitude, thereby persuading themselves that the task was more interesting than it really was. Of course, in real life contexts, persuaders might point

out any number of inconsistencies (e.g., one smokes cigarettes, but believes in being healthy) in order to bring about change in their audience.

Cognitive dissonance predominated persuasion research through the 1960s and 1970s. Along the way, the theory was refined to include a wide range of predictions and applications too broad to detail here.

Attribution Theory

Cognitive dissonance theory challenged the prevailing assumption that attitudes cause behavior by arguing that behavior, which is inconsistent with cognitions, causes attitudes. Daryl Bem's self-perception theory challenged the same assumption while disputing the dissonance interpretation as well. Specifically, the theory posits that people attribute causes to their own behavior. In the absence of some external cause, they infer that something internal, such as an attitude, caused the behavior. For example, if one eats a lot of chocolate without being rewarded or coerced into doing so, one is likely to infer that his or her attitude toward chocolate is positive. Similarly, in the study mentioned above, because the students receiving only \$1 had little or no external reason for telling others a task was exciting, they concluded that their behavior was an accurate reflection of their attitude toward the task.

Self-perception theory is not just an alternative explanation to cognitive dissonance. Among other things, it is a common explanation for the effectiveness of the foot-in-the-door tactic in which a persuader follows a small request, which must be agreed to, with a larger one. According to self-perception theory, the tactic is effective because people who comply with the small request perceive themselves as being helpful, agreeable, or altruistic. To remain consistent with this self-perception, they go along with the second request.

Approaches Exploring the Link Between Attitudes and Behavior

As a consequence of a parade of studies alleging a trifling relationship between attitudes and behaviors, the 1960s and 1970s marked a time when a large amount of persuasion research focused on specifying the conditions, if any, under which an

attitude-behavior link existed. Perhaps the most notable effort was made by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen, who developed the theory of reasoned action. According to it and similar approaches (e.g., Ajzen's theory of planned behavior), attitudes alone do not predict behavior. Instead, a person's attitude toward a behavior (e.g., buying a hybrid car would be good) together with the person's perception of how significant others view the behavior (e.g., my wife thinks I would be stupid to buy a hybrid) affect the person's behavioral intention or conscious plan to engage in the behavior. This intention, in turn, affects the person's actual behavior. In other words, people's behavior cannot be predicted without considering the role of multiple factors, including some detailed by the theory, but not here (e.g., a person's attitude toward a behavior is affected by the person's belief about and evaluation of the outcome of the behavior). As can be seen, the theory assumes that people are rational decision makers. It has been well supported under tests on a variety of topics.

Dual-Process Theories

Rather than describe the vast array of theories presented so far as contradictory, dual-process theories synthesized previous work into one approach. Two such theories, prevalent from the 1980s to present times, are Richard Petty and John Cacioppo's elaboration likelihood model (ELM) and Alice Eagly and Shelly Chaiken's heuristic-systematic model (HSM). Although these models are unique, the focus in this entry will be on their commonalities. Specifically, both argue that there are two modes by which people process persuasive messages. In the first, people exert little mental effort. Instead, they are persuaded somewhat automatically, relying on peripheral cues or heuristics such as source credibility and attractiveness. The consistency, conditioning, social judgment, and attribution approaches discussed above are examples of theories describing such low-effort processes. In the second mode, people exert a lot of mental energy while processing a message, systematically analyzing evidence and scrutinizing message content. The message-learning approach and theory of reasoned action depict processes closer to this mode.

Both ELM and HSM suggest that to be persuaded via the more effortful mode, a person must

have the motivation and ability to exert the effort required. Thus, for example, people who care little about an issue or who happen to be too distracted to scrutinize a message are more likely to rely on less effortful processes. Persuasion that takes place through more effortful processing is more lasting, whereas persuasion based on peripheral-heuristic processing is more temporary. Both the ELM and HSM are useful explanatory and predictive models of persuasion.

Expectancy Violation Theories

A number of persuasion theories, including Michael Burgoon's language expectancy theory, Judee Burgoon's nonverbal expectancy violations model, and Renee Klingle's reinforcement expectancy theory, focus on what happens when people's expectations for normal behavior are violated. These theories agree that people have expectations about what constitutes normal behavior. When a persuader violates such expectations by, for example, standing too close or using intense language, receivers shift their attention from the message to the source. If the source is perceived as rewarding (e.g., likable or attractive), persuasion is more likely. The reverse is true when sources are perceived negatively. Because of social norms, people may be more tolerant when males rather than females violate expectations.

Perspectives on Compliance Gaining

Studies on compliance gaining focus on changing behavior in interpersonal contexts rather than on attitude change in mass communication contexts, as many traditional studies have done. Early research on this topic identified the types of strategies people select or produce when seeking compliance in various situations. One approach was to use paper-pencil measures and ask participants to report strategies they would use in various hypothetical scenarios. Another was to observe successful persuaders (e.g., salespeople, fund raisers) in real-life interactions to identify a set of principles underlying why people comply. Using the latter approach, Robert Cialdini articulated numerous principles, including reciprocity (i.e., we should return favors by complying with those who have done us favors), scarcity (e.g., we comply with

requests to buy things in short supply), and social proof (i.e., we are likely to respond favorably to popular items), along with others discussed earlier (e.g., credibility, liking, and consistency).

Additional work articulated how goals influence the production of compliance gaining messages. For example, Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's politeness theory argues that people seek approval (known as positive face) and try to avoid disapproval (known as negative face). The pursuit of these different goals shapes compliance gaining behavior. For example, because asking to borrow money may threaten face more than asking for a loan to be returned, people may be more polite when doing the former.

Other and Future Directions

In addition to compliance researchers' focus on behavior, recent work has incorporated additional variables into their theories that move the study of social influence beyond its traditional focus on attitude change. For example, Kim Witte's extended parallel process model, an extension of work on fear appeals, considers the importance of perceived efficacy in persuasion. Specifically, to be effective, fear appeals (e.g., smoking cigarettes can kill a person) must provide recommendations that are perceived as efficacious (response efficacy) and convince receivers that they have the ability to undertake the recommended course of action (self-efficacy).

Clearly, the study of persuasion enjoys a rich past, widespread contemporary interest, and without doubt, a promising future. Although difficult to know what is yet to come, the situation specific nature of communication suggests that theoretical work aimed at specific contexts would be one fruitful avenue. Given the applied significance of persuasion in the medical field and the exponential growth of communication over the Internet, these contexts hold considerable promise for future investigation.

John S. Seiter

See also Attitude Theory; Attribution Theory; Cognitive Dissonance Theory; Compliance Gaining Strategies; Elaboration Likelihood Theory; Expectancy Violations Theory; Heuristic-Systematic Model; Inoculation Theory; Learning and Communication; Politeness Theory; Reasoned Action Theory; Rhetorical Theory; Social Judgment Theory

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PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology is a historical movement inaugurated in Europe by scholars interested in creating an approach to philosophy that focuses on the conscious experience of phenomena contextualized within the world individuals inhabit. Although the general concept of phenomenology has been the subject of exploration by a wide variety of scholars over time, current usage of phenomenology as a human science philosophy is most related to the work of Edmund Husserl, commonly considered to be the founder of contemporary phenomenology.

In its most basic form, phenomenology is the study of essences, or the person's lived experience in his or her lifeworld before this gets categorized or theorized. As such, phenomenology as a philosophical and methodological approach focuses more on the descriptive rather than on the prescriptive. Through the work of Husserl and others—most notably Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose disagreements with Husserl helped to extend and clarify the concept—phenomenology worked to establish a separate field of research, independent from an empirical science approach. Known as existential phenomenologists, these scholars promoted a return to a rigorous science that focused on analysis of conscious experience as opposed to hypothetical constructs.

Phenomenology is grounded in several key epistemological and ontological assumptions, each of

which helps to explain the foundations of this philosophical approach to understanding social phenomena. The first assumption of phenomenology is a rejection of the idea that researchers can be objective. Given this, phenomenologists believe that knowledge of essences is only possible by bracketing preconceived assumptions through a process known as phenomenological epoche. A second assumption hinges on the idea that a deeper understanding of the nature and meaning of life exists within analysis of our daily practices. Accordingly, phenomenological research encourages an attentiveness to the taken-for-granted experiences that are reflected in our everyday interactions; these same experiences reflect microcosms of larger cultural, political, and societal structures.

The importance of exploring persons as opposed to individuals is the third assumption of phenomenology. Although individuals can refer to any number of things, persons are understood through the unique ways in which they are reflective of particular social, cultural, and historical life circumstances. The fourth assumption relates to how persons are situated within the research process. In phenomenology, researchers are interested in gathering *capta* (conscious experience that is given significance through one's own interpretation) instead of traditional data. Some contemporary phenomenologists have solidified these values and worked to incorporate the contributions of those involved in more meaningful ways (e.g., seeking their feedback on preliminary themes of *capta*). In light of this epistemological shift, many have adopted the use of terms such as *participants* or *co-researchers* instead of the more traditional *subjects* to describe those studied in the research process.

The final assumptions of phenomenology relate to process. Phenomenology is a discovery-oriented methodology that does not specify beforehand what it intends to find. As such, it approaches scholarly inquiry through an open, unrestricting manner. Phenomenology is interested in meaning questions—those that seek understanding of the possible meaning and significance of certain phenomena. Meaning questions are never fully realized; instead, they are answered with an acknowledgment that other possibilities can and do exist.

Within the field of communication, the work of Richard Lanigan has been most influential in moving phenomenology from a philosophical approach

to a research methodology. Drawing primarily from the work of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, he has advanced a three-stage phenomenological reduction process that has been adopted by a variety of contemporary communication scholars studying a wide diversity of topical foci. According to Lanigan, the first stage of phenomenological inquiry involves a collection of lived experiences that should occur following a prereflection process of identifying preconceived ideas, assumptions, and beliefs (bracketing). Although phenomenologists have used a number of devices to gather descriptions of lived experiences, some of the more commonly used are in-depth interviews, focus-group discussions, and the critical-incident technique. The second stage of phenomenological inquiry focuses on a reduction of *capta* into essential themes. This step typically involves a rigorous process through which multiple reviews of the *capta* facilitate the emergence of preliminary (paradigmatic) themes. Through the use of free imagination—a phenomenological tool that allows researchers to eliminate incidental themes—this set of preliminary themes are further reduced into a core set of essential (syntagmatic) themes. The third and final stage of phenomenological inquiry is an interpretation of the essential themes. In particular, this stage facilitates a hermeneutic analysis of essential themes through a review of *capta* that works to generate meanings and significance that may not have been apparent in earlier stages. The term *hyper-reflection* is used to describe the process through which one central idea emerges to unite the essential themes in capturing the essence of the particular phenomena.

In conclusion, phenomenology—both as a philosophical approach and as a human science methodology—has been lauded for its ability to study social phenomena in a rigorous, yet open, unrestricting way. Contemporary communication scholars using phenomenology benefit from a strong foundation of tenets that have emerged from hundreds of years of scholarly exchange. Despite this foundation, however, some scholars criticize phenomenology and point to how problematic assumptions limit its ability to research human existence effectively. For instance, some critics have condemned its first-person, subjective approach and coined the term *autophenomenology*. Others have cited how other limitations—like

its inability to produce a complete reduction-interpretation or the tendency to promote an essentialist conceptualization of phenomena—also exist. Despite existing limitations, phenomenology continues to offer communication scholars a human-science approach to examining phenomena in ways that remain sensitive to the uniqueness of the person under study.

Mark P. Orbe

See also Epistemology; Metatheory; Ontology; Philosophy of Communication; Social Construction of Reality; Traditions of Communication Theory

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PHILOSOPHY OF COMMUNICATION

Everyone has a philosophy, and thus one must therefore have a philosophy of communication that takes into account all of the questions one may have and the answers to them regarding what one thinks and does when one communicates. Such thinking is silly and certainly not philosophical. It is true that we all have opinions about various problems we encounter in life, and that some of these—such as one's views on religion, on politics, on beauty, on morals, on truth, on the

meaning of life—border on philosophy, but few have a clear conception of philosophy, and still fewer know what a philosophy of communication is or should look like.

Since its inception, philosophy has been defined as a specific mode of thinking that begins by questioning established opinions, by debunking the dogmas or doxas that float around in our collective or individual lives, and from that basis, proceeds to construct a general theory relative to the topic in question that withstands skeptical disputations. Philosophizing, as opposed to thinking in general, therefore requires not only taking a critical stance toward what is given by the past and is taken for granted at present, but also, more positively, advancing a kind of knowledge distinguished by the rigor and universal validity characteristic of reason. This is the case with various branches of philosophy, for example, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, philosophy of art, philosophical logic, and metaphysics. Philosophy of communication, if there is such a thing, is no exception. As is true of various philosophies, a philosophy of communication would be nothing if did not afford a knowledge that bears on its subject matter reflectively, critically, and truthfully.

If, as just said, philosophy begins by questioning received knowledge, then philosophy of communication must take as its starting point the taken-for-granted ideas about communication. Now if a philosophy of communication must locate its point of departure amidst the received views on communication, then a proper understanding of what philosophy of communication is can be gained by identifying those received views against which this philosophy acquires the necessary traction to develop and declare its own critical truth claims. To identify these views, a bit of historical contextualizing is in order.

It should be noted right away that philosophy of communication did not exist as an independent discipline until the mid-20th century. It is true that what resembles the beginning of philosophy of communication can be found throughout the centuries. Even before the Hellenistic Age, Greek thinkers thought and wrote about communication by way of what they called rhetoric. During the Middle Ages, church fathers and scholars also theorized about communication in various modes.

Since then, in both Anglo American and Continental traditions, thinkers ranging from René Descartes, Gottfried Leibniz, David Hume, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, Georg Hegel, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, down to Søren Kierkegaard, John Dewey, Karl Jaspers, Karl-Otto Apel, and many others, have developed theories about mind, language, community, and human discourse that speak to concerns central to what we now call philosophy of communication. But none of these ideas begins by posing communication as the focus of their reflection, and consequently, they address communication only as ancillary or tangential to issues surrounding being, truth, mind-body, existence, and the like, which define the classical domain of philosophical thinking. So while it is easy to extract a philosophical view on communication from, say, Leibniz's theory of preestablished harmony, this view is inseparable and derivative from a specific theosophic background, out of which Leibniz's metaphysics emerges and for which the theory of preestablished harmony represents an earnest response to the pressing problem of evil. Properly reconstructed, this view would appear relevant to the project of developing a philosophy of communication, but it cannot be taken to be a philosophy of communication in the strict sense since it begins and ends within a problematic whose primary focus is on something other than communication per se.

The decade after World War II saw the rise of behaviorism as the singularly scientific approach in the social sciences as we know them today. Behaviorism was buttressed by positivism, which promised the integration of various fields. It also extended to researchers, regardless of their special research interests, the call to work in an interdisciplinary fashion, a call that continues to resound today. It is in this intellectual milieu that modern communication studies became a distinct and independent area of teaching and research. Like neighboring area studies in the social sciences or comparative literature in the humanities, communication studies began to consolidate its institutional identity by bringing into its own fold current research and methodologies at the confluence of more established disciplines such as political science, psychology, and anthropology, at the same time drawing support from private industry and the business world, as well as from governmental

agencies that actively recruited academics for their expertise in addressing various policy-oriented or geopolitical problems of the postwar era.

Underlying this trend is a certain implicit conception of communication, one that remains unspoken and yet is widely, if somewhat uncritically, accepted by communication scholars. Although it is implicit, or precisely because it is implicit, this conception is productive, indeed, constitutive, of communication studies in its modern form. It is this implicit, taken-for-granted conception that constitutes what I called the doxa undergirding modern arts and sciences of communication. And it is in its critical reaction to this doxa that what is now called philosophy of communication finds its starting point and develops into a recognized line of inquiry.

To unpack this doxa, we can quickly refer to the transmission model of communication developed by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver in *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* of 1949, arguably the best-known and most influential model of communication in the field. Although Shannon, an engineer, was concerned primarily with the quantitative measurement of information as it travels between end points, the model he developed proved to be more than heuristic to communication scholars in that it enables them to conceive diverse communicative phenomena with requisite economy. Based on a liberal reading of this model, all forms of human communication can be thought of as variations of a teleological process in which one party, the sender, imparts a message (or signal) to another, the receiver, in a circuit of exchange regulated by encoding and decoding whereby the message in question can be shared or rendered understandable by parties who adopt a common code. Schematically, processes of communication can be rewritten as follows: sender—> encode—> message—> decode—> receiver, and the process can occur in reverse by way of a return message, namely, the feedback.

As can be easily seen, the building of this model is predicated on the principle of breaking down or segmenting the process of transmission into distinct, function-specific moments and representing them according to linear organization, itself predicated on there being a predetermined goal to this segmented process. At work here is what can be called punctuation, a feat of parsing whereby what

is in reality continuous is pulled apart and rearranged as a sequence of discrete parts that can be subsequently reassembled in multiple combinations. It is easy to appreciate the value of this punctuation for a “scientific” study of communication. Not only does it translate the event of communication into moments that can be analyzed in isolation and in detail, but also it makes possible an ordered gathering of analyses of those parts to shed light on the phenomenon of communication as a whole. Thanks to punctuation, the phenomenon of communication is properly demystified—made into an object capable of being analyzed repeatedly. Consequently, different approaches to this phenomenon, regardless of their methodological orientations, can all claim to be scientific since their findings can presumably be confirmed or disproved by appealing to a common referent or as is customarily touted in social scientific research, to data that are considered objective and empirical.

Philosophy of communication can be said to begin by taking issue with the punctuation that turns communication into a possible object of scientific investigation. If punctuation pulls apart what in reality unfolds continuously, then to take issue with punctuation means questioning the validity and adequacy of this act of punctuation—an act that theories of communication cannot question because it makes them possible. Philosophy of communication thus begins where theories of communication end: It questions what is taken for granted by these theories. Recognizing that a model necessarily involves distorting in some way what it seeks to represent, this philosophical beginning takes its first step by asking, in keeping with its Socratic spirit, the most fundamental of all questions that can be raised with regard to the representation of communication as sending and receiving of message. Against the seeming self-evidence of the notion of message, for example, it asks what exactly a message is. How is it constituted as such? Is it by the intention of the sender or by the signs chosen by the sender to express it? But then, how is intention to be understood, and how do signs relate to intention? In any event, among all the information that comes to pass in the exchange between a sender and a receiver, what counts as the message, as that which can be transmitted? But again, what is transmission? If transmission takes place between or across a sender and

a receiver, if transmission can be interpreted as crossing, how does this crossing become a theoretical possibility without assuming the sender and the receiver to be mere mirror images of each other since the former necessarily crosses over to the latter, and vice versa? If, however, a sender and a receiver stand apart or exist independently of each other, as the transmission model seems to suggest, how does one construe their respective identities as appropriate to the specific function each serves in what is called transmission? Similarly, one may ask of codes, what are they? On what basis and to what extent do codes ensure the transmission that transcends space and time and in particular, the differences between a sender and receiver as well? If codes help the addresser to send a message to another, how are these codes successfully established in the first place; from where does the wonderful capability of codes to transcend differences come? Beyond questioning the conceptual rigor and the referential precision of the primitive terms of the transmission model and their interrelations, one can go further and ask if the idea of transmission begs the very questions it is proposed to answer. After all, if communication can be conceptualized through the notion of sending and receiving, how is sending and receiving itself understood without presupposing any prior comprehension of communication that itself is not formed in the image of transmission?

The questions raised above suggest that the transmission model of communication is superficially descriptive and dogmatic: superficially descriptive in that it not only depicts what it supposes is objective, but also assumes the very objectivity of its own depiction; dogmatic in that it affirms this depiction as the only valid representation of communication. As said earlier, it is against this dogmatic description that contemporary philosophies of communication emerge as identifiable lines of inquiry. Aiming at what is foundational to—already in place, but not always acknowledged by—modern communication studies, these philosophies reexamine, in part and in whole, the representation of communication as multi-step transmission. In the analytic tradition, various philosophies of languages—speech act theory, most notably—bear directly upon the question regarding message by linking it to considerations surrounding meaning, reference, speaker’s intention,

and truth conditions, which anchor or fail to anchor what the message means as it travels between individuals and across divergent contexts. In the Continental tradition, phenomenology and its hermeneutical outgrowth have forced communication scholars to rethink the practice of textual interpretation, with structuralist, Marxist, and other more social and contextual approaches forming a critical approach, according to which social exchanges of all sorts are no longer regarded as events of transmission between autonomous individuals, but rather as constantly shifting sites of contestation between material as well as discursive forces. Despite their different orientations, these philosophies—and there are others—work jointly and redraw the map of intellectual production of the field in keeping with the changing landscape of the field as it responds to broader intellectual trends as well as to the social and political environment in which scholars work. In light of the fact that courses bearing the title philosophy of communication are now routinely offered in graduate programs and that philosophy of communication divisions can be found in professional associations, such as the International Communication Association, we have reasons to believe that a philosophical turn has been made in the field of communication studies.

It is often said that one cannot not communicate because even when denying communication, in trying not to communicate, one does not fail to send a message, however negative, to the other. Such is the condition of our being social, a condition characterized, at one extreme, by what is known as autism, where the possibility of interpersonal commerce is tragically foreclosed, and at the other extreme, by what can be called paranoia, a pathological state in which an overabundance of meaning overwhelms the individual into a debilitating interpretive frenzy. Between these two extremes, we live socially, and thus we communicate. And in communication, we affirm and reaffirm our social reality. This condition of our social being demands thought. If philosophizing propels and reflects the movement of critical thinking, then philosophy of communication will likewise continue. It will go on, as long as we communicate, as long as we do not stop thinking.

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See also Axiology; Empiricism; Epistemology; Ethics Theories; Marxist Theory; Mathematical Theory of Communication; Modernism in Communication Theory; Ontology; Social Interaction Theories

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PLANNED BEHAVIOR, THEORY OF

See Campaign Communication Theories; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Reasoned Action Theory

PLANNING THEORY

See Cognitive Theories; Communication Goal Theories

POLITENESS THEORY

Politeness theory explains how small variations in how we say things are linked to broader features of social relationships and social contexts. This helps us understand how individuals create and interpret messages and also offers an account for speech communities' use of language.

Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson are sociolinguists who proposed politeness theory in 1978 based on their observations of similar patterns of language forms in three different cultures. They noticed that we frequently depart from the most direct, efficient way of performing some

action. For example, I could request a drink by saying, "Get me a glass of water," but I might choose, instead, to say something like "Sweetie, some water?" or "Could I trouble you for a little drink, please?" or even "I sure am parched!" A similar range of options for making requests was found among British speakers of English, Indian speakers of Tamil, and Mexican speakers of Tzeltal, leading Brown and Levinson to speculate that some cross-cultural feature of social life motivated these forms. They suggested face was the social force behind these language forms.

Erving Goffman defined face as the publicly approved identity we claim in a particular interaction. Unlike a self-image grounded in internal cognition or a role granted by the social structure, face is the public performance of our identity. Our actions convey who we are trying to be and what we are trying to do; to be successful, others' actions must not invalidate our persona. So, for example, when one enacts professor in a class, this person's actions and those of the students need to be consistent with that identity. A professor could lose face if he or she is not prepared to give a lecture or lead a discussion. Students could threaten the professor's face if they ignore attempts to lead the class or openly challenge the professor's knowledge, authority, or competence. This person is still the professor, but he or she would have lost face in an attempt to act out the self-image and fulfill this social role.

Goffman differentiated two ways to show honor for another's face: We might enthusiastically approach her or him and show approval, or we might maintain a respectful distance to show deference. Brown and Levinson adapted this distinction into two kinds of face wants. Positive face includes our desire to have others in an interaction approve our identity and validate it as a common enterprise. Returning to the professor example, positive face wants are met when students treat the professor as interesting, knowledgeable, fair, and eager to help them learn. In contrast, negative face is our wish not to be imposed upon in ways that disrespect our identity. In a professor identity, students honor negative face by respecting time, honoring personal boundaries, and avoiding unreasonable requests. Positive face is about solidarity, whereas negative face is about respect.

Many ordinary actions have the potential to be face threatening acts (FTAs). For example, criticizing

or disagreeing threatens positive face, whereas making requests or enforcing obligations threatens negative face. Because we all have face wants and because they may only be granted in interaction with others, there is usually a cooperative motivation to honor one another's face (individuals or situations with face threat as a goal are the exception in this view of the social world). Avoiding any FTA would honor face, but this would severely inhibit our ability to act! Politeness theory enumerates various strategies for committing FTAs.

Bald-on-record strategies commit a FTA directly, with no adaptation to face (e.g., "Get me a glass of water"). We can soften an on-record FTA by adding redress. Positive redress strategies add features that honor positive face by showing approval (e.g., complementing the hearer, using in-group language, seeking agreement, asserting common ground, joking, showing knowledge of the other's wants, promising something, including both people in an activity, or showing understanding). For example, "Sweetie, some water?" uses the language of solidarity, including a term of endearment and an abbreviated question that presumes a shared context. If speaker and hearer lack solidarity, assuming such solidarity may be offensive rather than polite. Negative redress strategies contribute to negative face by showing deference, distance, and a reluctance to impose (e.g., asking questions, using hedges, giving options, acknowledging imposition, apologizing, or being deferential). For instance, "Could I trouble you for a little drink, please?" is not literally a request, but we conventionally recognize this as a respectful way of asking. "Trouble you" acknowledges our imposition, "little drink" minimizes the request, and "please" is a shortened way of saying "if you please" so that we are not presuming compliance. Negative redress speaks the language of respect, with the potential for the speaker to appear subordinate to the hearer.

Off-record strategies commit a FTA indirectly so that the threat is hidden between the lines (e.g., "I sure am parched!"). This protects the speaker, who could deny the action was face threatening ("I wasn't asking for water; I was just saying I was parched"). It also enables a recipient to comply, not because he or she was a social inferior whose autonomy was compromised by a direct order, but because he or she is a magnanimous individual.

Either party can simply ignore the indirect meaning to avoid confrontation. For example, it is less awkward to reply, "I'm pretty hot myself," to the indirect, "I sure am parched," than to say "No, I won't get you a drink," in response to the direct, "Get me a glass of water." This same protective feature can also lead to misinterpretation (intentional or unintentional). Finally, there is also always the option of simply not doing the FTA.

Politeness refers to all the various strategies for doing FTAs. Strategies that are more polite show more regard for face. Not doing the FTA is the most polite. The face protection afforded by off-record strategies makes it the next most polite strategy. Negative redress still does say the FTA, so it is less polite than going off-record. Positive redress is riskier than negative redress because it presumes solidarity. Because it makes no attempt to soften face threat, bald-on-record is least polite.

When each strategy has advantages and disadvantages, how do we select an appropriate response? A rational speaker will choose more face-honoring strategies when his or her action has greater potential to threaten the other's face. The amount of threat is shaped by an assessment of three factors: power, distance, and rank. Powerful speakers worry less about the face of the less powerful. Distance captures the idea that speakers and hearers who are similar or close to one another can be more relaxed about face threats. Rank refers to culturally specific notions about what kinds of actions are especially risky. For example, many Americans would find questions about an acquaintance's salary more threatening than questions about her music preferences, and advising a friend to lose weight is likely trickier than advising him or her to check out an investment opportunity.

Researchers across numerous disciplines have used the theory to explore diverse issues, such as cross-cultural misunderstandings, advice giving in personal relationships, patient-physician rapport, copilots conveying safety information to pilots, and superiors reprimanding their subordinates. Scholars in communication have interpreted politeness theory in at least three distinct ways. Some have used it as a theory of message production and tested predictions about whether speakers do, in fact, use more polite strategies when they have less power and greater distance in their relationship to the hearer and higher rank to the FTA. A second

interpretation treats politeness theory as a rational model of message evaluation. Researchers have examined whether messages are perceived to be more appropriate and effective when they match politeness strategies to the amount of threat created by power, distance, and rank. Other scholars use politeness theory as a framework for investigating language-use patterns in various contexts. The general concepts of face, face threat, strategies, power, distance, and rank are used as a starting point for discovering ways social actors respond to face issues in their particular context.

The widespread use of politeness theory attests to its heuristic value. The original statement of the theory in 1978 was a chapter in a book; by 1987, there had been sufficient research on the theory to warrant its re-release as a book of its own. The theory continues to be frequently cited and utilized today. Although numerous studies support and extend the theory, it has also generated its share of controversy, and a variety of alternative formulations have been proposed. Brown and Levinson proposed that face wants, strategies, and contextual factors were cross-culturally relevant and that cross-cultural differences were due to different configurations of these universal elements. A lively debate surrounds whether this claim has held up to empirical studies in different cultures. The original theory focused on speech acts. Some scholars have found this unduly limiting and have studied how larger units of discourse do face work and how interpretation of FTAs is shaped by the sequence of actions or the speech event in which they occur. The theory has also been criticized for giving little attention to nonverbal communication and for emphasizing threats to the hearer's (versus speaker's) face.

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See also Conversation Analysis; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Face Negotiation Theory; Facework Theories; Identity Theories; Impression Management; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Language and Communication; Power, Interpersonal

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POLITICAL COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Political communication theory explains the purposeful processes in which elected and appointed leaders, the media, and public citizens use messages to construct meaning about political practices. When people exercise power in support of public interests, their messages and interactions are a strategic means for influencing public policies.

Conceptualizations of who has power and how they exercise it are prevalent in political communication theories. Power consists of political actors' abilities to acquire, maintain, and exercise authority in governmental affairs and to influence relationships and policies. Political elites (elected officials, party leaders, legislators, and agency directors) possess the power to influence large populations because they create laws and sanction behaviors, convey and withhold social and economic benefits to citizens, and influence mass media sources. The power of citizens comes from their legal rights, knowledge of political processes, and ability and willingness to engage in deliberations about public policies. Because the public often depends on mass media for political information, media sources use this power as part of their agenda of telling people what and how to think about political leaders, issues, and policies.

Political elites are the trustees of public interests; they share visions and ideals, promote policies with the consent of those being governed, and justify policy benefits by claiming they serve constituents' interests. The public assumes that the government will pay attention to their needs and problems and create beneficial policies. A keen awareness of the power of political elites and citizens is one reason that media sources frame policy

issues in terms of public rather than organizational and material interests. It is common for political elites to infuse the content of their messages with justifications emphasizing public benefits. One impact is to reassure the public that their elected and appointed representatives are acting on their behalf. Another impact is less obvious; it is to enhance the personal credibility and authority of political elites.

Political communicators exercise power and secure persuasive effects by selecting political symbols, creating strategic messages, and engaging in purposeful interactions. Since the 1970s, research in political science and communication has borrowed and extended concepts and explanations from social construction, message and media effects, and deliberative democracy to generate political communication theories.

Social Construction

The constructionist approach evolves from symbolic interaction, a social theory about how reality is created by people using and reflecting on symbols in social interactions. The theory derives from the conceptual ideas of George Herbert Mead and its political applications in the work of Murray Edelman. The meaning of political symbols surfaces through social interactions and depends on the content expressed through spoken, written, visual, and aural messages. Through interactions, people construct meanings that derive from their definitions of political situations, the reactions of their significant others to those symbols, and the subsequent self-reflective interpretations they attribute to symbols and messages. As a result, symbolic interaction promotes self-understanding, social knowledge, and interpretive explications pertinent to political communication theory.

Every symbol stands for something other than itself. *Referential symbols* refer to objective elements of a situation. When political communicators refer to the number of troops serving in Iraq, the length of a soldier's deployment, or the location of roadside bomb explosions, they use referential language. *Condensation symbols* are evocative; they arouse emotional reactions (hope, anxiety, humiliation, sympathy, and promise) in people's minds associated with political concerns. When policy makers characterize the medical care

provided in Veteran's hospitals as failing to meet the physical and psychological needs of returning service men and women, they often select condensation symbols that evoke emotions about poorly funded government care by claiming that it increases the suffering of veterans who have lost limbs, had brain injuries, and experienced post-traumatic syndrome.

Political actors select symbols that reinforce socially held beliefs about how public citizens help elected and appointed government leaders to solve public problems and serve public interests. People construct meanings for political realities based on what significant others (friends and colleagues, media sources, and political elites) indicate the symbols mean. For example, legislators can explain to the public what a city water conservation policy is and how it will be enforced, but the people affected by the policy construct its meaning from reflective thinking about the policy message that accounts for the reactions from their significant others. After socially constructed meanings are formed, they become part of people's conceptual structures and influence their knowledge and understanding of other political realities.

Myths and rituals are common symbolic constructions that legitimize and justify political meanings for community members. Myths are socially constructed ideas believed by the public to be true; they identify the ways that people succeed in a polity, a form or system of government. Myths may take the form of simple and easy to recall cause-effect statements, such as if people work hard, they can achieve the American dream. Myths also reinforce political values, such as the importance of voting or representative democracy, and they disavow others, such as voter apathy and autocratic governments. Rituals utilize predictable procedures and ceremonies that reinforce myths that are part of a community's collective political consciousness. Political rituals include inaugural speeches, patriotic public celebrations, election rallies, and public memorials that reify government ideals. For example, a burial of a military person at a national cemetery is a patriotic ritual that affirms the value of military service, acknowledges that the deceased served for a worthy political cause, and associates the dead person with evocative symbols of a flag-draped casket, patriotic music, and a military gun salute. Myths and rituals

integrate political symbols into messages and celebratory events in ways that legitimate public policies and solidify collective values.

Message Effects

Political communication theory also derives from experiment-generated message effects research developed in the 1960s and 1970s; it emphasizes a downward flow of communication that locates political elites at the top and the public at the bottom of the political power structure. These theories assume that the citizenry depends on political elites and media sources for political information. Two models, elaboration likelihood and social judgment, provide limited explanations of the effects political messages have on audiences.

Elaboration Likelihood

The elaboration likelihood model, originally formulated by Richard Petty and John Cacioppo, identifies two different routes used by audiences to process and attribute meaning to political messages. When people adopt the central processing route, they elaborate about the content of political messages by thinking critically and evaluating the relevance and strength of issues and arguments. Central processing creates audience involvement with the message content, and as a result, audiences taking this route are likely to connect messages with their own political knowledge, experience, and plans for action. However, when audiences process political messages using the peripheral processing route, they pay little attention to the content and its relevance to them. Instead, they rely on emotional cues, such as the attractiveness of the source, the memorable themes, and their own indirect connections and personal feelings about people, issues, and policies. This theory predicts that political messages processed by the central route will influence audiences' knowledge and attitudes and endure longer than when audiences use the peripheral route of processing.

Social Judgment

The social judgment involvement model, associated primarily with the work of Muzafer Sherif and his colleagues, conceptualizes audiences' responses to issues and policies along a continuum

of influence based on their preexisting beliefs and social connections. The continuum includes latitudes of acceptance, rejection, and noncommitment. This theory assumes that audiences have ego-involved attitudes toward political information because of their relationships with social-reference groups. Both factors affect the way they respond to political information. For example, if political messages advocate a policy of allowing oil drilling close to the shores of the United States and if that policy position is anchored in the audience's environmental, party, and professional reference groups, then they likely will judge the policy as being close to their own attitudes and assimilate it as part of their latitudes of acceptance. However, if political messages promote a policy that is not anchored in audiences' reference groups, then they likely will judge the policy as divergent from their own position, remote from their ego involvement, and contrast it to their own opinions. As a result, the policy becomes part of their latitudes of rejection. In cases when audiences lack interest, ego-involvement, or strong reference group anchors in regard to an issue or policy, they likely will not consider the issue important and locate it within their latitudes of noncommitment.

Although elaboration likelihood and social judgment models offer partial explanations about how audiences respond to and make judgments about political messages, they do provide concepts that political sources can use to strategically design and target messages to political audiences based on reference group affiliations, such as senior citizens, teachers, soccer moms, environmental activists, or military veterans.

Media Effects

Early theories assumed that media had a potent effect on the political audiences. This idea changed when Paul Lazarsfeld and associates interviewed citizens in Erie County, Ohio, in the 1940 election. They discovered the inadequacy of the magic bullet concept of media effects, which viewed media messages as the primary source of political attitude and opinion formation. Instead, political influence is personal; it takes place in a two-step flow in which community leaders gather political information from the media and other sources and then share their opinions with community members

through interpersonal and small-group interactions. Theoretical extensions to the two-step flow model add complexity to media effects by showing that a multi-step and somewhat unpredictable multidirectional flow of political information occurs as part of community-based interactions between political elites, media sources, issue activists, and informed citizens. This theory acknowledges the importance of personal and social interactions and identifies the limits of the media's power.

Agenda Setting

By the 1970s, another experiment-generated theory, agenda setting, explained that media sources do have power to influence how the public thinks about political issues. This theory, associated with such scholars as Maxwell McCombs, showed strong correlations between mass media placement and the quantity of coverage of political issues with public responses to this information. Agenda setting emphasizes the downward flow of this information and the media's strategic framing of mediated political messages. Recent research identifies several additional principles about the relationship of media sources, strategic messages, and audience effects: (a) Political elites help to set the agenda for media coverage; (b) media gatekeepers (editors and producers) make decisions about the placement and amount of the coverage; (c) media news sources emphasize the political problems that they believe are worthy of public and government attention; (d) the success of the media in telling people what political ideas to think about also influences what they think; (e) media news sources succeed in setting the agenda for national political issues and policies more than they do for local politics; (f) media sources use framing to slant and simplify political news; and (g) news framing increases the importance of certain political actors and ideas and simultaneously diminishes, ignores, or demeans other people, issues, and policies.

Framing

Agenda setting relies on the concept of framing, a kind of interpretive schema adopted by sources to report political news by simplifying issues and

catering to the interests of media owners and advertisers. A frame refers to a simplified and slanted viewpoint that defines and calls attention to some problems, but not others; creates causal connections between problems and preferred policy solutions; renders value judgments; and promotes partisan or economic rather than public interests. Frames can exert a positive effect when they educate audiences about the multiple sides to issues and policies, criticize the slants used by political elites, and provide arguments and evidence audiences can incorporate into their own interactions.

Most framing theory is critical; it emphasizes the negative sources and effects of media bias. Deliberate falsifying of information by media sources is called distortion bias. One-sided or unequal treatment of a political issue or conflict by media sources produces content bias. Media sources that intentionally promote their own viewpoints create decision-making bias. For example, media messages contain content bias when sources emphasize that gun control legislation should be rescinded because this policy violates a citizen's right to own and bear arms, creates a barrier to their ability to protect themselves, and impedes recreational game hunting. If media sources are concerned about health care availability, they can slant news about this issue by emphasizing the lack of availability of health care to thousands of hard-working families and the advantages rich people have in securing high quality care. Since the media often are the main means of obtaining political information, heavy media users depend on these sources to understand what and how they should think about political information.

Media framing affects the way audiences process and use political news. When media sources activate new political attitudes, an applicability effect occurs because a residue from the media's framing directs audiences to be attentive to, favor, and act upon certain viewpoints as opposed to others. Media sources also create an accessibility effect by reactivating previous attitudes of audiences that support the slant of news frames. This theory predicts that news frames exert a strong influence on audiences with little political knowledge, uncertainty about issues, and confusion about policies, but they have a weak effect upon knowledgeable and partisan audiences.

Deliberative Democracy

Democracy refers to a form of government in which the power is invested in the people and exercised by them through elected representatives. Deliberation involves discussion, debate, and interchanges between members of the public. Deliberative democracy embraces the ideal of the maximum participation of citizens in public decisions, emphasizes an upward flow of communication from the public to political elites, and empowers public participation in civic actions. Derived from the critical discourse theories of Jürgen Habermas developed from 1960s to the present, deliberative democracy concentrates on reasoned and pragmatic discourse as the source of the power that citizens have to influence government actions by participating in goal formation and working toward collective goals, such as giving input to policy makers, resolving conflicts of interest between citizens and political elites, and helping to solve public problems. Public policy spheres and deliberation are essential components of deliberative democracy theory.

The public sphere is a set of distinct, but overlapping spaces that are open to all citizens. Public and media spaces provide discursive arenas in which people can gather and communicate about public concerns and community interests. Specifically, public spheres promote social interactions and intersubjective understanding based on the civil exchange of reasons. Democratic deliberation takes place in policy spheres in which people communicate their ideas and feelings in ways that connect them with one another and the government. Town meetings are one kind of public policy sphere and interactive issue-based Web sites are another.

The purpose of public policy sphere communication is to engage other citizens in idea generation and critique. The success of deliberation depends on the diversity of political view points, the reciprocity of interactions, the relevance and accuracy of political knowledge, and people's willingness to discuss policy ideas even though they may disagree with the views of others. Deliberations in policy spheres succeed when groups of citizens, not political elites, exercise agency in public discussions in ways that lead to common understanding and generate policy recommendations. In democracies, the public has both the power and authorization of

governments to participate in making decisions that affect their civic lives; deliberation allows them to exercise this power.

Some key features of the deliberative process are reasoning, openness to refutation, reformulation of issues and arguments, and the creation of consensual agreements among participants. Features that lead to effective deliberation are equal voting, participation, and opportunity to express and validate reasons through cooperative and nonthreatening interactions.

Two different approaches characterize deliberations in democracies. The instrumental approach conceives of deliberation as a pragmatic process in which experts and citizens offer reasons, gain understanding of issues, formulate goals, and make policy recommendations that serve their collective interests. A town-hall meeting about a proposed policy uses instrumental deliberation. The dialogical approach conceives of deliberation as social interaction processes in which members of the community without specific goals interact with one another to understand self and others, create decision procedures, share values, and reason about civic practices. Neighborhood-association meetings tend to use instrumental deliberations.

Both approaches emphasize how deliberative processes empower citizens and give them voice in government matters in ways that coincide with the ideals of democratic governments. This theory concludes that when participants reason together, they create mutual understanding, their views represent the consensus of the community about what serves the public interests, and therefore, the results of their deliberations are relevant to and valued by policy makers.

Political communication theory emphasizes how the content and flow of communication between political elites, the public, and the media create and reflect power, cater to public interests, and produce strategic interpersonal and mediated messages and interactions relevant to government decision making. When theoretical concepts from different research traditions are applied to political contexts, they explain how different communication sources, messages, and interactions create political meanings, generate collective understanding, and influence policy making.

Janice Schuetz

See also Agenda-Setting Theory; Deliberative Democratic Theories; Elaboration Likelihood Theory; Framing Theory; Media Democracy; Media Effects Theories; Myth and Mythic Criticism; Power and Power Relations; Public Sphere; Social Judgment Theory; Symbolic Interactionism; Two-Step and Multi-Step Flow

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POPULAR CULTURE THEORIES

The study of popular culture calls attention to the importance of folk culture—folk stories, ballads, folk theater, and so on—and to various aspects of consumer culture. The topic has generated a great measure of interest among scholars, who have produced a number of important theories and conceptualizations.

In order to understand the significance of popular culture, we need to have a sense of the

importance and complexity of the concept of culture. The eminent British cultural theorist Raymond Williams once remarked that the word *culture* is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. This is because the term culture admits of a plurality of interpretations and consequently is not easy to pin it down. Williams proposes three definitions of culture. The first is that it signifies a general process of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development. According to the second, it points to a particular way of life, whether of a specific people, period, or group. The third definition emphasizes the works and practices of intellectual and artistic activity. The three definitions are, of course, interconnected; from our current perspective of popular culture, the second definition seems most appropriate. Popular culture constitutes a major meaning-making site for most citizens, and hence the way sophisticated theorists have sought to conceptualize popular culture merits close attention. This entry briefly summarizes several bodies of theory emerging in the study of popular culture—cultural studies, structural and poststructural ideas, Marxist thought, postmodern theory, feminist theory, ethnography, and others.

Cultural Studies Approaches

Let us first consider scholars and theorists associated with cultural studies. It is an interdisciplinary mode of inquiry that originated in Britain in the 1960s and spread to many other parts of the English-speaking world. Alternative forms of cultural studies have emerged in non-English speaking countries as well, including, for example, French- and Spanish-speaking parts of the world. Early theorists of cultural studies, such as Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, E. P. Thompson, and Stuart Hall, paid sustained attention to diverse forms of popular culture. Williams has written illuminatingly on the ways in which technology and cultural discourses meet in television programming, while Hall has focused on the complex ways of decoding television and the role of ideology in shaping television culture. Drawing on the pioneering work of these thinkers, scholars of cultural studies have uncovered the layers of significance of popular culture. Scholars such as John Fiske, Lawrence Grossberg, and John Storey—some taking their cue from the eminent French thinker

Michel de Certeau—have sought to demonstrate the important ways in which popular culture opens up spaces of resistance in everyday life.

Structural and Poststructural Approaches

The second group of thinkers that I wish to briefly consider can be termed *structuralists* and *post-structuralists*. Briefly, structuralism looks for meaning in the structures of language and discourse. In rejecting the idea that unified and coherent meanings are to be found in texts, post-structuralism has a complicated relationship with its predecessor. On the one hand, poststructuralism is an extension of the interests and concerns of structuralism, that of exploring meaning; on the other hand, it is a rejection of the idea that meaning can be discovered in texts apart from the contexts in which they are produced and read. What is interesting to note is that some of the most powerful thinkers who became identified with post-structuralism were, early in their careers, associated with structuralism. Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault immediately spring to mind. Barthes's collection of short essays included in his book *Mythologies*, which dealt with various aspects of French popular culture, had a profound impact on the study of popular culture.

Structuralist thinking has been employed in diverse ways in examining popular-cultural texts. This is most clearly evident in the domain of popular cinema. Will Wright, in his book titled *Sixguns and Society*, makes use of the structuralist approach to the analysis of myths deployed by the eminent structuralist anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss to analyze Hollywood Western films. Poststructuralist thinkers go beyond structuralism and focus on the context—social, political, ideological—as a crucial element in the meaning-making process. The work of Michel Foucault has been pressed into service productively in exploring popular-cultural productions, while Jacques Lacan's focus on language, desire, and subjectivity have opened up interesting and fruitful pathways of inquiry into popular culture.

Marxist Approaches

Another approach to popular culture is that of Marxist thinkers. Although there is a diversity of

opinion operating under the general rubric of Marxism, the Frankfurt School represents an important branch. Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Max Horkheimer were leading lights of the Frankfurt School. They saw popular culture in negative terms, closely linked to what they termed *cultural industries*. They saw the products of cultural industries as standardized, trivial, and manipulative and saw that these had a depoliticizing impact on the working classes.

However, there are other thinkers who were inspired by Marxist thinking who saw things differently. For example the influential Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci saw popular culture as an instrument of hegemony, which focuses on how the power of one group is exercised through coercion and consent over other groups. A number of scholars, inspired by the writings of Gramsci, have sought to project popular culture as a site in which ordinary people struggle to negotiate meaning, make sense of their lives and surroundings, and offer resistance to unwanted and oppressive influences. As examples, cultural studies scholars such as Hall and Grossberg have drawn productively on these ideas.

Postmodern Approaches

The next group of thinkers that I wish to focus on is the postmodernists. There is, to be sure, a great measure of overlap between poststructuralists and postmodernists; however, there are significant differences between these two groups as well. In this regard, the formulations of Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard are most important. Many scholars of popular culture have been influenced by postmodernist thinking. The ideals of discontinuity, fragmentation, relativity, problematic nature of reality, playfulness, hybridity, pastiche, and border crossing associated with postmodernism have been applied usefully to the understanding and investigation of popular-cultural texts. When discussing the complex relationship that exists between postmodernism and popular culture, the writings of the Marxist thinker Fredric Jameson can prove to be of great value. Although he sees the shortcomings of postmodernism as an intellectual formulation, he makes use of it to understand the cultural landscape that has been produced in popular cinema, video games, music, and so on in

terms of the cultural logic associated with late capitalism.

Feminist Approaches

The fifth group that merits close attention is feminists. Feminism gained great visibility as a social movement in the 1960s, and it has begun to influence our understandings of art and culture in significant ways. Feminists focus on the unequal power relations in society and how they impact cultural production. They are interested in exploring how issues of gender operate within popular culture and how inequalities and disparities between men and women are articulated in cultural texts. There have been a number of important feminist writers who have shaped the trajectories of thinking on popular culture. The British filmmaker Laura Mulvey, through her writings on narrative cinema and visual pleasure, focused on how the male gaze operates and the ways in which in cinematic narratives men derive pleasure by turning women into objects of desire. Janice Radway opened up an important space of critical inquiry by investigating the ways in which women derive pleasure and meaning in their interactions with popular romances. Ien Ang, in her important work on women and television dramas, focused on the mechanisms of pleasure—how it is generated and the ways in which it works. Similarly, Tania Modleski has done some pioneering work on the relationships between popular romances and women and television soap operas and women. Meghan Morris's work on popular culture, ranging from cinema to shopping malls, has illuminated questions of female subjectivity in terms of popular-cultural texts. Rey Chow's work on modern Chinese cinema that draws on feminism and deconstruction has encouraged many students of popular culture to adopt similar strategies of analysis. All of these feminist writers critique patriarchal social orders and male-dominated discourses in productive ways. The problematics of representation and the role of male ideology constitute important strands in their thinking.

Ethnographic Approaches

A sixth group that merits consideration consists of ethnographers, who are increasingly drawn to

popular culture. Traditionally associated with anthropology, ethnographic attention has been given to all forms of culture, including industrial societies and the popular-cultural texts associated with them. Lila Abu-Lughod's work on Egyptian television soap opera and Purnima Mankekar's studies on Indian television dramas are but a few of the examples that exemplify this trend.

Additional Approaches

Several scholars share certain features with some of the groups referred to above, but do not fit neatly into any of these categories. For example, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has fashioned a number of concepts that have a direct bearing on the analysis of popular culture. His ideas on how cultural capital is produced are particularly relevant in this regard. He dissects how social distinctions, positions, and power relations are made, legitimized, and challenged in the domain of cultural productions.

When we discuss theorists of popular culture, we need to cast our net as wide as possible and take note of developments in societies outside the West. For example the Indian cultural critic Ashis Nandy has written perceptively on Indian popular cinema and other popular-culture products in terms of subject formation and cultural values. The Japanese cultural commentator Kojin Karatani has written a number of seminal essays that shed valuable light on the dynamics of cultural production.

The field of popular culture has made rapid progress over the years. From an undertheorized field has emerged a remarkable vibrancy. Questions of popular culture in relation to subjectivity, power play, representation, social formations, ideology, desire, and resistance have begun to attract increasing scholarly attention. The intent of this short entry has been to highlight some, though by no means all, of the more significant theorists associated with popular culture.

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See also Cultural Studies; Culture and Communication; Ethnography of Communication; Feminist Communication Theories; Frankfurt School; Marxist Theory; Postmodern Theory; Poststructuralism

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POSITIONING THEORY

Positioning theory can be traced to several sources from within the disciplines of marketing, social psychology, and linguistics. Within the field of marketing, positioning refers to the strategic use of communication to position products in the marketplace. Social psychologists use positioning to illustrate how individuals have multiple, fluid positions and how positions can and do change. From a similar vantage point, linguists pinpoint the rhetorical and linguistic means by which individuals position themselves and continually negotiate their positions. One of the first scholars to illustrate the workings of positioning theory was psychologist Wendy Hollway, who demonstrated how people take up and negotiate their gender-related places in conversations.

Social psychologists Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherall, psychologists Rom Harré and Bronwyn Davies, and sociologist Luk van Langenhove are most often seen as the founders of positioning theory. They share a social-constructionist approach to how communication shapes identity. In particular, their interest lies in how positioning takes place in naturally occurring conversations such as, but not limited to, talk among friends, family members, or colleagues. Positioning theorists find inspiration in linguist John Austin's speech act theory and especially in the concept of illocutionary speech acts—words that by their very

utterance embody an act such as “I hereby pronounce you husband and wife.” Positioning theorists note that conversations are structured speech events that are created by the joint participation of all participants. This point of juncture between social psychology and linguistics has led positioning theorists to also label the approach psychosocio-linguistics or discursive psychology.

In addition to their social-constructionist approach to communication, positioning theorists also have in common a critique of Erving Goffman’s role theory. To them, the concept of position better captures the dynamic aspects of multiply intersecting positions than does the term role. Yet they also make use of the notion of subject positions, which they recognize as somewhat similar to roles. To positioning theorists, communicators are participants in conversations and simultaneously audience members, or observers, who view situations based on how they imagine positioning themselves in that situation. Communicators who have expectations that they themselves will someday become a teacher, for instance, will view the position of teacher differently than those who expect that they will never take up that position. For positioning theorists, cultural categories such as female–male, teacher–student, mother–daughter, or doctor–patient are learned categories that also serve as forms of expression in language.

Positioning is displayed simultaneously at different conversational levels: from the grammatical (micro) level, to the interactional (meso) level, and onto the macrolevel of discourse. Although focusing on the interactional (meso) level of conversation, theorists distinguish between different modes of positioning. The most basic distinction is that between first and second order positioning or interactive and reflexive positioning. First order (interactional) positioning refers to the ways in which people locate themselves and others in conversation. Second order (reflexive) positioning occurs when the recipient challenges or redefines the positioning intended by the speaker.

Davies and Harré illustrate these conversational levels and positionings in an example of two academics (Sano and Enfermada) who attend a conference together when one of them (Enfermada) falls ill. The case begins when Sano says, “I am sorry to have dragged you all this way when you are not well.” Enfermada responds, “You didn’t drag me;

I chose to come.” At the grammatical (micro) level we note, for instance, the use of the first person pronoun *I* by both of the participants. At the interactional level, we note how Sano’s first order positioning is challenged by Enfermada’s second order-reflexive positioning. And at the macrolevel, we note how Enfermada positions Sano as a male chauvinist. The case highlights another important feature; namely, that having assumed a particular position in a storyline, communicators will tend to view the world from that position, also known by Wetherall and Potter as interpretative repertoire. Although Sano views his speech act as an act of commiseration and hers as overly sensitive, Enfermada views Sano’s speech as an act of condescension and her own as an act of empowerment.

Positioning theorists go beyond simply articulating different types of positionings. Van Langenhove and Harré explain this by using a triad of (a) position, (b) act-action, and (c) storyline. Neither storylines nor positions are freely constructed; rather, they reflect already existing cultural narratives. Conversations have storylines, and the positions that people take within conversations are always linked to particular actions. Davies and Harré explicate this in their discussion of Robert N. Munsch’s fairytale *The Paperbag Princess*. In the book, Princess Elizabeth takes up the subject position of the heroine and saves Prince Ronald. When Elizabeth defeats the dragon and comes to Ronald’s rescue, Ronald simply notes that she looks dirty and should have worn some nice clothes. Elizabeth tells him off and on the last page, skips happily into the sunset—all alone. Although the book challenges traditional subject positions of male hero and female victim, it is not the feminist subject positions that are taken up by the readers—in this case, children. In contrast, children typically agree with Ronald’s position and criticize the heroine for not having cleaned herself up and worn nicer clothes. Positioning theory is suited to illustrate how individuals take up subject positions and negotiate new positions made available to them in light of familiar storylines.

Although positioning theorists have tended to favor naturally occurring conversations, positioning theory can be applied to media and interpersonal as well as institutionalized settings such as the criminal court. Wetherall and Potter have applied positioning theory to demonstrate how

White New Zealanders essentialize notions of race in talk about Maori culture. Although White New Zealanders are presented as liberal, egalitarian, and culturally progressive, the Maori are presented as bound by culture and exoticized. Linguist Judith Baxter has extended positioning theory to a post-structuralist feminist discourse analysis. She uses this perspective to demonstrate how students in classrooms or managers during board meetings locate themselves among multiple relationships and positions. Jointly, positioning theorists note that social worlds are created in conversations and that it is in and through communication that one constitutes oneself as a subject.

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See also Discourse Theory and Analysis; Gender Role Theory; Postmodern Theory; Poststructuralism; Social Construction of Reality

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POSTCOLONIAL FEMINISM

Critiquing Western nation-centered perspectives on gender, race, class, and sexuality, interrogating the colonial legacies that still impact relationships between first- and third-world peoples and providing innovative ways for understanding difference in a transnational world mark a few of the primary commitments of postcolonial feminism. Postcolonial feminism can be understood in relation to postcolonial theory generally. Perspectives with similar commitments include third-world feminism, which centers on the experiences and ideas of women from so-called third world countries, and transnational feminism, which explores the construction of gender across nation-state boundaries in the context of globalization. Postcolonial feminism emerged in the humanities and social sciences in the late 1980s with key figures such as Gayatri Spivak, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and Trinh T. Minh-ha. It has been utilized in communication since the mid 1990s in the work of scholars such as Radha S. Hegde, Raka Shome, and Radhika Parameswaran. As a perspective rather than a unified theory, postcolonial feminism begins with two related projects: (1) critiquing hegemonic Western feminism emerging out of the United States and Western Europe and (2) formulating culturally, geographically, and historically grounded feminist theories and politics in relation to broader transnational processes.

In the first project, postcolonial feminists share with postcolonial theorists a critique of Western depictions of the East. Postcolonial feminists contend that Western feminism often adopts and reproduces many of the same troubling representations of the East and the other as Western humanism. More specifically, depictions and treatment of third-world, subaltern, or marginalized women often reproduce colonization by featuring third-world woman as a monolithic object who is a victim of the universal conditions of patriarchy or male domination. In this homogenizing of all women, third-world women are often talked about not only as victims, but as powerless and as traditional. Furthermore, concepts such as reproduction, family, and patriarchy often get used to describe women's experiences, ignoring the geographical, cultural, and historical particularities

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that make those experiences meaningful. The outcome is a denying or silencing of agency and the ability of individual women to create and respond to their unique situations.

In addition to challenging the ethnocentric universalism in which Euro-American beliefs and ideologies end up the norm by which all other cultural, political, and familial formations are evaluated, postcolonial feminists also are concerned with issues of power. All people are subjects of the cultural and social relations out of which they emerge, but when the third-world woman is featured as a coherent entity, power relations appear unilateral and unchanging across time, place, or culture. Power is viewed in binary terms of powerless and powerful where women are powerless and men are powerful. In line with the broader postcolonial critique of first-world, third-world binary oppositions, postcolonial feminists argue that the depiction of third-world women as powerless is not unlike the binary between Western and third-world women where Western women are secular and liberated as opposed to the veiled and traditional other.

The second project of postcolonial feminism—developing culturally, historically, and geographically specific feminist theories and politics in relation to transnational processes—involves centering the perspectives of third-world women, offering alternative theories about gender and gendered practices, and investigating the way that global flows of capital and culture impact people's gendered experiences. Fundamentally, postcolonial feminism centers third-world women as the creators of knowledge. Uncovering, translating, and interpreting texts written by third-world women is central to this project. Additionally, this work complicates the theorizing of gender and gendered practices by re-interpreting practices that have been figured as backward, traditional, or otherwise problematic. For instance, the Muslim hijab or veil has often been construed as a symbol of oppression; however, many Muslim women have argued that for them, the hijab is a source of personal freedom. Additionally, although silence has often been considered a negative concept within Western feminist theory, Hegde has shown through ethnographic research in South Asia how, in some instances, silence is a rich site for women's agency. Within communication studies, the postcolonial

feminist approach has often been utilized to frame ethnographic research on gender as well as to critique media representations of non-Western women.

Postcolonial feminists also uncover the ways in which particular experiences of race, gender, and class are always positioned in transnational power relations. Critiquing the state and its role in sanctioning women's oppression in various ways around the world and adopting an anti-capitalist framework for rethinking democracy are central to this task. An analysis of the state and its historical relationship to capital reveals the colonial legacies that many states still engender as they continue to enact racialized, gendered, and sexualized hierarchies. Such hierarchies reveal the continued disparities of present and past colonialism within particular locales. For example, Parameswaran's analysis of events surrounding the 1996 Miss World pageant in India demonstrates the complicated ways in which gender and sexuality are intertwined with politics of global consumption and cultural imperialism. She reveals that what organizers of the event hoped would be a coming together of East and West on equal terms to celebrate multicultural femininity turned into a collision of multiple actors over tradition, nation, capital, and modernity within the postcolonial state.

The creation of a feminist democracy in relation to a decolonization project is also part of the efforts of postcolonialist feminists. This kind of feminist democracy begins by building analyses based on feminist scholar-activist alliances and adopting a vision that both acknowledges the devastating effects of colonialism, understanding sexual politics as central to governance processes, and creating anticolonial cultures and relations. Within this vision, women are not passive victims; agency is understood as the processes around one's existence for which one takes responsibility. Mohanty's discussion of third-world assembly-line workers in the United States reveals how women are oppressed by their conditions at the same time that they have developed collectives and unions to express resistance. Such collectives divulge how third-world women are the creators of democracy, building projects in the global arena.

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See also Cultural Studies; Feminist Communication Theories; Hybridity; Neocolonialism; Postcolonial Theory

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POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

Broadly speaking, postcolonial theory or postcolonialism looks into processes of colonization and decolonization. Postcolonial theory engages questions about how cultures create identities after colonization, about the subjugation of colonized peoples' knowledge and histories, about the use and misuse of knowledge about colonized peoples by Westerners, and about the creative ways in which colonized and formerly colonized peoples respond to their oppression. Additionally, postcolonial theory extends beyond traditional geographical colonialism into neocolonial relationships between nations, questioning why such relationships exist. Communication scholars have taken up postcolonial theory primarily in order to critique the Eurocentrism of both scholarship and beliefs about communicative and rhetorical practice and to center knowledge produced from other locales and subjects.

Emergence of Postcolonial Theory

Many parts of the world have been impacted by colonialism and continue to be shaped through neocolonial relationships and various kinds of cultural imperialism. One historical trajectory of contemporary postcolonial theory marks its origins at World War II, with Indian independence from Britain as one of the hallmarks of the scholarly enterprise. The third-world migration to cities and the emergence of English-speaking formerly colonized academics in the Western academy created the push for postcolonial theorizing. Specifically, postcolonial theorists asked the West to confront its colonial history and refused what Dipesh Chakrabarty calls a waiting room version of history where colonized and formerly colonized peoples are configured in a liminal, or threshold, space in relation to the West. This is, however, only one version of the emergence of postcolonial theory.

Other scholars such as Angelita Reyes, mark the emergence of something called postcoloniality in the 19th century. Frantz Fanon is sometimes credited for the earliest postcolonial writing in books such as his 1952 text, *Black Skin, White Mask*. Still other scholars contend that Edward Said's 1978 book, *Orientalism*, is the hallmark text in postcolonial theory. Other key figures in postcolonial theory include Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Albert Memmi, and Aimé Césaire.

Though there are disagreements about the origin of postcolonial theorizing, a number of similarities exist across versions of postcolonialism. Foremost, postcolonial theory is a transformative stance, focused on reconfiguring epistemic or knowledge structures and making connections to groups' and cultures' obliterated pasts. This is not simply an intellectual endeavor, although much good work remains to be done in the academy. In that vein, postcolonial theory challenges established disciplinary knowledge that has been created through the force of modernity and long histories of imperialism. Postcolonial theory thus provides historical and transnational depth to understandings of culture and power.

Western Modernity

Although not its only focus, a central concern for postcolonial scholars centers upon the impact of Western modernity. Although the modern has been

characterized a number of ways, the characteristics associated with Western modernity have often been taken as the standard by which all other nations are evaluated, and those nations that are radically different from the West often are imagined to be exotic, backward, or wrong. One way the primacy of Western modernity persists is through what Said calls orientalism, which he describes as functioning in the dichotomy between the occident, or Western European countries and more recently the United States, and the orient, or non-Western, typically Asian regions. Orientalism is not only a simple geographic distinction that the world is made of two unequal parts called the orient and the occident, but it also engenders a range of interests. As an occidental construction, orientalism creates and also maintains an intention to know, or even to control and manipulate, what is a very different world. Whether in politics, media, or literature, orientalism has led to very limited representations of the orient. Such depictions fashion people in exotic and sometimes passive ways that work to remove their agency or ability to be considered fully human actors in the Western imaginary.

Most fundamentally, postmodern thinkers challenge two aspects of Western Modernity—knowledge and universality.

Knowledge

The dominance of Western modernity promotes a very narrow construction of what can count as knowledge and who is a valid producer of knowledge. Within Western modernity, Europe and the United States get constructed as subject, or active knower, whereas subaltern, or subordinated, peoples get positioned as object or other, that which is known about. This means that too often, in the best scenario, texts produced by subaltern peoples are not considered knowledge, but rather an object for Western scholars to create knowledge about. More typically, however, anything produced by subaltern peoples is simply ignored as not worthy of being knowledge at all.

Western scholars, however, have long relied upon the other for production of knowledge. In her 1988 book, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Spivak uses the notion of the native informant to critique philosophical, literary, and cultural history (and present), showing the ways that this figure

has been used in colonial discourse studies. The native informant is not a celebrated figure, but both the necessary and foreclosed, or denied, figure of the West, which means that all knowledge production in the West always already relies upon the native's story at the same time that that fact is denied. A task, then, of postcolonial theory is to avoid re-inscribing, or rewriting, the position of neocolonial knowledge in a way that locates imperialism and colonialism safely in the past, when neocolonial knowledge itself assumes a continuous connection between past (colonialism) and present (postcolonialism). This is especially important because many foundational Western texts that continue to undergird Western thinking sanction colonialism and imperialism. In this way, the legacy of Western knowledge production very much impacts the present moment, which renders quite complex the West's relationship with its colonial past and post- and neocolonial present.

Universalism

Knowledge gets produced within Western modernity in a way that assumes the universalism of Western thought and the Western subject. Postcolonial theory challenges this universalism on a number of fronts. Initially, in critiquing Immanuel Kant's depictions of culture, Spivak shows how this view overlooks the possibility of a geo-politically differentiated subject. This universalism permits subjectivity to be solidly configured in a way that perpetuates and justifies further exclusion of subjects who are left out of this way of constructing knowledge. The Western subject within Western thought re-inscribes and reaffirms itself by making use of certain kinds of colonial subjects as evidence for knowledge claims. Because the Western subject is the standard, all others who might be subjects are evaluated in relation to the criteria of the West. This means that many non-Western peoples would fall short of the Western standard of subjectivity that requires certain peoples be cast as other in order for Western knowledge to have meaning.

Although postcolonial theorists contend that historically Western thought has been universalist in this way, they also maintain that contemporary thought continues to mark the Western subject as the standard. Postmodern thought has devoted much attention to the decentering of the Western

subject. A premise of this decentering, however, is that the Western subject is currently the center of knowledge, demonstrating that even attempts to rupture the historical line of Western thought still assume that its lineage is universal. Alternatively, postcolonial theorists use other kinds of subjects as the starting points for their critiques, which implicitly decenters the Western subject without centering it in the first place. For instance, an assumption within much Western communication theory about subjectivity is that silence demonstrates a lack of agency. In an analysis of mothers in South Asia, however, Radha S. Hegde challenges this taken-for-granted assumption by showing how a variety of geo-political, interpersonal, and historical factors make silence a rich source of agency in certain cultural contexts.

Postcolonial theorization of culture has offered some of the most poignant critiques of Western universalism. Because many formerly colonized peoples exist in widespread diasporas (geographical dispersion), for example, their relationships to their home cultures and their new cultures challenge any kind of cultural essentialism. Similarly, Bhabha's notion of cultural hybridity highlights the ways in which oppressed peoples make use of the oppressors' cultural artifacts in new and unfamiliar ways. A song that might have one meaning in the oppressors' country can be completely refashioned in the oppressed country to create a hybrid text that combines old and new. The practice of colonial mimicry, where colonized peoples learn to perform civilized or European manners of dress, talk, and comportment to gain privilege, directly challenges both the universalism and the superiority of Western culture and subjectivity. Postcolonial theorists have centered analyses of culture(s) in order to highlight the creative cultural practices and productions of subaltern peoples in order to obliterate the strongholds of Western modernity.

Postcolonial Theory in Communication

Postcolonial theory gained legitimacy in communication in the 1990s. Raka Shome's 1996 germinal essay, "Postcolonial Interventions in the Rhetorical Canon: An 'Other' View," which focuses on how rhetorical scholars could benefit from an engagement with postcolonialism, is a significant

introduction of postcolonial theory to the field of communication. One of the most important contributions of postcolonial theory to communication has been its critique of the limits of critical theories. Shome and Hegde contend that critical theories in communication have focused on axes of power such as race, class, and gender mostly within the context of the United States and without attention to other factors outside of the nation. Postcolonial theory unearths specific historical, geopolitical, and geographical aspects of several forms of modernity within which other sites of power such as race, class, and gender reside. This transnational layering adds richness to discussions of power axes and has led communication scholars to ask questions pertaining to issues such as media representations in global contexts and hybrid communication practices that challenge typical assumptions about race and nation. Radhika Parameswaran's analysis of colonial discourse in *National Geographic* depicts the subtle ways that the publication's presentation of gender and race reinforces an othering of non-Western people. K. E. Supriya's ethnographic research with immigrant Asian women in a domestic violence shelter in the United States demonstrates the particular aspects of identity building and communication among women whose gendered and racialized experiences do not originate in the nation where they currently reside. Such research shows the necessity of thinking through the impact of transnationalism on all representational and communication practice.

Criticisms

Though postcolonial theory has had a significant impact on academic theorizing about others, it has also been subject to criticism. For example, some scholars have argued that postcolonial theory focuses too much on the West and its colonial impact while denying the colonial-style relations between, for example, Arabs and Africans. The Western emphasis can function to continue to center the West as the site of knowledge production and civilization. Additionally, other scholars have suggested that postcolonial theory over emphasizes the impacts of culture while denying or ignoring the relevance of economics. Such criticisms maintain that postcolonial theory's import remains minimal until it wrestles with the material factors

that compel colonial relations. Scholars of globalization have critiqued postcolonial theory for construing all unequal global relationships as remnants of past colonialism, which, they argue, is an inadequate depiction of globality.

Although much of the earliest postcolonial theorizing emerged from Asian, African, and Middle Eastern scholars living in various diasporas, postcolonial theorists from parts of Latin America have also suggested the regional and experiential limitations of this work. Since more than one colonizer colonized many Latin American countries, postcolonial theorists working from these locations demonstrate the complex layers of colonization-decolonization that is arguably elided in other kinds of postcolonial theory. Additionally, these theorists often center indigenous and mestizo/a cultures as central to understanding the impacts of colonization. This focus has introduced the importance of religious conflict and translation to understanding the continual impacts of colonialism and imperialism.

Despite criticisms, postcolonial theory offers different ways of reading and understanding that are guided by postcolonial subjectivities, historical and geo-political contextualization, and alternatives to Western modes of meaning making.

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See also Critical Theory; Cultural Studies; Hybridity; Neocolonialism; Postcolonial Feminism; Poststructuralism

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POSTMODERN THEORY

Postmodernism has reconstituted human communication since its arrival in the 1960s. It captures multiple world views through partial snapshots of reality, knowledge, and values. The postmodern project bridges aesthetic, economic, and theoretical discourse built on critiques of modernism. Postmodernists challenge modernist truth claims by exposing inconsistencies in the communication of those very claims. One can affirm postmodernism (e.g., encourage its play) or remain skeptical of its truth potential (e.g., question its mess). Although communication scholars may disagree over whether to call the 21st century postmodern, or even to acknowledge the term at all, others look to appropriate only the theoretical parts that most usefully illuminate reality, knowledge, and values.

Cultural critics dispute whether postmodernism has introduced new styles or recycled modernist tendencies. Although the debate continues unsettled, postmodernists have settled on three ideas: most oppose a totalizing view of reality, objective knowledge construction, and the possibility for neutral values. After introducing premodern and modern systems of thought, this entry will illustrate the key issues of postmodernism across three domains: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. It will conclude with the possibility for an ecstasy of communication.

From Premodernism to Postmodernism

Scholars situate premodernity in the epochs prior to the mid-17th century. A premodernist associated knowledge production with ecclesiastical and governmental institutions of authority. Divine intervention by God or a higher being paved the path for belief, attitude, and value formation. The church and state worked together to shape premodern exchanges. Gutenberg's printing press shook up the definition of authority in the production, distribution, and consumption of knowledge.

Modernity began in the mid-17th and lasted until the mid-20th centuries. As a historical period, it witnessed the rise of reason over superstition. Henry Ford's early car manufacturing introduced Fordist terminology into modernism and its industrialization, urbanization, and transmission of new technologies. Whether one tried to fix a mechanical or a relational problem, modernists believed a universal Truth existed out there, awaiting discovery by researchers and implementation by rulers.

Mass culture accompanied the growth of cities and technologies. The term intervenes between modernism and postmodernism because it signifies social change. Critics believed the culture industries discouraged active thought and encouraged passive acceptance of goods and services, burdening bonds of solidarity and communal living. Fashion and record labels qualify as culture industries from Armani to Arista.

Communication scholars have suggested an alternative frame for mass culture's great divide between modernism and postmodernism: Instead of a discontinuous break or a radical rupture, modernism and postmodernism might mutually constitute one another. Consider prior separation of high from low art by elite modernists and their subsequent integration in the postmodern era, evinced in Andy Warhol's pop art. A discussion of whether to label modernism and postmodernism as mutually constitutive remains open.

As postmodernism came of age in the 1960s, activists argued for the abolition of racial, gender, and sexual inequalities. World War II memories simmered in the background as the Cold War came to the forefront. Imperial systems of colonial rule slowly dissolved as indigenous populations spread around the world. Industrial economies declined in the transition to a post-Fordist service model of a new information society. This epoch of late capitalism referred to transnational consumer economies based in global and local trade flows.

Post suggests a practice that revises modernism and its coherent signs or cohesive symbols. Postmodernity references historical and temporal frames, from the 1960s through today, while postmodernism attends to cultural and economic texts, from minority artwork to commodity flows away from industrial to information economies. For example, the production of photography has shifted from broad distribution to narrow customization

for and by consumers. One can receive targeted images on his or her Internet homepages or social networking devices in seconds.

Multiple Meaning and Mixing

Polysemy does not limit itself to postmodernism, but rather holds utility when one wishes to uncover multiple meanings in a text. For example, graffiti does not simply mean pollution or dirt. It instead conveys complex symbols and suggests preferred, negotiated, or oppositional interpretations, depending on the ease of decoding signs without an encoder.

Intertextuality can occur across multiple types of self-referential texts. A film may base its plot on a novel or reference popular storylines that occur in other nonfilmic contexts. Internet applications often mix media in intertextual ways because each sonic or visual part references the other.

Postmodern conditions of bricolage and pastiche are not unrelated to polysemy and intertextuality. Bricolage appropriates old elements in new and unexpected ways. Continuing with the Internet example, one might decide to sample new spoken lyrics and juxtapose them on top of older melodies. A pastiche then would result in a patchwork of words from various artists, forming a speech-to-song continuum in the audiovisual application. It might even parody the original intent of the artists themselves with the addition of poetry or rhyme schemes.

Postmodern Ontology

Postmodernists address ontology, or the nature of reality. They believe reality appears in the linguistic interaction between individuals and groups. Understanding ourselves and others depends on an infinite potential to succeed or fail in communication. Language constitutes the world rather than the other way around.

The meaning of postmodern reality fluctuates. For example, natural rites of passage from adolescence to adulthood materialize through ideological state apparatuses or institutions of knowledge and power that produce consent. Humans thus learn about the nature of human development through media outlets, religious doctrine, and family chat. They also learn the limits of their own realities

from official ideologies. One cannot openly commit a crime without penalty. Institutions of power demarcate the bounds of communication.

The reality of postmodernism does not have a rational origin. Rather, postmodernism dislocates itself in a communicative context with subjects speaking, listening, reading, and writing their own versions of reality. The essence of reality becomes a simulation or spectacle that replaces whatever clear image existed before. The signifier that represents the signified becomes reality. French social theorist Jean Baudrillard's idea of the simulacrum suggests a copy without an original. The former becomes more real than the latter, just as a paperless society slowly replaces previous hardcopies with electronic portable document formats. Instead of relying on proof of banking deposits in hard copy, one opts to visit an automated Web site and view a hypertext post that has slowly supplanted a modernist system of bank slips and passbooks.

Postmodernists do not view reality as a unified whole. Integrated systems collapse into fragmented spaces that radically reconsider linear time. For example, digital downloads allow fans to hear single songs without purchasing entire music albums. The reality of listening dramatically changes in the move from analogue to digital media. Technology no longer demands a structured practice of consumption from beginning to end. One can enter a medium in media res, or in the middle. The nature of music as a medium of communication changes dramatically.

Postmodern Epistemology

Postmodernists also question knowledge construction, or epistemology. Instead of asking how one can know what counts as knowledge, the postmodernist plays with an incapacity to know and a failure to communicate. The world cannot always be understood, but when it can, understanding, however partial, will depend on the minds and bodies of those who directly experience it.

Grand master narratives of history and progress no longer offer scientifically verifiable truth. Instead, small stories produced by minorities appreciate in value as the knower localizes knowledge production. In the modernist period, one could hypothesize the nature of a noun beforehand and test an educated guess by sensory observation,

or discover it during the process of interpretation. The epistemological goal remained to predict, explain, understand, or empathize with observable phenomena in the real world, either generalizing beyond particular populations or focusing on local contexts with thick descriptions.

In postmodernism, the nature of a noun subjectively plays itself out across space and time. Postmodernists challenge the idea of a single truth by advancing multiple truths based in experimental thought. One plays a language game to make uncertain or contradictory knowledge claims. Words derive their meanings through communicative action. In short, language undergoes a radical restructuring, new words suddenly appear in the dictionary, and colloquialisms shift registers from street to school. The meaning of *jamming* began in the street and subsequently entered into academic discourse on popular culture. Artful expressions based in poetry and performance now challenge modernist theories of society and culture with blank verses or gibberish.

When postmodernists make knowledge claims, standardization disappears and truth articulation comes to depend on a distrust of rational reason in favor of human freedom. In his work on communication theory, Dennis Mumby has referred to postmodernism as a discourse of vulnerability because its epistemology opens itself up to temporary responses rather than to permanent answers. What we know today about stem cell research may drastically change tomorrow with the arrival of new techniques and technologies.

A coherent subject has been replaced by an incoherent one based in communicative coalitions of power and knowledge. Although postmodern knowledge claims emphasize decentralized authority and localized autonomy, they cannot completely escape from systems of domination. To resist, individuals must deconstruct or take apart an authoritative text to expose its internal paradoxes, silences, absences, and tensions. Texts vary greatly and can range from news events, films, and Internet chat transcripts to health policies, presidential speeches, and corporate mission statements. For example, one might look to uncover the contradictions inherent within and between texts like government health care policy, health maintenance organizations, and a film such as *Sicko* to uncover many types of truth on the status of health

care and its unequal distribution in the United States.

Discourse, Power, and Knowledge

Discourse, power, and knowledge cannot be considered without mentioning French philosopher, historian, and social critic Michel Foucault. Although Foucault did not intellectually identify with postmodernism *per se*, his work has nonetheless been strongly associated with the movement.

Discourse distinguishes itself by intent: to teach or to share, for instance. Foucault analyzed how discursive practices communicate meaning over time. These practices define their own properties by creating the objects of which they speak. By speaking of the death penalty, then, Foucault would argue opponents could repeal it through a strategic use of language. Once state authorities rule on capital punishment, a different method will arrive and create new forms of resistance based in the strategic exercise of protest by competing interests.

For postmodern epistemology, all social relations revolve around power as a web that ensnares individuals by defining their subjectivities. One becomes conscious of oneself and another by contesting the very power that constitutes selfhood in society. A desire to wear particular types of clothing cannot be divorced from social fads, trends, supply, or demand in the management of unstable identities.

Foucault supported particular knowledge acquisition rather than universal histories. Knowledge only meant something when it involved relative relations between local sources of power. A patient may heed the experience, affiliation, or credentials of his or her psychiatrist. Based on these knowledge symbols, the patient may not even question a prescription. Power manifests itself as knowledge.

Postmodern Axiology

The study of values, or axiology, drives the investigation of texts. Social inquiry becomes a political act that seeks to empower racial, ethnic, gender, or sexual minorities. Postmodern scholarship may involve the participation of researchers in extension or outreach movements to further the emancipation of oppressed groups. Although pessimistic values can prefigure postmodern work, a desire to

liberate subaltern groups requires an optimistic sense of unbounded fairness.

Postmodernists create a space for silenced minorities to speak out against instrumental technologies of surveillance or forms of hegemony, a condition in which the dominant repeatedly win the consent of the subordinate with subtle expressions of authority. Subordinate groups contribute to their own subordination by subscribing to the dominant power bloc's control over the political and cultural dimensions of a nation, an institution, an organization, and so forth. The oppressed do not always question their oppressors' values.

An axiological paradigm shift from modernism to postmodernism involves the contestation of values by those most often misrepresented through visual modalities. The postmodern self directly confronts such representations because they offer no more than shallow solutions to struggles. Liberating identity politics tied to progressive values in education, health care, and government encourage new forms of resistance to modern narratives that would otherwise maintain a unitary understanding of self and other in society. For example, the value-laden question of whether to place marriage and unions within church and state jurisdictions, respectively, has been taken up by postmodern communication scholars.

Cognate Cultural Posts

Postmodern ideas point to the particularities of cultural studies, feminism, poststructuralism, and postcolonialism. Although postmodernism does not equate itself with any of these enterprises, all share a common concern with who defines power, for what purpose, by what means, and to what ends. These movements also became popular around the same time.

Although cultural studies boomed in the 1970s, its genealogy as a project backtracks to adult education tutors looking for a home outside departments of sociology, philology, philosophy, history, and literature. Like critical theorists, cultural studies scholars interrogate power distribution between the haves and have-nots, though usually from a populist rather than elitist perspective. Instead of studying objects, the cultural studies movement articulates the conjectures of racial, ethnic, gendered, sexual, and other relational contexts between the dominant

and subordinate. In that sense they are not far removed from many postmodernists who contextualize research within the particular rather than the universal. They study everyday, ordinary interaction between institutions, texts, and audiences. For instance, a cultural studies scholar might question how the media play a role in representations of poverty and disability. These researchers do not shy away from political action in fear of retaliation. Like most postmodernists, cultural studies scholars usually reject positivistic policy research manufactured by a standard scientific canon.

Feminism has been studied from inside and outside cultural studies. Feminists have critiqued the gender blindness of Marxism and its patriarchal divisions. Feminist studies matured alongside the work of cultural studies and their mutual interest in making the personal political. Scholars have explored sex and gender philosophies, stereotypes, archetypes, and representations of women in the media. Their central concern with equality has modulated in tone across a series of waves and strands. The second wave from the 1960s and 1970s has been identified as the most radical to date, arguing for separation from masculine systems of thought. This argument grew quite complicated as those very feminists began to appropriate theories devised by men. The battle over separation and integration simmered into the third wave from the 1990s forward. Gender as a fluid performance continues to influence studies of femininity.

Poststructuralism also arrived between the modern and postmodern divide. This movement has produced important studies of signs and symbols. It includes, but does not solely identify with deconstruction and its attention to inconsistencies. Poststructuralists doubted neutrality without destroying the nature of structuralism, an earlier movement based in rational science. A playful act focused on the unstructured nature of a text's center gestures at peripheral discourses responsible for meaning. Poststructuralism shares with postmodernism the traits of unstable meaning and language-based reality.

Postcolonialism investigates the effects of colonization from Europe on other cultures. It looks to understand how local communities construct their own cultural and political identities after Western imperialism. Once humans scatter around

the world, the possibility of forging collective identities becomes less likely. Postcolonial studies explore how those who have felt the historical repercussions of imperialism in language speak in their own native tongues. Scholars consider how language codes othering, a process that defines the colonized against the colonizer. Othering refers to a situation in which the master and slave relate in a field of unequal conflict. Both postcolonial scholars and postmodernists question identity and knowledge structures, though postcolonial scholars place greater emphasis on nationalism, history, and geography in the study of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality.

Postmodern Communication

Communication and postmodernism intersect in the work of Jean Baudrillard. Information bombards our society in torrents, provoking increasingly intense exchanges between isolated individuals and groups. The intensity of communication depends on its instantaneity, a postmodern condition of immediate connection between individuals. Think of instant messaging in computer-mediated spaces. Reality by proxy, or the inability to distinguish reality from fantasy, succinctly sums up the idea of hyper reality. Communication media instantly influence individual understandings of the world through the mouths of people and the microprocessors of machines. These interconnections paradoxically create efficiency with their momentum and surveillance techniques to monitor behavior. This false ecstasy of communication has its own experts and witnesses.

Postmodern communication studies will continue to investigate identity and power. As for the divide between views of reality, knowledge, and value, communication scholars will need to decide whether they can reconcile a centralized modernist subject with a decentralized postmodern subject. Without closure based in rational, scientific, observable truth, modernists will continue to think of postmodern communication as impossible, while postmodernists will embrace the communicative potential of instant and tentative message exchange. For them, even the incommunicable communicates something in silence. The ways in which social actors invoke and revoke the meaning of events or expressions will reveal

the limits of communication through language in the future.

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See also Axiology; Critical Theory; Cultural Studies; Deconstruction; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Epistemology; Feminist Communication Theories; Identity Theories; Language and Communication; Modernism in Communication Theory; Ontology; Postcolonial Theory; Poststructuralism; Power and Power Relations; Simulation and Media

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POSTPOSITIVISM

Like many concepts that begin with *post* and end with *ism*, postpositivism is hard to concisely define. It is not so much a definite philosophy as a collection of beliefs that are positioned against an older set of ideas. The forebears of postpositivism are several versions of positivism that began with August Comte's formulation of classical positivism. He postulated a progression of scientific knowledge beginning with a primitive theological phase in which the church and its clergy determined what was legitimate scientific knowledge. Next was a metaphysical phase, where phenomena were explained as the result of mysterious, invisible forces or substances. For example, in the 17th and 18th centuries, a popular theory held that combustion was caused by the release of a fifth classical element called phlogiston. In the positive phase, which Comte promoted, phenomena are explained on the basis of immutable natural laws, such as Newton's law of gravity.

Following Comte, the idea of positivism evolved. As many as 12 variants have been identified. Today it is hard to find anyone in the social sciences who is a true positivist. Yet many communication researchers retain some core ideas of positivism while accommodating critiques that sprang up along the way. We can therefore define postpositivism as a philosophy of science that respects the spirit of science in the context of fundamental reforms of positivistic principles.

The spirit of science values knowledge built through rigorous, systematic observation. Though postpositivists believe in this approach, they also take seriously critiques that have been leveled at the various kinds of positivism over the years. As a result, they accept five principles that represent reforms of beliefs held by earlier positivists.

Falsificationism is the belief that the discovery of disconfirming instances is the most important factor in the progress of science. This is at odds with earlier versions of positivism, which believed in the verification theory of meaning—the idea that discovery of instances confirming a theory was the key to scientific progress. Karl Popper, a prominent critic of the verification theory, argued that we can almost always find some evidence to support a theory. Yet this can never offer conclusive proof

that a theory is true because some new facts could come along at any time to disprove it. In contrast, disconfirming cases unambiguously show when and how a theory is false. Science, then, is actually a critical enterprise that proceeds by a process of conjecture and refutation. It never reaches certainty that a theory is true, but only shows that it has never been refuted—the best known method for generating reliable scientific knowledge.

Naturalism is the belief that there is an essential unity between the social sciences and the natural sciences. Postpositivists would not accept the positivist belief that the social and natural sciences are isomorphic because they acknowledge that understanding plays a role in all science. However, they believe that as a rule hermeneutic reflection is not any more troublesome for social sciences than it is for the natural sciences. Because it is part of the natural world, there is nothing about communication that precludes the adoption of scientific methods.

Realism is the belief that phenomena have a reality independent of their being perceived by an observer. This is a clean departure from positivism, which holds that the only valid knowledge comes from experience. It is also at odds with relativism, the idea that phenomena only exist in relation to some point of view, popular with many critical and interpretive perspectives in communication. Postpositivists determine what is real by focusing on the conditions that have to exist for something to be the true, a form of transcendental reasoning. They also accept the principles of critical realism, which holds that human cognition and perception influence the way we perceive the real world.

Transformational models hold that there are generative mechanisms that are not observable themselves, but account for things we can observe. This is a departure from positivism, which rejected as meaningless the study of anything that could not be directly experienced. Postpositivism allows one step away from this position, saying that there can be things such as attitudes or society that we cannot see, but account for things we can see. Such reasoning is prominent in theories by Roy Bhaskar and Anthony Giddens that are widely applied in the communication field.

Emergent objectivity is the idea that objectivity is not a property of an individual researcher, but of a system of scientific practice. Positivism, especially classical positivism, held that there was a strict

separation between ideas and things and that scientists could remain objective by focusing only on things. Critics discount this belief by pointing out how all knowledge is to some extent subjective. Although postpositivists accept this critique, they do not concede that all observations are equally good. Although the making of observations may be subjective, the checking, testing, and critical evaluation of them need not be. By developing and implementing standards for what counts as knowledge, we create a system of organized skepticism that averages out biases that result from individual subjectivity. So although individual scientists might not have objectivity, it can be an emergent property of this system.

Postpositivism has supplanted the positivistic boogeyman of years past by making the reforms just outlined. They result in a perspective that is philosophically no more (or less) problematic than other alternative perspectives, thus maintaining a respectable place for scientific study in the communication field.

Steven Corman

See also Empiricism; Metatheory; Philosophy of Communication; Scientific Approach

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POSTSTRUCTURALISM

During the past 2 decades or so, poststructuralism has begun to influence the thinking in many fields

in the humanities and the social sciences. Communication is no exception. Poststructuralism is a mode of thinking that is associated mainly with French thinkers and theorists; however, in recent times, it has begun to exert a profound impact on scholars the world over. As the name suggests, poststructuralism is a mode of thinking that succeeded structuralism. However, the relationship between structuralism and poststructuralism is complex and many-sided. At one level, it is a rejection of structuralism; at another level, it is an extension of the concerns and interests of structuralism.

Some use the two terms poststructuralism and postmodernism interchangeably because there is a great deal of overlap between the thinking of the proponents of both these modes of inquiry. However, although poststructuralism grew out of linguistics, anthropology, and literary studies and was largely French in origin, postmodernism grew out of architecture, film, and performance studies and is mainly associated with the United States. This is, of course, not to deny the fact that French thinkers such as Jean-François Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard have played an important role in defining postmodernism.

Structuralism, the idea that meaning resides in the structure or organization of language and other symbolic systems, is associated with a number of French thinkers who were influential in the 1950s and 1960s. Among them, Claude Lévi-Strauss (anthropology), Roman Jakobson (language and literary studies), Roland Barthes (cultural analysis), Louis Althusser (Marxist studies), and Jacques Lacan (psychoanalysis) are perhaps most important. Barthes, Lacan, and Michel Foucault were later associated with poststructuralism as well. The writings of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure on language had a deep influence on the rise of structuralism.

Structuralism and poststructuralism share many features in common. They are both extremely critical of such fields of inquiry as humanism, existentialism, and phenomenology that exercised considerable influence before the emergence of structuralism. Structuralists and poststructuralists repudiated humanism's notion of sovereign subject, or the importance of the individual human person, that had dominated Western thinking for centuries. Both structuralism and poststructuralism, then, are

unyieldingly critical of humanism, which has been a cornerstone of Western thinking since the Renaissance. And both structuralism and poststructuralism place great emphasis on the determinative role of language in shaping self and meaning.

However, there are significant differences between structuralism and poststructuralism as well. Poststructuralists are extremely dubious of scientific pretensions. Structuralists were keen to come up with a science of the study of meaning; poststructuralists saw it as a misguided effort. Despite the critiques of humanism by structuralists, poststructuralists felt that there was a residual humanism in their thinking in view of the fact that they sought to posit a timeless human essence. Unlike the structuralists, poststructuralists placed great emphasis on the idea of historicity. Poststructuralists forcefully argued that questions of identity, signification, consciousness, and selfhood have to be understood in terms of the historical movements of society. In addition, some dominant theorists of poststructuralism, although not all, sought to call attention to the politics of culture and the political production of meaning. Furthermore, although both structuralists and poststructuralists recognized the centrality of language in the construction of meaning, the former believed in determinate and specific meanings while the latter thought that it was a mere illusion. In other words, poststructuralists placed far greater emphasis on the crucial role of the signifiers (symbols and language) as being intrinsic to the communicative act.

Representative Theorists

There are many important theorists of poststructuralism. Four of them will be considered in this entry. Jacques Derrida, the French philosopher, represents one important branch of poststructuralism. He is the originator of the strategy of inquiry referred to as deconstruction. From a communication viewpoint, what is significant about deconstruction is that it maintains that there is no direct relationship between the signifier and the signified and that linguistic meaning is based on the idea of difference. Derrida took these notions of Saussure to their logical conclusion. Derrida also underlined the fact that there are no unified beings or stable selves in communication with determinate consciousnesses in communication and that beings and selves are

unstable and multiple and incessantly evolving. These ideas serve to challenge in a fundamental way the mainstream modes of Western understandings of communication.

The French psychoanalyst Lacan is another very important and influential theorist of poststructuralism. He was deeply influenced by linguistics and anthropology. He asserted that the unconscious bears a resemblance to language and has to be understood in linguistic terms. We begin to form an awareness of ourselves through language. His notion of human subjectivity is inextricably linked to the functioning of human language. According to him, it is language that makes human subjects possible. He sought to re-interpret some of Freud's ideas in terms of language. From a communication viewpoint, ideas of Lacan related to subjectivity, language, desire, and identity are extremely important.

Foucault is another significant thinker associated with poststructuralism. Greatly influenced by the thinking of Nietzsche, Foucault challenged the then-ruling notions of history, knowledge, power, and subjecthood. His focus was not on global thinking, but on local practices and their meanings. For him transgression was not a term of disparagement, but of approbation. He paid close attention to the interconnections of knowledge and power and unmasked the idea of innocent knowledge. He went on to show how in modern societies knowledge has come to be seen as a way of subjugating and defining others. He took great pains to show how we live in disciplinary societies in which we are being constantly observed and controlled. Foucault, through his writings, focused on contexts of meaning and power that are vital to a proper understanding of communicative events.

Roland Barthes's writings are also important in understanding the evolution of poststructuralism. He started out as a structuralist and later became identified with the concerns and impulses of poststructuralism. For example, in his book *Mythologies*, which is devoted to analyses of cultural events and artifacts such as wrestling and advertisements for cars and detergents, he uncovers the subtle ways in which cultural meanings are produced. These analyses are basically ideological readings of cultural objects and activities. Barthes is keen to demonstrate the power of conventions, social formations, and historical conjunctures that inform cultural practices. From a communications standpoint,

these have great implications and consequences for the understanding of human communication. Giving up his earlier penchant for scientific ideals, systematizations, and classifications, he, like many other poststructuralists, was drawn to the importance of the human body, desire, subjective experience, dismantling of binary distinctions, and classifications.

Impact of Poststructuralism on Communication

Poststructuralism has had the effect of forcing us to rethink the axioms, presuppositions of communication in a fundamental way. Poststructuralists challenge the basic assumptions that have guided the study of communication; they have shocked us into a newer awareness of the problems and dilemmas of communication and pulled us out of the easy complacencies in which we have been ensconced. In a word, poststructuralism has had the effect of questioning what is often taken for granted in communication, turning it into a problem for investigation. Western communication theory rests on the notion of a solitary and self-contained communicative subject who is in control of his or her actions; this notion has suffered a severe blow at the hands of poststructuralists.

Western communication theory, from its inception, has privileged understanding over misunderstanding, order over chaos, clarity over confusion, unitariness over diversity, linearity over circularity. Poststructuralism has overturned these long-held beliefs and presuppositions. An act of communication involves a communicator, a message, medium, a receiver, and context of interaction. These were regarded as unproblematic and free of ambiguities. Poststructuralist thinkers have demonstrated that each of these constituent elements of communication is full of ambiguities and contradictions. The communicator, far from being self-present and self-contained, is self-divided. The message can be full of tensions and ambivalences of meaning. The medium is not transparent and is not a mere conduit, but one that imposes its own meanings. The receivers are not passive absorbers of meaning, but are active cocreators of meanings. The contexts of interactions, with their politics of meanings and contradictory pulls, have a direct bearing on communicative acts.

One useful way of understanding the important new modes of thinking ushered in by poststructuralism is to examine the evolution of communication models. For purposes of analytical convenience, we can identify three important phases. In the first phase, we have models such as those proposed by Harold Lasswell, Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, and David Berlo. In these models, we see an inclination to conceptualize communication as a linear, one-way process rather than see it as a circular and two-way process over time. There is a heavy emphasis on the role of the communicator in the act of communication as opposed to the complex interactions between the communicator and the receiver. One also observes that the attention paid to the context of communication that, in point of fact, supplies the meaning to the communicative event is inadequate. The emphasis on the communicator's manipulation and persuasion of the receiver at the expense of a sense of mutuality and reciprocity in the generation of meaning is evident. Another deficiency is the tendency to perceive individuals as atomistic as opposed to being vital and integral parts of the social structure. There is also a propensity to regard communication in mechanistic as opposed to organic terms. Clearly, these are obvious deficiencies and shortcomings discernible in communication models associated with the first phase.

In the second phase, we have the Wilbur Schramm, George Gerbner, Matilda White Riley, and John W. Riley, Jr. models of communication. These represent an advance over the models of the first phase. The linear, one-way, decontextualized models have now given way to circular, two-way, contextualized models. Still, both these sets of models operate within the same epistemological foundations as did their predecessors. The attempt at communication model-building characteristic of the third phase is reflective of a felt desire to further refine and fine-tune the existing models and the conceptualizations that inform them. Fields of inquiry such as cybernetics, systems theory, semiotics, and structuralism began to influence the thinking of communication model builders linked to the third phase. It is indeed difficult to pinpoint one single model as representing the essence of the third phase of development; the continuing efforts of scholars such as Klaus Krippendorff, Larry Kincaid, Brenda Dervin, Ruth Ann Clark, and Jesse Delia,

to mention but a few names, point toward the rise of a newer set of models. One way of characterizing these efforts is to underline the fact that they all regard communication as forms of meaning-generating interactions within specific social and cultural contexts through shared meanings.

It is against this background of thinking that one has to understand the significance of the newer thinking brought in by poststructuralism. The three sets of communication models described above represent the way communication thinking has evolved over the past 6 decades or so. Interesting to note is that while at each phase there has been an advance over the preceding phase, basically, these models operate on a common pool of assumptions—communication is orderly, unambiguous, chaos-free, determinate, and so on. What poststructuralism has done is to challenge these assumptions in a fundamental way and to provoke communication scholars and theorists into newer modes of thinking and imagination. Poststructuralists have made the point that communication is as much about communication as miscommunication

From the very beginning of Western communication theory, communication was seen as a form of transportation of meaning from a communicator to a receiver. What poststructuralists have done is to replace the transportation-like idea of communication with a constructional one in which the communicator and receiver cocreate meanings in a joint and collaborative effort. This cocreation of meaning also involves the cocreation of nonmeaning and ambiguities. Poststructuralism, then, has served to introduce an element of a welcome skepticism into the thinking of communication scholars, challenging the taken-for-granted assumptions of communication theorists and jolting them out of their self-certainties and complacencies.

Wimal Dissanayake

See also Archeology and Genealogy; Constructivism; Cybernetics; Deconstruction; Information Theory; Postmodern Theory; Process of Communication; Semiotics and Semiology

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POWER, INTERPERSONAL

Over the last several decades, scholars in interpersonal communication have debated how to define what power is and how to distinguish it from related constructs such as dominance, authority, status, and domineeringness. These constructs have been defined in numerous (and often synonymous) ways by a variety of theorists and researchers, but scholars from diverse fields are converging on the definition of power generally as the capacity to produce intended effects and in particular, the ability to influence the behavior of another person, but does not refer to the behavior itself.

There is a large body of research in the area of interpersonal power, but scholars typically focus on six important issues when examining the definition of interpersonal power. First, power is the ability to achieve desired goals or outcomes, although power is not always exercised and may not result in any actual change if a force is pitted against a force of equal strength. Second, power is a system property rather than the personal attribute of an individual in that power and is often the result of social or psychological mechanisms that do not necessarily surface in overt behavior, but may be manifest in systematic differences between people due to culturally relevant expectancies. For example, men are often seen as more powerful than women even though there may be resources a woman can use to increase her power in a particular context. Third, power is dynamic rather than static and therefore involves reciprocal causation. In order to be powerful, another must be powerless, but that status can change over time or even within a particular interaction. Fourth, power is both a perceptual and behavioral phenomenon because power is based in both structural status differences as well as personality traits. Thus, one must perceive that he or she is powerful and must also be willing to act accordingly. Fifth, power is

always asymmetrical, although the power of one individual in his or her sphere may be compensated by another individual's power in an alternate sphere, so power may be characterized as equalitarian across spheres. Sixth, power is multidimensional in nature, including sociostructural, interactional, and outcome components. Although cultural values may have an a priori determination of power, the interaction itself can change the power dynamic of communicators and also determine the subsequent behavior. Clearly, power is a complex variable that cannot be easily captured by researchers.

The multidimensional nature of power is reflected in the classification of power into three domains: power bases, power processes, and power outcomes. Power bases are resources such as rewards or knowledge possessed by individuals that form the basis for control over others. In a now-classic article by John French and Bertram Raven in 1959, they identified five power bases that have subsequently been used extensively in the interpersonal communication literature. These include reward power and coercive power, which represent, respectively, a person's right to reward and punish; legitimate power, which is power that comes from holding a high status position that is sanctioned by society; referent power, which is the power that results when others admire and emulate a person; and expert power, which is derived from having expertise in a needed field. Other scholars have since added additional power bases such as informational power, which stems from the ability to persuade another, and credibility. The second domain, power processes, refers to the strategies used to exert power in interactions such as decision making, problem solving, and conflict management. The third domain, power outcomes, refers to the resultant influence on others' thoughts, beliefs, and actions and includes the results of decision making in terms of who makes the decision or who wins.

Theories About Interpersonal Power

There have been a number of researchers as well as social-psychological and communication theorists who have attempted to explain the dynamics of power in interpersonal relationships. However, since the approaches to power have been multidisciplinary

and are based on assumptions that come from very different perspectives, the theories of power often bear little resemblance to one another.

One of the most widely studied perspectives of social power includes social exchange theories. These theorists rely on the assumption that individuals will act to maximize their interpersonal rewards and minimize their interpersonal costs. Different exchange theories all share a common set of concepts such as reward, cost, resources, alternatives, value, opportunity, and transactions. In general, however, if it is perceived that rewards exceed costs, the relationship is relatively satisfying, but if costs outweigh rewards, the relationship is perceived as comparatively dissatisfying. Thus, A has power over B and can influence B's behavior to the extent that A can determine the rewards and costs B experiences. A pivotal concept of this theoretical approach is dependence—the extent to which one's outcomes are contingent on exchange with another. Dependence is a function of both value and alternatives inasmuch as people are more dependent on those whose exchange relationships they value highly, especially when alternatives are few. Power, then, is achieved when a person is valued as an exchange partner and there are few alternatives.

According to a contemporary social exchange theorist, Linda Molm, there are three important implications of the social exchange view of power. First, they view power as an attribute of a relationship, not a person. Thus, person A may have power over B, but not over C. In a particular dyad, one should view a person's power as relative to another and not as a static characteristic. Second, power is a potential inherent in the structure of mutual dependencies created by discrepancies in the resources that the partners control. This emphasizes the distinction made earlier between the potential for power and the behavioral process of exerting dominance. Third, power is nonzero-sum, meaning that one person's power does not necessarily detract from that of another. In social exchange theory, for example, each actor's power is determined by the other's dependence and so an increase in one actor's power does not imply a decrease in the other's power. Both partners may be equally powerful or powerless, depending on the circumstance.

Other theories that are related to social exchange theory examine interpersonal power as well. Caryl

Rusbult's interdependence theory examines the process by which interacting persons influence one another's experiences—the effects individuals exert on other persons' motives, preferences, behavior, and outcomes. Robert Blood and Donald Wolfe's normative resource theory of marital interaction argues that power in marriage is manifested in the ability to make decisions regarding the life of the family and is dictated by two main factors: the societal and cultural norms that influence the relationship (especially patriarchal norms) and the comparative resources possessed by either partner in the marriage. Finally, Norah Dunbar's dyadic power theory argues that the expression of power through the use of attempts to control the interaction is a function of the perceived power between the interactants. Those who perceive themselves to be relatively equal to their interaction partner will express themselves more and withhold grievances less than those with large power discrepancies.

A discussion of theoretical perspectives of interpersonal power would not be complete without a brief discussion of sex roles because societal norms for the sexes often translate into distinct power differences for men and women in various realms of social life. Sex roles are the learned behaviors differentially displayed by the sexes that are shaped by common social assumptions and expectations. Current iterations of sex role theories such as Sandra Bem's gender schema theory assume that there are socially normative roles for men and women that are rooted in socialization and internalized by individuals. Men are expected to be more self-assertive and motivated while women are believed to be more selfless and concerned with others. Sex role identity translates into structural power differences between men and women in society. Interpersonal relationships do not occur in a vacuum, but are influenced by the norms of the culture in which they live. This creates a gendered hierarchy in close relationships that is difficult to change because it is learned through socialization and embedded in the continued interactions of a couple.

Norah E. Dunbar

See also Dyadic Power Theory; Gender Schema Theory; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Relational Control Theory; Social Exchange Theory; Social Penetration Theory

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POWER AND POWER RELATIONS

The concept of power generally refers to societal arrangements of privilege and the ability to prevail or set conditions for prevailing in organized and institutionalized contexts. It also refers to the domination of economic and cultural resources and the ability to deploy them. Power is also linked to interactions and relations in seemingly informal interactions, as power relations, where advantage orients involvement in contemporaneous or historically situated interactions. Critical perspectives often extend the notion of relation deeper, beyond the relative moment into the history or evolution of society. Critical theories of power echo Karl Marx's idea of relation, which directs attention to the productive demands of

capitalism that pervade the social sphere. Through inherited allocations of resources and the persistence of dominant cultural practices, the material of history defines contexts and forms of social relations before particular actors arrive on the historical stage. Philip Wexler placed social researchers in the same situation, showing that research reflects capitalist thinking when using marketplace variations of cost–benefit ratios to explain even most intimate spheres of life.

Whether addressed through wide sweeps of history or relatively contemporaneous contexts, critical perspectives approach power and power relations as fruits of historical processes that shape the character of, resources for, and analyses of social relations. Social actors, including researchers, experience power less through consent than through normalized relations that reproduce power. Power relations normalize prevailing distributions of power and resources for power. Whether interactions are communicative is an issue for critical theories, which regard the history of domination, manipulation, and control to have infused social interactions and research about them.

Migrations of Power Concepts to Communication Studies

Critical perspectives on power and power relations migrated from the philosophy of history and political economy into the social and cultural sciences during the 20th century. In the 1960s, communication studies thematized power and power relations by linking symbolic action to social order in the work of Hugh Duncan. In the same decade, Herbert Schiller connected capitalist consolidations of mass communication industries to the growth of American empire. The 1970s saw the rise of cultural studies along American and British lines. American cultural studies associated with the work of James W. Carey urged replacing the effects research tradition in mass communication with conceptions of ritual while recognizing power to have been a missing dimension in this alternative. British cultural studies associated with the work of Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall brought Marxist analyses to cultural formations with concepts of hegemony and ideology, indebted respectively to Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci. British cultural studies echoed earlier work from the

German Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, which since the 1930s had been connecting social theory to the history of domination. The Nazi-induced emigration of critical theorists Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Leo Lowenthal, and Herbert Marcuse brought analyses that unpacked popular culture as forms of politics. By the 1980s, critical theory provided reformulations of influential power theorists and philosophers, through Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action. Meanwhile, the work of Michel Foucault linked power to knowledge as another set of arguments pressing on the field's neglect of culture and history as sites of power struggles.

By the early 1990s, Hanno Hardt assessed these developments as an emerging critical communication studies. In the same decade, research by Christopher Simpson described communication studies as a government-funded science of coercion during World War II, later sanitized through forms of administrative research, primarily as the dominant paradigm of effects research. Its concepts, models, and practices moved the strategic thinking of psychological warfare from international to domestic campaigns between 1945 and 1960, producing a substantial academic literature concerned with message flows, the diffusion of opinions, reference groups, and mechanisms of motivation as the contours of communication research. By the end of the 1990s, the history of critical communication studies joined the history of society as communication came to mean the inevitability of studying power and power relations, whether or not the term power was mentioned. Although calls for critically reflective and contextualized analyses of power applied to the field itself appeared, the effects tradition continued to dominate.

Key Sources and Themes for Relating Communication to Power

Critical communication studies derives theories of power and power relations from key philosophers and social theorists claimed by multiple fields. When action is (co)oriented toward success, power relations encourage interaction away from questions about the goals to which actors have become instrumentally oriented. An underlying goal orientation instead encourages the efficient attainment of results. Change is constrained to the better

engineering of instrumental actions for the successful accumulation and uses of power. Theory is strategic theory.

To bring power and power relations into view for the idea of communication, Habermas distinguishes two types of action. Purposive-rational action encompasses a range from instrumental to strategic actions, oriented toward success in practice and efficacy in theory. The second type, communicative action, refers to reflective-critical discourses where challenges to the truth, appropriateness, and veracity, unless suppressed, can occur in practice with consequence. Communicative actions invite reconsiderations of arrangements of power, while strategic-instrumental actions suppress or ignore reevaluation. Power relations instrumentalize interaction and actor. When interactions (re)normalize power relations, they foreclose considerations of appropriateness and the nature of general and particular interactions. Interactions take on anonymous and abstract qualities as they deploy power resources that interactants do not themselves possess and in directions they do not decide. Hannah Arendt described 20th-century forms of abstract power as an unending accumulation process to explain the double-edged dynamics of imperialism. As does capital accumulation, the accumulation of power resources has a historical life of its own, beyond the reach of particular actors. The connection of power to communicative interactions is similarly abstract.

Purposive dimensions of social action drive social structures sufficiently to become principles of structuration, theorized by Anthony Giddens. Such a view is related to Marx's production principle, which subordinates social action to the powers of technical expansion over nature and human nature. Max Weber endowed purposive action with intersubjective reason as the power to orient action. In a line from Weber to Giddens, power relations typify human action in modernity as the purposive expansion of resources that characterize coordinated action. In Habermasian terms, strategic action requires communicative actions when the truth of affairs demands discourses of revision. Power relations remobilize power resources at this intersection of communicative and strategic action. The importance of intersubjective actors surfaces during assessments of truth. Separating these assessments from evaluations of appropriateness,

however, draws lines of distinction between purposive and communicative action. Arendt saw the distinction as a line crossed in history for the will to power and totalitarianism. Foucault saw power as established regimes whose histories must be unearthed, as archaeologies of knowledge or as genealogies of concrete social practices.

These accounts provide ways to consider the social as productive activity and its consequences, including when concepts invest actors with the ability to redirect social actions in which they are involved. Intersubjective versions of power relations fall to inheritors of privilege and position, who can marshal resources and decide who will participate in (re)defining goals in the full range of contexts. Weber's concept of purposive rationality encouraged a focus on competitive relations in theory and instrumentalized relations in practice. Instrumental actions are nonsocial forms of action that strategic action aims to extend, through assessments about chances for success in practice. Habermas suggested that the better argument is as important as sheer force or criteria for successful instrumentalization. His suggestion for a distinction between strategic-instrumental actions and communicative actions led to cautions against dismissing the discursive potentials of interaction in favor of power relations. Moreover, power relations depend on discursive interaction because they rely on arguments and winning contests of force and will.

Democratizing Power Relations

Once arguments become the stuff of power relations, actors and their interactions are concerned with more than considerations of truth or factuality. They incorporate reciprocal expectations, at least for the comprehension necessary for coordinated instrumental actions. An unmet demand for recognition at this juncture can be overridden by force instead of the force of the better argument, but at power's peril. This much of the theory of communicative action establishes the importance of legitimate power and of legitimacy within power relations.

To have or to enact power and authority requires that instrumentalized actors regard relationships of power as appropriate and just. Failure to secure legitimacy is a failure of power that calls for redefined and rearranged forms of interaction. Rational

rearrangements on paradigms of communicative interaction redefine power, as the force of the freely accepted, not merely already normalized, better argument.

Research is part of the cultural capital of society. Similar to economic class, which fixes differences of access to economic capital, cultural capital fashions unequal distributions of knowledge and opportunities to propose alternative explanations and understandings of society. Because cultural capital is evident as systems of expertise and reliance upon them, its power is the power to interpret for others. As this power sets limits for day-to-day interpretive practices, critical communication studies aims to democratize opportunities for meaning making in society.

Power intervenes in this critical-democratic project with ideology for social relations. It aims to instrumentalize communicative interactions to preserve conventional power relations. As the ever-present legitimation of unequal social relations, ideology represents society and its meanings as though they were neutral, apolitical, natural, and inevitable—beyond reformulation. Meanwhile, interactive engagements that struggle to redefine, reconstruct, and redistribute meanings work beneath the hard surface of ideology.

That hard surface is hegemony. Critical communication studies describes hegemony as the paradoxical concealment of meaning. In addition to concealing the workings of ideological meaning, hegemonic practices produce unintended undergrounds of expression and meaning. Gramsci demonstrated that, while ideological meanings are resistant and suppressive, the contestability of meaning is never fully contained. Because communication theory and research studies meaning, ideology and hegemony are involved. This links communication theory and research to analyses of power and power relations, a link difficult to see when research itself is ideological. To articulate ideological and hegemonic practices is for critical scholars a democratizing project on the field of meaning.

Conclusion

Considered vertically, power and power relations are phenomena of societal evolution, the history of society, and the embeddedness of organizational

and institutional cultures. Their persistence calls for analyses of communication as ideologies of power. Considered horizontally, power is a contemporaneous set of relations that enacts conformities and conceals struggles over meaning. This persistent hiddenness calls for analyses of communication as hegemonic interactions. The study of power and power relations entails diagnoses of distances between the theory and practice of democratic participation and of opportunities to reshape and redefine meaning and the direction of culture and society. Theoretical differences about historical depth, contemporary reach, and degrees of democratic articulation nonetheless place ideology and hegemony at the center of power and power relations. Critical communication studies addresses these issues in the interest of equalizing cultural capital or its restraint. This interest asks whether and how far communication and its study act to reproduce or to challenge enactments of power and power relations.

Ed McLuskie

See also Archeology and Genealogy; Critical Theory; Cultural Studies; Frankfurt School; Ideology; Marxist Theory; Structuration Theory

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PRACTICAL THEORY

The linguistic and discursive turn in the social sciences has focused attention on the importance of practice when studying human systems. The term *practice* is a broad term that has been used in a variety of ways. Practice has been used to refer to the situated flow of messages within the stream of conversational activity. Practice has also been used to refer to specific kinds of communicative activity that people carry out in groups, organizations, and societies as well as the specific sites for their performance. The former is represented by studies of practice that look into how activities such as management, therapy, and mediation are brought off in interaction, and the latter focuses on institutional scenes such as homeless shelters, planning meetings, and academic colloquia where the key question becomes how people manage various interactional challenges within particular kinds of settings.

The practice turn in the social sciences, therefore, has turned our attention to the way social actors construct their communicative conduct and the kinds of cultural resources they draw on as they act. A microfocus on practice centers attention on the specific moves that people make during conversation and what they accomplish and create.

A number of theoretical and methodological approaches such as conversational analysis, action implicative discourse analysis, and ethnomethodology focus on the way that individuals structure their practice within situated conversations. A macrofocus on practice concentrates on articulating the larger sociocultural resources actors draw on that inform their patterns of conduct. Michel Foucault's notions of archeology and genealogy to articulate discursive formations—the assumptions and premises that inform an ideology or worldview—as well as Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis highlight the importance of identifying those sociocultural resources that transcend situations and are variously available to social actors. A growing number of approaches such as Anthony Giddens' focus on constitutive approaches to communication as well as discursive psychology have attempted to connect micro- and macrofocuses on practice.

The practice turn in the social sciences has also necessitated a different form for theorizing communication. The communication discipline has long had a commitment to the practical, and the long-standing assumption has been that communication theory and research should facilitate the creation of better social and professional lives for individuals and communities. Grounded in Kurt Lewin's recognition that good theories are inherently practical, communication scholars have long recognized the important connection between theory and practice. Inspired by the work of Robert T. Craig and Vernon E. Cronen, the term *practical theory* began to emerge in the mid-1990s to refer to a particular form of theorizing within communication studies.

Approaches to Practical Theory

Practical theory is intended to address the problems, dilemmas, and challenges that social actors face in their everyday life and to generate new possibilities for action. J. Kevin Barge has argued that approaches to practical theory manage the theory-practice relationship in different ways. This led him to suggest that there are three ways that the term practical theory has been used within the communication discipline: (a) mapping, (b) engaged reflection, and (c) transformative practice.

Practical Theory as Mapping

In the Lewinian sense, a good theory is a practical theory as it should lead to insights about how to live out the ideas expressed in theoretical discourses in ways that help enrich the lived experiences of people. Practical in this sense means that any approach to theorizing—causal, interpretive, or critical—can be judged by its ability to translate its theoretical concepts and ideas into modes of communicative conduct that make a meaningful difference in people's lives and social practices. Viewing practical theory as mapping draws our attention to the way traditional theoretical resources are used to create a high-quality map of problems, techniques, and consequences for subsequent intervention. A high-quality description of a phenomenon includes articulating (a) the problems, challenges, and concerns that constitute a practice; (b) the moves, techniques, and strategies that can address these problems; and (c) the consequences of performing particular communication strategies. Barge and Robert T. Craig suggest that practical theory as mapping may adopt either a scientific or interpretive and critical approach.

A scientific approach to mapping makes three key assumptions. First, theory building is treated as a distinct activity from practice and is intended to create generalizable explanations of human behavior. Typically, a problem area is defined, a relevant causal theory is selected that addresses the problem, and a study is conducted to assess whether theoretical propositions are true. Using evidence-based practice as an example, once the truth of theoretical knowledge has been determined, concrete practices based on this knowledge can then be constructed. Second, theory building is treated as a more important activity than practical applications. Both the scholarship of translation and evidence-based practice place theory ahead of practice as they assume that once we have validated a theory and sufficiently tested its propositions, practices subsequently can be developed. For example, in leadership communication studies, once we have determined when particular styles of leadership behavior are appropriate and effective, we can then create prescriptions for best leadership practice. Third, good theory corresponds to the objective reality that comprises the material world. The primary way we judge a theory is by its

correspondence with the objective world, not whether it makes a practical difference in people's lives.

Interpretive and critical approaches to mapping focus directly on describing the practices of individuals, groups, and other social organizations. A variety of interpretive and critical theories, including dialectical theory, sense-making theory, and narrative theory, provide useful resources in the form of concepts and ideas for describing the challenges people face as they engage others. Theories become reflexive resources that practical theorists can use to describe and critique a practice. Similar to scientific approaches, theorizing a practice is distinct from intervention. From this perspective, a theory is judged by its heuristic value: Does it yield or generate new insights regarding key ideas and concepts that belong to the theory?

Practical Theory as Engaged Reflection

Practical theory as engaged reflection highlights the importance of theorists keeping reflexivity alive between theory and practice so that each informs the other. Systematic reflection on theory, practice, and their interrelationship allows theorists to ground their theory in the way social actors frame and manage interactional problems; it also allows them to use theory as a productive resource that can inform subsequent social practices as these practices become incorporated into the discourses of members within a tradition or community of practice. From this perspective, a practical theory is a normative reconstruction of a practice. Two exemplars of practical theory as engaged reflection have emerged over the last decade: (a) Craig's grounded practical theory and (b) Mark Aakhus and Sally Jackson's notion of design theory.

Craig argues that grounded practical theory is a normative reconstruction of practice. We can examine a particular form of communicative conduct or institutional scene and through empirical methods create a grounded description of practice. According to Craig, such a normative reconstruction must occur at three levels: (a) Problem level: What difficulties, dilemmas, or predicaments do people experience? (b) Technical level: What communication strategies do people employ to manage these problems? (c) Philosophical level: What reasoned principles or situated ideals inform the

practice that guide how people make sense of acts from within the practice? For example, a number of studies have explored September 11th calls, academic colloquia, and school board meetings using grounded practical theory with the aim of linking problems, techniques, and reasoned principles into a normative reconstruction of practice.

Aakhus and Jackson have recently used design theory to articulate how practices can be (re)designed in order to address interactional problems. Design theory begins with the premise that our communication is a designed activity where hypotheses about what works are implicitly or explicitly embedded within the structures of our communication. The task is to identify the situated ideals of a practice so people can (re)design a better practice and bring it closer to the articulated situated ideals. The key difference between grounded practical theory and design theory is that design theoretic approaches are intended to create interventions into communicative practices and change them.

Practical Theory as Transformative Practice

This approach to practical theory is best represented by the work of Vernon E. Cronen and his associates. According to Cronen, a practical theory helps us explore unique patterns of interaction within various situations in which communicators cocreate forms that make new courses of action possible and constrain others, both in task-oriented and experiential dimensions of human life. Grounded in pragmatic and systemic theory, Cronen argues that the concepts, ideas, principles, and models that comprise a theory are tools that theorists can use to inquire into communication phenomena. For example, the theory that Cronen is closely tied to, coordinated management of meaning theory, has a number of tools that provide the practical theorist with ways to describe the unique situated practices engaged in by members of a human system.

Practical theory as transformative practice emphasizes the need to engage and address the interests of research participants. Transformative practice emphasizes the scholarship of engagement whereby theorists and researchers work closely with their co-researchers and recognize that their activity has the possibility for generating new

meanings and possible actions for these people. Transformative practice emphasizes the importance of recognizing the role of the theorist to intervene and change social settings as well as foster learning through their activity. This suggests a heavy reliance on action research methods as well as participatory or collaborative research models. Although practical theory as transformative practice has a strong focus on enabling action and meaning making about people, it also recognizes the importance of keeping in close contact with those in the scholarly community. A failure to keep in contact with the people one is working with makes it unlikely to create useful and actionable knowledge, but at the same time a failure to keep connected with the scholarly conversation limits one's ability to connect with the important questions and issues of the scholarly community.

From this perspective, a practical theory is judged by the pragmatic utility of its concepts, models, and principles to foster change within human systems. The way practical theory grows is by developing new concepts, models, and principles to foster change within human systems or to elaborate their use. By using coordinated management of meaning theory as an example, over time new ideas and models have been added to the original set of conceptual tools. Furthermore, the use of existing concepts has been expanded from understanding interpersonal communication to working with public participation processes and dialogue within community settings.

Choices in Practical Theorizing

Practical theory as mapping, engaged reflection, and transformative practice represent three different approaches toward managing the relationship between theory and practice. They should be viewed as ideal types of practical theory and do not reflect the kind of blurring among different types of practical theory that one can encounter when theorizing a practice and conducting a research project. Barge and Craig suggest that practical theorists need to make certain choices when theorizing practice and conducting research:

- Theory and/or practice: Different research projects have various aims as some are more directly aimed at building theory, while others

are more directly aimed at building practice. Practical theorists need to make choices about the focus of a particular study and be thoughtful about how this particular project may be built upon in the future.

- Engaged and/or complicit: Is the aim of the present study to challenge existing understandings of the phenomena within a human system, therefore, laying the ground for intervention, or is its emphasis to describe the practice? Although all forms of research have the possibility for creating change, the question is whether the practical theorist intentionally adopts a position of engagement designed to foster change or a complicit position where change is not purposively sought and a description of practice emphasized.
- Local and/or distal consequences: Is the study intended to produce immediate benefits for the individuals involved or is it designed to impact them at a later time when its key findings are translated into usable knowledge for practitioners?

Doing practical theory is rarely as neat as locating oneself within one of three approaches. Rather, it involves practical theorists making situated judgments about what kind of impact they wish to make to theory and practice and when.

J. Kevin Barge

See also Archeology and Genealogy; Coordinated Management of Meaning; Critical Discourse Analysis; Metatheory; Pragmatics; Structuration Theory; Theory

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PRAGMA-DIALECTICS

See Argumentation Theories

PRAGMATICS

Pragmatics is a topic that intersects many social science fields including linguistics, anthropology, psychology, sociology, and communication. This entry defines pragmatics and outlines approaches to its study, including some key contributors to pragmatic theories and concepts. The most basic definition of pragmatics is the study of signs as

used in actual situations. The root of the word derives from *prassein*, Greek for “to do,” indicating the association of pragmatics with practice or action. In semiotics, the term was first used by Charles Morris in 1937 to distinguish sign behavior from structure (syntactics) and meaning (semantics). The less specialized definition of pragmatics (as something that is practical, concrete, or realistic) contributed to philosophical pragmatism in the late 1800s, which similarly concerns itself with usefulness and practical consequences, but not necessarily with a semiotic or linguistic focus. The semiotic concept of pragmatics (the use of signs) has influenced distinct research traditions in relational communication and discourse studies.

Pragmatics of Communication

An important theory of interpersonal communication developed out of cybernetics and systems theory. In 1951, Jurgen Ruesch and Gregory Bateson introduced the concept of metacommunication (communication about communication) and pointed out that all communicative messages have a pragmatic, metacommunicative aspect—that is, every message is both a report that comments on previous messages in a sequence and also a command that indicates the communicative response expected. Every message functions pragmatically as a metamessage that defines the relationship between the communicating parties and manages their interaction. For example, a female student passing one of her professors in the hallway makes eye contact, smiles, and says, “Hi, Dr. Jones.” Her message functions pragmatically to produce a patterned sequence of interaction (eye contact; friendly, but formal greeting; return greeting) and thereby also both reflects the status of her relationship with the professor (report) and signals her expectation that it will continue as such (command). Thus, as the student and professor communicate, they also implicitly metacommunicate about the system of interaction that constitutes their relationship.

Paul Watzlawick and a network of family therapists that became known in the 1960s as the Palo Alto Group extended this theory in numerous writings, especially *Pragmatics of Human Communication* in 1967, which opened with a

discussion of Charles Morris's semiotic concept of pragmatics and went on to present a series of axioms explaining how interpersonal relationships form self-maintaining cybernetic systems that can be both highly dysfunctional and difficult to change. L. Edna Rogers and other communication scholars have further extended this theory in research on control patterns in interpersonal relationships, and the underlying concept of interaction pragmatics has been widely influential in communication studies.

Discourse Pragmatics

Discourse pragmatics, the study of language in use, is concerned with the intended meaning of speakers beyond what is explicitly stated. Around the time of Morris's definition of pragmatics, six functions of language were defined by Roman Jakobson: referential (refers to a phenomenon), expressive (describes feelings), conative (attempts to elicit behavior), phatic (builds relationships between speakers), metalingual (references self), and poetic (attends to text). Ludwig Wittgenstein further emphasized the contextual and pragmatic dependence of linguistic meaning in his work *Philosophical Investigations*.

Some key topics in pragmatics are deixis or indexical expressions, presupposition, implicature, speech acts, politeness, discourse markers, and metapragmatics. Deixis, literally "to point," demonstrates language's ability to refer to content outside of a particular sentence or utterance. Spatial deixis, for example, might include gesture indicating a particular location; temporal deixis might include words such as tomorrow (requiring one to know the date in order to fix the time indicated); social deixis includes honorifics such as sir; person deixis includes pronouns that require the knowledge of who, for example, *she* is; and discourse deixis refers to part of a written or spoken text, such as "see section four," or "that was a stupid thing to say." Presupposition, similarly, is attached to specific linguistic components of an utterance, called triggers. Presuppositions are background knowledge triggered by a particular word or portion of a sentence. For example, in the sentence "George likes chocolate too," the presupposition that some other relevant person to which George is being compared likes chocolate is triggered by the word *too*.

Implicature, Relevance, Speech Acts, and Politeness

Related to presupposition is the notion of conversational implicature, developed by H. P. Grice to accommodate statements that suggest each other. Unlike presuppositions, implicatures do not have linguistic triggers. Implicatures are also unlike entailment in which statements that suggest each other are mutually required (e.g., if I have nine bananas, I also necessarily have six bananas). Implicatures, rather, are based on subtler distinctions that may or may not have anything to do with grammar. For example, the sentence "Paul ate the cake and threw up" strongly suggests that the cake was the cause of Paul's illness based on the ordering of the sentence, but Paul's illness could very well be incidental to having eaten the cake. It could also be the case that this is just a list of things Paul did in the last hour, but not necessarily in chronological order: perhaps Paul threw up, and ate some cake later on.

Grice developed maxims based on a principle of cooperation to explain why implicatures work—why one would be less likely to understand the previous example to mean that Paul threw up before eating the cake. These maxims include quality (speak truthfully, have evidence), quantity (be informative, be efficient), relation (be relevant), and manner (be clear, be straightforward, be brief, be orderly). Utterances that flout (apparently fail to cooperate with) the maxims produce implicatures. "Paul ate the cake and threw up" would violate the maxim of manner if it meant that Paul threw up first because it would be giving the events out of order. Similarly, lying flouts the maxim of quality, either saying too little or rambling on and on flouts the maxim of quantity, and giving unrelated information flouts the maxim of relation. If a person, when asked how yesterday's dinner party went, replies with nothing more than a frown and "Paul ate the cake and threw up," this obviously inadequate response to the question (flouting the maxims of quantity and relevance) suggests the implicature that dinner did not go well.

According to Grice, people generally cooperate with these maxims unless cooperation with one would too greatly interfere with another. Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson have extended this notion in relevance theory, which explains, for

example, why irony, which violates the maxim of quality, nonetheless conforms to the cooperative principle because it is maximally relevant to the situation. This theory is based on the assumption that people will want to communicate an optimal amount of new information that requires the least possible processing effort. In the example of asking how yesterday's dinner party went, both interlocutors will understand the meaning of "Paul ate the cake and threw up" by assuming that it expresses a relevant response to the question in the most efficient way possible.

Two related theories in pragmatics that are covered by other entries will be mentioned briefly. Speech act theory derives from the philosopher J. L. Austin's insight that talk is a form of action and that the meaning of an utterance depends on the type of act performed, such as an assertion of fact, a request, or a promise. The words, "I now pronounce you husband and wife," when uttered in appropriate circumstances, pragmatically produce a state of matrimony, just as the words, "The keys are in the car," when used in different circumstances, pragmatically commit the speaker to a belief that the keys are in the car. Indirect speech acts can rely on implicatures, as when "the keys are in the car" might be used as an indirect way of asking someone to drive.

Politeness theory begins with the observation that many speech acts can be pragmatically face threatening, meaning that they may impinge on someone's presumed desire for freedom of action (negative face) or appreciation by others (positive face). For example, the act of asking a favor can threaten both the negative face of the person being asked (by demanding something of them) and the positive face of the person asking (by showing their inability). Speakers use a variety of facework strategies to avoid possible threats to face, such as when asking a favor, expressing a reluctance to impose on the other person.

Discourse Markers and Metapragmatics

Pragmatics not only takes into consideration extralinguistic properties such as interaction and relationships, but also attends to components of utterances that would otherwise be considered meaningless, such as what are traditionally called fillers (um, like, you know, I mean, etc.). These

words, and other elements of an utterance that do not belong to its syntactic or semantic structure, are studied as discourse markers. A discourse marker can not only join elements of sentences to serve a connective function, but also commonly serve conversational functions. For example, in "the bike was so broken," the word *so* serves to communicate a relationship between parts of the utterance (emphasizing the brokenness); in "she was like, 12 or something," the word *like* communicates a relationship between the speaker and the message (uncertainty about someone's age); and in "it was hot, you know, tropical," the phrase *you know* communicates a relationship between the speaker and hearer (a mutual understanding that tropical hot is different from desert hot). Discourse markers often arise from adverbs and prepositions through a process of linguistic change called grammaticalization in which words with a particular grammatical or content-based function evolve over time to take on new functions. For example, "you know" has evolved from a primarily semantic sense referring to someone's knowledge to a primarily pragmatic sense communicating an interpersonal relationship when used as a discourse marker.

Metapragmatics studies the use of language in referring to the pragmatic function of an utterance. For example, "swearing makes some people feel uncomfortable" describes the emotional effect (discomfort) achieved by a communicative act (swearing) and constitutes an awareness of pragmatic functions. Metapragmatics can be studied with regard to a range of communicative functions or properties, including speech acts and politeness (discussed earlier), framing (representing something from a particular perspective), reported speech (restating something someone else has said), and language ideologies (normative beliefs about language and ways of communicating within a community, usually unquestioned). Any form of communication that refers to the use of communication in interaction is considered metapragmatic; related, but broader, terms include metalanguage, metadiscourse, and metacommunication (intersecting with the pragmatics of communication discussed earlier). Many commonplace idioms and expressions in contemporary English have a metapragmatic function, such as "silence is golden," "actions speak louder than words," and "time is money."

Rather than attending solely to the literal semantic content of language, academic traditions that are influenced by pragmatics focus on language as interaction, specifically in naturally occurring conversation. The communication field of language and social interaction deals specifically with social interaction as it relates to discourse. Methods that adopt a pragmatics-sensitive approach include discourse analysis and conversation analysis. Both pay attention to specific aspects of verbal and nonverbal language in everyday talk, the latter emphasizing the detailed orderliness of interaction, for example in the intricacies of conversational turn taking.

Robert T. Craig and Jessica S. Robles

See also Conversation Analysis; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Language and Communications; Metacommunication; Politeness Theory; Speech Act Theory

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scholars in communication and computer science. The origin of the term *presence* comes from Marvin Minsky who used the term *telepresence* to explain the possibility that humans could feel the sense of being physically transported to a remote work space via a teleoperating system. Since then, various terms (e.g., *virtual presence*, *mediated presence*) have been used to describe similar phenomena. Lombard defines presence as the perceptual illusion of being in a situation that is unmediated, and Lee defines it as a psychological state in which the virtuality of experience is unnoticed. According to Lee, presence occurs when technology users do not notice the technology-mediated nature of experiencing (e.g., telecommunication) and/or the artificiality of experienced objects such as computer agents or social robots.

The concept of presence is important because it is at the heart of all mediated and simulated experiences through which humans try to overcome their sensory channel limitations by using psychological (e.g., imagination), physical, and/or human-made technologies. For example, almost all ancient tribes had a convention of narrating fantasy tales of tribal history to the younger generation. Through imagination, each generation of listeners transported themselves to different times and spaces in which the events supposedly had occurred. Physical tools (written language, media, telephone, computer simulation, etc.) provide rich sensory props for imagination. Written narratives provide reliable and detailed descriptions of events. Film and television visualize imaginary worlds. Telecommunication devices simulate face-to-face communication by providing real-time interaction and delivering authentic (or at least, very realistic) voices of interactants. Sophisticated simulation technologies create a virtual world by accepting almost all human sensory inputs and providing multisensory feedback and output. In all the examples above, presence occurs when tools successfully create compelling experiences in a way that users do not notice the virtuality of experience.

PRESENCE THEORY

The concept of presence and its related theories have mainly been developed by Frank Biocca, Matthew Lombard, Kwan Min Lee, and other

Three Types of Presence

Based on three domains of human experience, presence can be further categorized into three types—physical, social, and self-presence. Physical

presence is defined as the psychological state in which the virtuality of physical experience is unnoticed. Physical experience becomes virtual either when the act of experiencing actual physical objects or environments is mediated by technology or when the experienced physical objects or environments are artificially created by technology. Physical presence occurs when technology users do not notice the mediated nature of experiencing actual physical objects-environments and/or the artificiality of experienced physical objects-environments.

Social presence is defined as the psychological state in which the virtuality of social experience is not noticed. Social presence occurs when technology users do not notice the mediated nature of experiencing other humans and/or the artificiality of experienced social actors.

Presence researchers have tended to focus on physical presence, but social presence is now gaining a tremendous interest not only from academia, but also from industry. There are four main reasons. First, the possibility that social presence can also be created through agents or through the machine itself—computers, e-toys such as Sony's Aibo, bots or robots, and the like—has tremendous theoretical and practical import. Theoretically, it suggests new lines of thinking about human interactions with media. Second, the growing trend of projecting oneself into mediated-virtual environments (via agents and avatars) and increasing communication between projected selves has called for a systematic study of how people make sense of virtually presented selves. Third, the recent growth of multi-user computer games and anecdotal evidence indicates that users strongly prefer to interact with others across a wide range of media products. In other words, users pursue social presence while interacting with new media. Finally, social presence also has been argued to facilitate persuasion and sales in e-commerce.

Self-presence—the last type of presence—is defined as a psychological state in which the virtuality of self-experience (awareness) is unnoticed. The experience of one's own self becomes virtual either when the act of experiencing one's actual self is mediated by technology or when the experienced self is artificially constructed by technology. A virtual self thus can be defined as either the para-authentic representation of a technology user or an

artificially constructed alter-self (or selves) existing inside a virtual environment. Users' self-identification with either the whole (e.g., avatars, remote robots in teleoperating systems) or the partial (e.g., projected hands in a shooting game) representation of themselves inside a virtual environment plays a key role in the feeling of the existence of a para-authentic virtual self. Self-presence occurs when technology users identify themselves with either para-authentic representations of self or with artificially constructed alter-selves inside virtual environments.

Why Presence Occurs

The possibility that both experienced and novice users of technology feel various types of presence—even with low-tech media such as books—calls for a fundamental question: What makes human minds not notice the virtuality of incoming stimuli?

One popular answer to this question is the willing suspension of disbelief argument. This argument proposes that the fundamental reason why feelings of presence occur is that people purposefully and consciously follow the intention of authors-producers and forget about the artificiality of mediated-staged communications (e.g., books, TV, movie, theater, software agents) in order to fully enjoy themselves. According to this argument, active and conscious mental efforts to suspend disbelief constitute the major prerequisite necessary for feelings of presence to occur. The validity of this argument has been seriously questioned by a series of empirical studies by Cliff Nass and his colleagues. In their studies, Nass and his colleagues consistently show that people automatically and naturally accept incoming virtual (mediated or simulated) stimuli as if they were real rather than willingly and consciously suspending disbelief about the validity of the stimuli.

A recent answer to the issue of the fundamental presence-enabling mechanism is that humans have a strong tendency to accept any incoming information as true, unless there is strong counterevidence. This natural preference for acceptance over rejection is a manifestation of the fundamental psychological tendency shaped through the course of human evolution since prompt reactions to incoming objects provide a greater survival advantage

than careful assessments of the validity of possible life-threatening physical objects and social entities such as rocks, predators, or enemies. According to Byron Reeves and Nass, our stone-age brains cannot effectively deal with media stimuli made by space-age technologies, and we have a tendency to accept them as if real unless there is a serious design problem.

Kwan Min Lee has applied recent findings in evolutionary psychology to the phenomenon of presence and proposes a cognitive hijacking model of presence. According to this model, human beings feel presence when evolutionary hardwired domain-specific mind modules cognitively hijack normal thinking processes. For example, when a robot talks to users, the users automatically respond to the robot as if it were a real human because the speech coming from the robot automatically stimulates users' language-processing module and because it cognitively hijacks a normal cognition about the ontological limitation of the robot (i.e., "this is only a machine"). As a result, a disbelief based on the ontological limitation of the robot is automatically suspended, at least temporarily, and the robot users feel varying degrees of social presence depending on the quality of the speech.

Causes of Presence

The above discussion provides a general explanation of the fundamental reason why humans feel presence while using media or simulation technologies. The discussion, however, does not fully explain what kinds of specific factors contribute the feeling of presence. There are three types of factors affecting presence—technology (objective quality of technology), user (individual differences), and social (social characteristics of technology) factors.

The technology factor is about the quality of stimulus that users perceive. The following technology variables have been empirically tested to affect feelings of presence: consistency of multimodal sensory information; equipment comfort and ease of navigation; fast response rates to user input; image resolution, color quality, clarity of image; image size or field of view; sound quality; isolation of real environment; meaningful media content; modifiability of environment in virtual environment; narrative quality; number of sensory dimensions and channels presented and engaged;

production techniques; scene update rates; and social realism of content.

In addition to technology factors, user factors such as demographics, experience, learning style, personality, and mood play an important role in determining feelings of presence. Despite the conceptual attention to users' psychological processing in studies of presence, user factors have been neglected or been regarded simply as sources of random error. As a result, there have been fewer empirical studies reporting the effects of user factor on the feeling of presence. Below are user variables that have been suggested to influence the feeling of presence: adaptation and learning of system features usually operationalized as time spent in virtual environments; experience and familiarity with technology; focused attention to or involvement with virtual environments; gender; mood, especially sensation seeking mood; and technology self-efficacy.

Three types of social factors influence feelings of presence—social interaction among users within mediated environment; social cues residing in technology such as anthropomorphic shapes, human voice, and interactive turn taking; social roles traditionally assigned to only humans; and social interaction between users and technology (e.g., similarity-attraction between user personality and a given technology's manifested personality).

Effects of Presence

There are many physiological, psychological, and social effects of presence. For example, intense feelings of presence invoke high-level arousal, motion sickness, and even nausea. Enjoyment of media stimuli and positive mood change are also closely related with feelings of presence. In e-commerce situations, feelings of presence have been reported to increase persuasion and sales. In educational and training software, presence has been reported to increase memory and task performance. Desensitization to phobic stimuli also has been reported to be an effect of presence. In studies of human-robot interaction and human-computer interaction, it has been found that feelings of presence (especially social presence) increase positive evaluation of technology products such as social robots and speech-interface systems.

Measurement Issues

In general, there are four ways of measuring presence during experimental sessions—subjective, behavioral, physiological, and brain-image measures. Subjective measures rely on postexperiment questionnaires and thus can be used in various situations. They have fundamental limitations, however, since they are administered after the experience of presence. Behavioral measures utilize recorded natural behaviors of users during experimental sessions. They are nonobtrusive and have the advantage of not relying on participants' postexperiment memory. The major disadvantages of behavioral measures are that they cannot be standardized because they are subjected to each experimental context and situation. Physiological measures utilize various physiological responses—heart rate, skin conductance, skin temperature, blood pressure, muscle tensions—and measure fluctuations that occur during experimental sessions. These measures are objective and can be used in a wide variety of situations, but the process of measuring physiological responses inevitably requires multiple physical constraints on users. For example, participants cannot move their hands freely when their hands are attached to skin-conductance sensors. With advances in many physiological measuring devices, the nonobtrusiveness of physiological measures will be significantly improved. With the development of brain science and easier access to expensive fMRI (functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) devices, brain images are now being considered for a new measure of presence.

Kwan Min Lee

See also Computer-Mediated Communication; Media Equation Theory; Network Society; New Media Theory

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PRIVACY MANAGEMENT THEORY

In today's world, managing privacy has become a critical part of everyday life for many societies. Although privacy is important, the juxtaposition of privacy and social interactions is often misunderstood. The theory of communication privacy management (CPM), developed by Sandra Petronio, provides a vehicle to understand the way people handle decisions about revealing or concealing private information as they enact social relationships with others. Since the early 1980s, the development of CPM theory has been grounded in empirical research, and as a consequence, its principles have been repeatedly tested for their robustness in explaining the way people regulate privacy.

Though CPM initially grew out of an interpersonal and family tradition, it has evolved to be a viable tool for examining the regulation of disclosing and protecting private information in a vast array of contexts. For example, CPM has been used to understand disclosure of personal medical information in genetic testing, an examination of privacy and Weblogging, HIV disclosure and privacy, Internet privacy, privacy issues in e-commerce, studying privacy and radio frequency identification, privacy in cancer care, workplace surveillance, secrets in primary care, medical mistakes, and privacy expectations athletes have when they disclose to their athletic advisors. This theory meets the test of heuristic value and continues to grow through the applications of the original principles.

Reasons for Developing CPM Theory

The advancement of privacy management theory initially grew out of a desire to provide a conceptual framework to address the gaps found in the disclosure literature at the time. During the 1960s and 1970s, scholars in a number of fields extended Sidney Jourard's work on self-disclosure. Although a considerable amount of research was amassed, it was difficult to interpret the disparate findings without a conceptual map. As a result, a set of organizing principles needed to be developed to give context to the existing empirical research and find new ways of understanding what disclosure was and was not. Through this exploration, it became evident that disclosure should be considered in relationship to privacy and defined as a dialectic, or tension between privacy and disclosure. Defining privacy and disclosure in conjunction with each other gave a coherent wholeness to the way in which people make choices about telling or safeguarding private information. In other words, private information is the content of what people typically disclose and disclosure is the process by which people make that information public.

Connecting privacy and disclosure in this way affords the opportunity to see how people manage to be social and autonomous at the same time. The theory of CPM grew out of this exploration and not only has contributed to an understanding of privacy, but also has recast the nature of disclosure to reflect a concept larger and more involved than self-disclosure.

Principles of CPM

Using a metaphoric boundary between what is personal and what is public to illustrate how people conceptualize the process of privacy management, communication privacy management offers five principles that guide this theory. Principle one states that people believe they own their private information and assume they have the right to control access. For example, if a woman finds out that she has a genetic predisposition for breast cancer, she is likely to believe that she is the only person who has the right to tell others.

Principle two states that because people believe they have the right to control the boundary surrounding their private information, the way they exercise that control is through the use of privacy

rules that are based on decision criteria for revealing or concealing the information. For instance, it is likely that most adults in the United States have a privacy rule about to whom, how much, and if and when others might know how much they make as a salary. These privacy rules are often derived from cultural expectations, based on motivations, an assessment of risk-benefit, situational needs, and gender. They also have the characteristic of change. Thus, when couples get divorced they can no longer use the same privacy rules they did as marital partners.

Principle three states that revealing private information to a target person makes that person a co-owner of the disclosed information. As such, the receiver becomes responsible for the care and protection of the information from the perspective of the discloser. For instance, a sister may tell her brother that she failed an important test. The sister has made an assumption that her brother will recognize her embarrassment and will take care not to tell someone else about the failure.

Principle four posits that once a disclosure is made, to ensure that privacy boundaries are regulated in a synchronized and expected fashion regarding third-party access, a level of privacy-rule coordination is necessary. CPM argues that there are three kinds of coordination that can take place. One, the original owner and co-owner coordinate privacy rules for linkage, that is, who else can know the mutually owned information. Two, they coordinate privacy rules for permeability, that is, how much third parties can know. Three, they coordinate privacy rules for ownership, that is, how much control each party can exercise independent of other co-owners.

Coordination represents the expected; however, many times coordination does not happen. CPM theory accounts for that in the last principle. Principle five argues that when there is a failure to coordinate privacy rules among the owner and co-owners, a possibility of boundary turbulence erupting exists leading to violation, invasions, and privacy dilemmas. For example, having been diagnosed as HIV+, this person tells a confidant his status and asks that confidant not to tell anyone else. The confidant, making an independent decision, tells the wife of the discloser that her husband is HIV+. The violation reflects a breach of ownership and linkage rules because the confidant's

actions went against explicitly stated parameters for third-party disclosure. Thus, the confidant used his own privacy rules instead of those stated and agreed upon between the discloser and confidant by linking the person's wife into the boundary with the information and taking control over the information by making this choice to tell.

These five principles of CPM theory work in tandem to explain how people manage revealing and concealing private information and have much to offer in understanding the why and how of privacy management.

Sandra Petronio

See also Interpersonal Communication Theories; Relational Communication Theory; Relational Dialectics; Relational Maintenance Theories; Self-Disclosure

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PRIVILEGE

Privilege theory is an approach to explaining and rectifying inequality and oppression. The main tenet of this theory is that those who are socially privileged are rarely explicitly self-conscious of the nature of their privilege or willing to examine their privilege because they see their state as natural and normal. This lack of self-consciousness and examination of privilege shifts the locus of inequality analysis to attributes and behaviors of those who are defined as disadvantaged in some way. In this formulation, those with privilege are much more likely to be aware of factors that place others in positions of disadvantage than they are

to see exactly how they, themselves, experience and communicate advantage. Privilege, then, is a special advantage that its holders can possess without examination or self-consciousness of its contours. Even when critically examined, facets of privilege can be overlooked by the person situated in the privileged social position.

The move into action growing from this theory compels those who have knowledge of their privilege to use this knowledge to help dismantle inequality. In this way, privilege theory coordinates well with several other theories that stress criticality. For example, critical discourse analysis focuses on revealing how discourse patterns constitute social inequities, thus establishing the awareness that is necessary to work on alleviating those inequities. Critical race theory (an outgrowth of critical legal studies) delves into the racial dimensions of everyday interactions to help ascertain why even the assumption of a color blind society and laws against discrimination do not produce racial equality.

Privilege theory is an outgrowth of theoretical examinations of male privilege and White privilege. The core of privilege theory in its formative articulations is tied to conditions of social identity that define people because of their birth, mainly race and sexual assignment (meaning in the United States, White and male). In this formulation, privilege is not earned, but rather is ascribed based on the race and sex assignment given at birth and then elaborated on through social interaction. Those who have this type of privilege possess many benefits that, unless examined, remain unacknowledged. Because notions of White privilege and male privilege have proven to be powerful for explaining the persistence of privilege despite recognition of racial and gender inequalities, critical examination of privilege has been extended to other types of inequality, leading to a more general privilege theory.

In privilege theory, the concept of making privilege visible (sometimes called transparency) is a turn away from more standard approaches to studying oppression, which emphasizes making oppression and inequality visible. Unexamined privilege—privilege left invisible—cannot be easily dislodged from the everyday practices that constitute it.

Many scholars consider Peggy McIntosh's work as foundational in concretizing how privilege

works. In a paper she authored in 1988, McIntosh began by noting the intractability of male privilege, that is, the resistance of many men to close examination of their privilege even when they might be sympathetic to and supportive of gender equality. She came to recognize that social hierarchies are, to use her word, interlocking, which led her to an examination of White privilege as a racial benefit and her own White privilege as an everyday set of unexamined assumptions. McIntosh offered a long list of daily effects of White privilege that she enjoyed, such as “I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed,” and “I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods that fit my cultural traditions, and into a hairdresser’s shop and find someone who can cut my hair.” This type of microexamination of the everyday constituents of White privilege provide the foundation for broader theories that have emerged in recent years under the rubric of critical Whiteness studies.

Privilege that is accrued through years of social practices, workplace and interpersonal communication, and social institutions (such as education, law, government, and religion) comes to be seen not only as the norm, but also as natural. In this regard, privilege theory seeks to unpack what underlies the idea that something like the White race is normal, natural, and in some constructions, no race at all. A range of exercises are available to demonstrate how privilege operates. One such exercise is named the race game. This game can unsettle the assumptions of White privilege by forcing participants to name (and thus mark) the race of every person they mention. Those in the privileged race position will often mark the race of others by referring, for example, to “my black neighbor,” “the African American teacher,” “the Asian woman over there,” or “his Korean roommate.” In the race game, a White person (a person not designated as of color) is forced to refer to other Whites similarly so that race can be brought to self-consciousness: “Both my White doctor and his White nurse told me that I should check if any of my White neighbors have been diagnosed with lyme disease.”

A number of feminist theorists who work within the perspective of critical studies have addressed

the problem of White privilege within feminist theory itself. Feminist theory presents a significant site of analysis because of its intersection between racial privilege and gender subordination. Because a substantial body of feminist theory grows from the experiences of White women, the theoretical formulations are often not only at odds with the experiences of women of color, but also devoid of analysis of the privileges afforded to theorists who are White as they develop the feminist project. One line of argument pinpoints silence as a powerful aspect of privilege, that is, the failure to address the issue of privilege or race explicitly and to universalize the experiences of White women to all women. Feminists of color as well as some White feminists have addressed the need for criticality of White privilege in feminist theory. Aimee Carrillo Rowe’s work in presenting a communication-based understanding of White privilege is significant in this area.

The branch of privilege theory focused on male privilege, or the presumption of male behavior and male prerogatives as normative, has often been coupled with Whiteness to examine White male privilege. The argument is that unless White male privilege is examined and its practices made explicit, non-White heterosexual males (African Americans, Latinos, males of different Asian ancestries, native American males) and gay males (White and of color) will continue to be seen as less than adequate, deviant, and failing in masculinity. The idea of relational privilege has been proposed by Aida Hurtado in *The Color of Privilege* to explain that White male privilege operates differently for women of color because their relationship to White men differs from that of White women.

Privilege theory has over the years been expanded to address a range of presumptive advantages that attach to various social statuses. Class privilege can confound White and/or male privilege, giving those with higher social class standing the advantage of unexamined benefits that far surpass economic means. Heterosexual privilege (what Adrienne Rich called compulsory heterosexuality) grants those coupled or seeking to be coupled with members of the socially defined opposite sex the privilege to function as though their behavior is natural and all other sexual relationships deviant (thus, the debates about same-sex marriage and civil unions); this type of heteronormativity has been examined

extensively, notably by Judith Butler. Within a cultural context, religion privilege can also operate in the same manner, making the unexamined privileges of a Christian identity in the United States appear normative and everything else Other (thus the controversy over attributions of being Muslim to Barak Obama's presidential candidacy or the setting of holidays in secular institutions to correspond with important Christian observances). Professional privilege too can mask the ways in which individuals of varying professional groups—doctors, lawyers, educators, therapists, politicians—hold advantages that are not recognized. Further, privilege theorists also point out that in all types of professional contexts, communication proceeds with practices and patterns that are tacitly assumed to be the norm. In short, privilege theory can be applied to any dominant identity where the identity category has been associated with power, and any axis of privilege can be complicated by its intersection with other axes of privilege.

Recent developments in privilege theory feature the complications of privilege and otherness and also offer many avenues for communication scholars to pursue. Privileges are manifest in public discourse, interpersonal communication, and institutional communication of many types. Privileges are manifest in practices that discipline both verbal and nonverbal communication. Privileges are both stable historical creations and constantly changing currents in multicultural America.

Fern L. Johnson

See also Critical Discourse Analysis; Critical Ethnography; Critical Race Theory; Critical Theory; Feminist Communication Theories; Feminist Standpoint Theory; Whiteness Theory

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PROBLEMATIC INTEGRATION THEORY

Problematic integration (PI) theory is an attempt to illuminate the process of sense-making in situations that defy easy understanding. Introduced in 1992 and developed by Austin Babrow and his colleagues, the theory adds several distinctive claims to more widely held propositions about how humans make sense of their experience. Although PI theory is a general perspective on communication in difficult situations, many applications have been made in the area of health communication. Over time, as well, the framework is making its way into both general reviews of theory and applications to an ever broader range of phenomena. A brief review of the theory's central ideas illustrates its reach.

Probabilistic Orientations, Evaluative Orientations, and Integration

PI theory holds that all meaning is associational: Human beings make sense of, find meaning in, or understand the world of things, people, events, ideas, and so on by associating these objects in their minds with various characteristics, causes, effects, and so on. People form these associations with varying levels of certainty. Some are seen as doubtful, some as possible, and some as probable or even certain. Thus, the theory terms such associations *probabilistic orientations*. Moreover, the theory holds that meaning is also evaluative. All perceived associations are evaluated in terms of their implications for well-being; these meanings are termed *evaluative orientations*. These two forms of meaning—probabilistic

and evaluative orientations—are recognized not only in classical and contemporary rhetorical and communication theory, but across the humanities and social sciences.

PI theory begins to diverge from other perspectives in claiming that probabilistic and evaluative orientations are integrated in sense-making. In part, this means that probabilistic and evaluative orientations influence one another; what one believes to be true influences whether one evaluates that knowledge as good or bad, and vice versa. For example, finding out that one has a particular disease may influence his or her evaluation of that condition. The opposite might also be true: One's evaluation of a disease can influence the degree to which the person thinks she or he might actually have it. People also integrate probabilistic and evaluative orientations to any one object of thought with surrounding beliefs, values, intentions, and ongoing behavior. To continue the preceding example, learning that one has a particular health condition influences thought and action related to diet, work and leisure activities, relationships, and sense of self.

Problematic Integration

Whereas many other theories focus on probabilistic and evaluative orientations and some examine their integration, PI theory is distinct in its emphasis on common dilemmas that arise in efforts to make sense of the world and one's experience of it. More specifically, the theory posits several major forms of integrative difficulties, or challenges to deciding what something means. The most frequently noted of these is uncertainty, which the theory defines as troubled association: elusive, unstable, or otherwise doubtful. The theory further differentiates between ontological and epistemological uncertainties. Ontological uncertainties arise in conceptions of the nature of the world, such as the enormous diversity of life, complexity of causal structures, or play of random influences on events. By contrast, epistemological uncertainty reflects challenges rooted in the nature of one's knowledge of the world. For example, epistemological uncertainty arises when a person is faced with insufficient information, overwhelmingly abundant or inconsistent information, knowledge of doubtful relevance to her or his interests, and so

on. All of these difficult sense-making situations create PI.

In addition to uncertainty, PI can take other forms. A person experiences divergence when a belief and a desire conflict. For example, a person might want parents to accept her or his decision to leave their church, but believe that they are very unlikely ever to do so. Ambivalence arises when a person must choose between equally desirable but mutually exclusive alternative courses of action, as might be the case, for example, when facing a choice between going to the local community college, where one can be close to his or her girlfriend, or moving away to a better college elsewhere. Integrating belief and desire is also difficult when a person faces certain unpleasantness or impossible or unattainable desires, such as longing to be as carefree as a child, but knowing one can never return to that time.

Chaining Out of Problematic Meanings

PI entails processes by which a particular meaning is formed, sustained, transformed, sedimented, or perhaps resolved. These eventualities occur when PI chains out in a variety of different directions. For example, problematic meanings can chain from one focal issue to other related issues (chaining across foci). Having problems determining one's major in school could chain out to problems with grades, finances, parents, and more. When vitally important beliefs or values are involved, PI sets in motion cascading waves of change that extend the length, breadth, and depth of psychological and relational systems—from problems choosing a major to doubts about oneself, distrust of parents and advisors, and pessimism about the future, for example. Meanings also chain out in the transformation of one form of PI into another. For example, perceived impossibility is often refashioned into diverging expectation and desire (e.g., a ray of hope), which is in turn reconstructed as uncertainty, such as doubting the trustworthiness or relevance of available information. For example, the perceived impossibility of landing a dream job could morph into belief that there is a very small chance of success, which might in turn give rise to distrust of what one has heard about chances of landing the job. Communication is central to the search for meaning in these chaining processes.

More specifically, the theory holds that communication is the primary medium, source, and resource in PI experiences. In other words, PI is at once an individual psychological process, but it is also inherently a communicative phenomenon. Through communication, people learn much of what they know about the composition of the world, its evaluative meanings, and particularly problematic meanings. Communication is also a coping resource for persons experiencing PI. It enables them to reappraise probability and value or to construct holistic reframings that can lead to more comfortable understandings. For example, a professor or friend might help a struggling student reframe painful uncertainty as a test of faith or an opportunity for growth. Throughout such struggles, individuals and groups draw on, reinforce, challenge, and at times transform sociocultural resources (e.g., therapeutic, artistic, political-economic, and religious texts) that are themselves the residue of shared, ongoing search for often elusive, troubling, or otherwise problematic meanings.

Austin S. Babrow

See also Attitude Theory; Health Communication Theories; Motivated Information Management Theory; Reasoned Action Theory; Relational Uncertainty; Social Support; Uncertainty Management Theories; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is a complex continuously moving interaction of variables without a fixed beginning or end with each simultaneously affecting and affected by each of the others. This entry outlines the concept of process and its implications for the study and understanding of communication.

Multiple Usages

Multiple usages exist for the term *process of communication*. A clear and complete explanation is David Berlo's, whose 1960 book on this subject remains a classic. For this reason, Berlo's ideas about process form the basis for this entry. This process view contrasts significantly with many current nonprocess oriented treatments in which communication is represented as a sequence of events, one following the other. It begins when someone creates a message. It is something people do to other people, perhaps getting them to comply with what they are told. Communication in that view is simply the transfer of ideas since the message carries the meaning. The process view, as presented by Berlo, helps us to overcome this simplistic depiction.

Berlo's Process of Communication

Continuous Interaction of Variables

In Berlo's view, the model above is a poor abstraction of the reality of communication. A process is not a sequence of events, one following the other. Communication is a continuous simultaneous interaction of a large number of variables, moving, changing, and dynamic, not static and at rest, without a fixed beginning or end, wherein each variable affects each of the others and is in turn influenced by the others. A variable or factor is something that changes and affects something else. An interaction of factors means that more than one is involved in affecting something and that they act together to produce an effect that is potentially different from summing their individual effects.

Creation of Structure

We create this structure of interactional reality since it is not possible to discover it through

perception alone. The variables we select do not depend upon the way a process is really structured. Rather, we structure the reality that we see in ways we believe will be useful to us in dealing with the reality. The reality of communication exists, but we create its structure. We do not discover it. In the 14th century people believed in a substance that kept the air around the earth from floating off into space. They did not discover the structure of reality—they created it.

The Locus of Meaning

Accepting communication as a process implies that meanings are in people, not in words or messages. Meaning is inherently phenomenological, occurring only in the mind. It does not exist outside of the phenomenology of the person. It cannot be transmitted. It cannot be recorded. To suggest that communication is the transmission of meaning is to fundamentally misunderstand the nature of communication and of meaning itself. Constructing, recording, and sending a message transmits only bits of physical reality: ink marks on paper, modulated electromagnetic radiation, magnetic impulses. Transmission must be in a code or language, which is itself a process and constantly in flux. Meaning must be constructed by the receiver based on attempts to interpret a mutually understood symbolic exchange. What is often called communication is more accurately regarded as attempts to communicate, as is the case with all message construction and transmission.

The Process Point of View

Attempting to describe a process requires freezing it and selecting portions for study. Football is a process. Assume the Hurricanes are playing the Spartans. Compare an announcer's words, "Freeman's pass completed to Moss on the Spartans' 25" with what occurred: men charging at each other, some pulling back and running toward the side or end of the field, others spinning around and changing places, the eyes and motions of some following the ball, the eyes of others following certain players, and in general, people running all over the field in every direction, some hitting others, some avoiding others, some chasing, and some being chased. In

addition, Freeman threw a pass to Moss at the Spartans' 25 yard line.

Focusing on the individual, the ball is snapped, a player charges forward, the timing, direction, and intensity of his charge based on how all other factors in the game affect him including his past knowledge and practice and his presumptions concerning the future. Simultaneously, his charge affects all other variables including those leading to his charge initially, influencing some variables more than others. The whole is composed of actions involving arbitrarily chosen chunks perceived as useful at the moment.

We discussed one play in an entire game, a small part of the entire action process. Although variables do not operate individually and at a single moment, a full understanding of the whole functioning, working, dynamic process of communication, or football, cannot be achieved without such parsing. If we investigate an entire process as process, without ever breaking it apart to see how it might work, we end either with very little knowledge, cliché-type surface knowledge, or no knowledge at all.

We divide up a process in a particular way not because it is the only possible way to divide it up and the variables selected the only way to examine it. We do this because an announcer, or communicator, has to say something and cannot say everything. Although processes do not exist in the form of separate, discrete actions, and variables, it is necessary to select certain variables and actions to be described. It is not possible to deal with an entire process as a process.

When we make this selection, we stop the process. A still picture of a game stops the process. The picture is not the game. In order to discuss and learn about the game, we have to impose a structure on it. When we do, we have stopped the dynamic of the process, the continuous flow of variables, and have tried to describe that continuous interaction and its results, not in necessarily the best or only way, but in what seems at the time the most useful and practical way to describe, explain, predict, and thus to understand.

In doing this, students of communication must never forget that communication is a process. Nature, reality, and anything observable are not composed of absolute actions or variables with

well-defined boundaries that separate them from other actions or variables or events.

Thomas M. Steinfatt

See also Constitutive View of Communication; Definitions of Communication; General Semantics; Meaning Theories; Semiotics and Semiology; System Theory

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PROPAGANDA THEORY

Propaganda is a form of persuasion involving a mass message campaign designed to discourage rational thought and to suppress evidence. The term is also used to refer to individual messages as in a piece of propaganda, often as a pejorative term used to attack a message in disagreement with the source of the pejorative. This entry considers definitions and theories of propaganda and its history, distinguishing propaganda from other persuasive forms.

Defining Propaganda

Persuasion refers to a subset of communication involving the intent to support or change people's beliefs and behaviors. In its most common current usage, propaganda refers to a form of persuasion distinguished by a mass persuasion campaign, often one sided and fear based, that distorts or attempts to hide or discredit relevant evidence, disguises sources, and discourages rational thought. Often considered a tool of government formation and policy, propaganda also may be found in advertising, religion, education, and other institutional settings.

The term propaganda may also be used neutrally through definitions such as the systematic

propagation of a doctrine or cause, communication's role in social struggle, or mass suggestion of influence through the manipulation of symbols and psychology. Some definitions suggest propaganda requires total control of the media, an unlikely event. The more neutral definitions do not distinguish clearly between education, advertising, and propaganda. They suggest that the education-propaganda distinction may simply be based on one's viewpoint: What another does is propaganda; what I do is education. In some cases, then, education and propaganda as practiced may be the same. But a theoretical distinction between them as ideally practiced is important to maintain. Rather than seeking to hide evidence, subvert reasoning, and promote the propagation of belief through fear-based emotions, in theory, education should seek to promote the search for and evaluation of all available evidence and to promote logical thought, separating it from emotion for the purpose of creating a rational understanding of the subject matter.

Definitions dependent on the use of specific message techniques or on the channels and media used for transmission have not proved useful in distinguishing propaganda from other mass persuasion campaigns. Propaganda may or may not involve the use of specific media or the employment of specific techniques such as the seven devices of propaganda articulated by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis: name-calling, glittering generality, transfer, testimonial, plain folks, card stacking, and band wagon. The existence of such characteristics is neither necessary nor sufficient evidence of the existence of propaganda. Information dissemination strategies are propagandistic only when the attempted subversion of evidence and/or reasoning processes occurs, by whatever means.

Propaganda is referred to as white, grey, or black, according to properties of the attributed source. In white propaganda, the actual source is attributed to the message. In grey propaganda, no source is attributed or an actual source is difficult to discern. In black propaganda, the attributed source is not the actual source.

Propaganda Theory

Propaganda may have a single audience, perhaps the American voter, or two or more basic target audiences, perhaps a home audience and an enemy

audience. Home and enemy targets are often approached through different campaigns, with different message sets for each. Within each such audience are some who are initially in favor and others who are initially opposed to the policy of the propaganda source, as well as those who are neutral. A principal strategy is to move those in each of the basic audiences who are opposed to the propagandist's position toward neutrality or to uncertainty, thus moving them to inaction; to move some who are neutral toward favorableness; and to keep those who are in favor within the fold by creating within them a readiness and willingness to act.

This may be done by creating doubt about the position to be attacked concerning its validity, practicality, potential financial and security costs, and its compatibility with dearly held principles of the target position, along with reassurance of these factors with respect to the proffered position. The simplest method of accomplishing this is usually through the use of fear, often by associating the policies of the opposition with great perceived harm and disaster for the target individual and/or the relevant others for that individual, while supporting the desired alternative policy or group. Notably, these strategies may also be used in a persuasion or advertising campaign, claiming failure to use a particular mouthwash will result in bad breath and loss of sexual experiences. The distinction between persuasion and propaganda occurs if, when, and to the extent that a persuasive campaign uses messages designed to hide or subvert evidence, and/or to remove rationality and substitute emotional responses for reasoned discourse. This line may be crossed in advertising, education, or any other application of persuasion.

Common propaganda tactics are those of persuasion. They often include misdirection or distraction of the audience's attention away from issues important to the opposition and toward irrelevant issues associated with fear and loathing by the target audience. If there are a substantial number of single-issue members of the target audience who favor a position X on the issue, and X is opposed by group A, repeated messages from group B concentrating on the connection of A with X will often be effective in moving the single-issue voters away from A. Given two sides to an issue, X and Y, grey propaganda claiming X to be true,

later followed by information showing X to be untrue, can lead toward belief in Y. If an event occurs that affects the credibility or the nature of the connection or of that issue, the message set may require change. Existence of such a change may be suggestive of the existence of propaganda, but is not proof.

Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky propose a theory of propaganda alleging a systemic bias in the mass media and explaining the existence of the bias through structural economic causes. They suggest that the growth of democracy and corporate power has led to the growth of corporate propaganda to protect corporate power from democracy. In their model, the product of the media is an audience that is produced through messages such as TV shows and news.

Modern History of the Study of Propaganda

Although propaganda has long been a tool of governments, the term originated in the Latin title of the Council of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church. The *Congregation de Propaganda Fide*, or Congregation for Propagation of the Faith, was created in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV, seeking ways of convincing people to convert without the sword. For the church, propaganda involved conversion without coercion, intending a neutral definition. The term maintains this connotation within the church and within communist agitprop strategies, where propaganda is advocated for use with the educated classes, and agitation—repetition of slogans without reasoning—for the masses.

An infamous example of propaganda concerns a work possibly created in the mid-1890s by the Head of the Okhrana, the Czar's secret police, to convince the Czar to act forcefully against the Bolsheviks. Attempting to discredit Bolshevism by tying it to Judaism, *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* was largely plagiarized from Hermann Goedsche's 1868 novel *Biarritz*, which itself borrowed from an 1864 French novel titled *Dialogue in Hell Between Machiavelli and Montesquieu*. In the protocols, the names of Jewish leaders attending the first Zionist Congress in Basil, Switzerland, were substituted for the original characters. Bound in a manner appearing to suggest notes of a secret meeting of Jews who were bent on world economic domination, it was

exposed as a forgery in 1920 by a Jewish committee and by a 1921 *Times of London* article by Philip Graves. Apparently spread by Loyalists fleeing Russia following the Bolshevik Revolution, copies reached most Western countries by 1920. Henry Ford placed excerpts from the protocols in his showrooms, and his purchase of the *Dearborn Independent* was intended to serve as a vehicle for disseminating anti-Semitic propaganda based on the protocols. A set of leather-bound volumes containing portions of the protocols and Ford's editorials for the independent was available in Berlin. It may have been the copy initially seen by Adolph Hitler and referred to in *Mein Kampf*. Julius Streicher relied on the protocols while producing issues of *Der Stuermer*. Though denounced as a forgery by each of many investigations, beginning with a Czarist committee after it became publicly available in 1903 to the U.S. Senate investigation in 1964, the protocols still appears on many Internet hate sites represented as truth.

During World War I, George Creel employed Walter Lippman and Edward Bernays as the best known members of the *Creel Commission*, the *Committee on Public Information* of the U.S. Government. This committee relied on fear in a poster campaign and on personal contact in the speeches of the volunteer 4-minute men. Their topics covered reasons for America's role in the fight and the need for press censorship, to be conducted by a president who had promised peace. Creel's committee worked on reducing morale on the German home front and produced massive anti-German sentiment in America. Few records remain, as Congress provided no funds for archiving its work due to a public backlash. In the 1930s groups such as the Institute for Propaganda Analysis attempted to sensitize the public to propaganda techniques through lists such as its seven devices, yet employed these very devices in arguments against propaganda. Funding for the antipropaganda movement dried up as the United States prepared for World War II. German, British, and American propaganda efforts in World War II drew on ideas from the Creel commission.

In 1935, Leonard Doob was among the first to state clearly that propaganda works through its effects on the individual human mind. The movement from the study of propaganda toward the study of persuasion did not begin in earnest until

the 1950s. It became increasingly clear that though public opinion was a useful concept, it was a convenient fiction, implying the existence of a group mind. Three elements worked together to produce the change in scholarship from public opinion and propaganda to persuasion: the shift of emphasis from changing public opinion to the persuasion of individuals, the movement from a hypodermic effect to a two-step flow model, and the government desire to be associated with funding of research on persuasion, not propaganda.

As advertising agencies spent freely on proprietary persuasive research, the modern era of academic persuasion research began with Wilbur Schramm's work as Educational Director of the U.S. Office of War Information during World War II. Using funding from multiple government contracts following the war, Schramm founded the Institute of Communications Research at the University of Illinois in 1947. Similar institutes formed at Stanford and Hawaii, encouraging movement from a study of propaganda as sociology, to the persuasion of the individual. Doctoral graduates from these programs established similar departments at other major universities. During the Cold War, the United States Information Agency operated the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Liberty, supported in part by government funding including the intelligence community. Wars from Vietnam to Iraq continued to employ the results of this research on message and channel strategies. These included encouraging the wearing of American Flag lapel pins that became a symbol of support for America's wars rather than of America and equating patriotism with support of the current government rather than of the Constitution.

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See also Advertising Theories; Attitude Theory; Audience Theories; Corporate Colonization Theory; Critical Organizational Communication; Journalism and Theories of the Press; Media Effects Theories; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Public Opinion Theories; Two-Step and Multi-Step Flow

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PROXEMICS

The study of communication through interpersonal space and distance is called proxemics. This area of theory and research on nonverbal communication encompasses the study of personal space, territoriality, crowding, and density. How we employ space during interaction sends powerful messages about ourselves and about relationships with other people.

Personal Space

The most important research on proxemic behavior deals with personal space, an invisible bubble or comfort zone that follows us wherever we go. In North America, personal space is an egg-shaped zone extending about 3 feet away from the body. In organizational or sales relationships, we expand our space zones so we are most likely to interact at the business-professional zone of 4 to 8 feet. In professional settings, interactions that occur at the interpersonal distance of less than 3 feet are perceived as uncomfortable and inappropriate. Public figures interact in what is called public space of interaction at over 8 feet. Public space zones encompass both a dimension of respect that communicates status and a safety zone since political figures, movie stars, and rock stars can be mobbed and even injured at closer distances. Though

greater space confers status on a public figure, it can also produce loneliness and isolation for the powerful and the famous.

In our closest relationships in the United States, we stand and sit in an even closer zone, called intimate space, which extends from tactile contact to about one-and-a-half feet from the body. Sex differences in personal space exist. Women stand closer than men, normally communicating at less than an arm's length. Men maintain more than an arm's length during interactions with men, but adopt women's interaction distance when communicating with women.

When individuals inappropriately invade our personal or intimate space zones, we engage in defensive behaviors. One of the most common is withdrawal to a more normative and comfortable distance. People may also react to spatial invasions with decreases in intimacy such as turning away and reducing or eliminating eye contact. The use of body buffers or barriers may also occur by placing objects such as purses or backpacks between oneself and the invader or by folding one's arms.

Young children have no real understanding of personal space. In any culture, proxemic norms are learned through imitation and instruction by family and peer group regarding what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate spatial behaviors. The result is that each culture adopts its own proxemic norms. Cultures with origins near the equator and from the Mediterranean regions maintain the closest distances; as a result, they are often referred to as contact cultures. Regardless of culture, toddlers are exempt from cultural personal space rules, school-age children are expected to show some understanding of proxemic norms, and teens are expected to adhere to adult interpersonal space rules.

Territoriality

Territoriality is a home space that is maintained by virtually every animal and all mammals. Humans have extended territoriality to the occupation of dwellings and vehicles and ownership of property and objects. Fixed territory is a zone that always belongs to a person or to a family such as an automobile, apartment, or house. Semifixed territory is typically or temporarily occupied territory such as a public picnic table, a seat in a classroom, or a blanket on the beach.

Fixed territories are diligently defended. Laws establish property rights, and even the Bill of Rights stipulates that the “right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated.” It is understood by law and practice that an uninvited invasion of a fixed territory is a breach of both law and decorum.

Ownership of semifixed territory is more ambiguous, though occupancy of public territory such as a seat in a cafeteria or train, a parking space, or place in line generally constitutes possession, if only temporarily. However, some people are proprietary about their favorite desk in class or table in a lunchroom and regard occupancy by others as an unjustifiable invasion. Semifixed territories are defended in several ways: though appeals to tenure (e.g., I always sit in this seat) or through markers such as coats, blankets, or purses that designate occupation of a territory. Markers must appear to be permanent possessions such as a coat to communicate that the territory is reserved; a half full soft drink cup will be treated as trash, not as a communication marker.

Crowding and Density

Crowding is a perception that occurs when a person feels that too many people are in her or his space or territory. Density is an objective measure that indexes the number of people per square meter or square mile. Perceptions of crowding are somewhat related to density. However, people from urban areas are more tolerant of density and are less likely to feel crowded because they have adapted to more dense environments.

Density and crowding generally have negative physical, psychological, and interpersonal effects. Research suggests that crowding is associated with discomfort, increased stress, reduced ability to concentrate, lower reading scores, interpersonal violence, and a host of other negative effects. The negative effects of crowding extend to other mammals and have been demonstrated in Calhoun’s landmark experiments on the behavioral sink. Research suggests that social support from close friends or family can reduce the effects of crowding.

The negative effects of crowding and density do not always occur; there are even situations when

greater density is appreciated and even desired. Crowding is part of the experience and spectacle of certain events such as major sports events, rock concerts, parades, and political rallies.

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See also Kinesics; Nonverbal Communication Theories

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PUBLIC OPINION THEORIES

Public opinion theories provide insight into the roles that various forms of communication play in the formation of public opinion. As understanding of communication has increased during the past 2 centuries, more useful theories of public opinion have been developed. The development of empirical research methods has permitted increasingly useful measurement of public opinion; normative, or prescriptive, theories of public opinion have given way to more explanatory theories that reflect or are grounded in empirical research. Research has revealed many limitations in the way public opinion is formed and in the role it plays in politics and government. Contemporary theories envision ways of overcoming these limitations.

Early Theories

The development of theories of public opinion became a focus for scholars in the late 18th century during the Enlightenment era. Theory development was motivated in part by the American and French Revolutions in which the power of monarchies was broken, and many rights, including voting rights, were extended to middle- and even some lower-class men. In Britain, political reform movements promoted and eventually achieved the extension of voting rights to larger and larger segments of the population. As these political changes spread across Europe and the United States, politics was less dominated by small traditional elites and was increasingly influenced by newly enfranchised voter groups. Other changes that sparked concern about public opinion included the expansion of the middle class, increasing levels of literacy, and development of mass newspapers. Early theories of public opinion were normative theories that sought to legitimize or challenge these political and social changes. Theories tended to express optimism or pessimism concerning the consequences of greater public involvement in government.

Utilitarian Theories

An early optimistic view was offered by Jean-Jacques Rousseau who championed the notion of a common will arising out of reasoned debate and serving as a powerful means of checking government actions. Similar notions concerning the merits of public debate were offered by early libertarian thinkers such as John Milton. British utilitarian philosophers such as John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham offered the first systematic argument favoring democratic government grounded on public opinion. They argued in favor of the creation of a political system in which individuals and groups competed to pursue their economic and political interests. Unlike Rousseau, they had no faith in reasoned debate as a mechanism for harmonizing interests. Instead, they argued that unfettered competition to pursue interests would best serve the majority of people. This competition would take place in a marketplace of ideas in which various interests were promoted and majority views were formed. Ultimately, these views should result in the choice and election of politicians who would serve majority interests.

Mass Society Theories

By the end of the 19th century and through the first half of the 20th century, optimism concerning public opinion and democratic government faded. Enlightenment faith in public opinion was challenged by a darker view of human nature and its limitations. A set of mass society theories were developed by conservative thinkers such as Ferdinand Tönnies, Gustave Le Bon, and José Ortega y Gasset and radical thinkers such as Marxists associated with the Frankfurt School that questioned whether public opinion and majority rule could provide a viable basis for government. At the heart of these more radical theories was deep pessimism concerning common people and their ability to recognize their interests and make reasoned political choices. Instead, the public was seen as a disorganized, undifferentiated, and ignorant mass. This mass was easily ruled by unscrupulous, demagogic elites who would manipulate public opinion to serve elite interests.

Propaganda Theories

Mass society theories were closely associated with theories of propaganda developed during the early part of the 20th century. Propaganda theorists such as Harold Lasswell drew on mass society notions as they speculated about the reasons why propaganda was so successful in mobilizing massive armies during World War I. Lasswell went on to develop a theory of propaganda that provided a more scientific basis for all forms of promotional communication. This theory explained how public opinion can be cultivated and organized around master symbols—a notion that presaged the idea of using advertising campaigns to brand consumer products.

Attitude Theory

The development of attitude theory during the 1930s also had implications for development of public opinion theory. Gordon Allport formulated a notion of attitude as a predisposition to respond to environmental stimuli in predictable ways. Attitudes were formed based on experience in the social world and thus could be changed by experience. They serve as a basic mechanism for organizing human behavior. Some theorists argued that

public opinions are verbal expressions of underlying attitudes; thus, measurement of opinions might provide insight into attitudes. It might be possible to change attitudes by changing opinions and vice versa.

Theories of the Press

Public opinion has typically been a central concept in most theories of journalism and the press. A series of normative theories stretching from libertarian theory in the 1600s to contemporary public-journalism theory have viewed public debate and the press as important aspects of democratic politics. The press is usually seen as having a responsibility for informing the public so that public debate—and thus public opinion—is enhanced. Libertarian notions about communication freedom underlie the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution and its guarantees for a broad range of communication freedoms, including freedom of the press.

The Lippman and Dewey Debate

During the 1920s, efforts were made to develop empirical rather than normative theories of public opinion. A journalist, Walter Lippman, offered one of the first comprehensive theories of this type. He argued that it was impossible for average people to form useful pictures in their heads of an increasingly complex social world. Newspapers could only provide simple, stereotyped depictions that necessarily reinforced preexisting notions. Since media could not provide an effective basis for useful opinion formation, Lippman concluded that governance was best provided by a benevolent technocracy that would wield power on behalf of the masses. A pragmatist philosopher, John Dewey, challenged Lippman's views, arguing that it was possible to systematically inform the public so that public opinion could be a constructive force in society. Lippman rejected Dewey's views as impractical and idealistic, and both Lippman and Dewey marshaled empirical, but largely anecdotal evidence in support of their views. Since their original debate in the 1930s, the views of Lippman and Dewey have continued to provide two important and opposing perspectives concerning the place of public opinion in a democracy.

Empirical Research

During the 1930s, survey research techniques were developed, and these permitted increasingly useful measurement of public opinion. These included techniques for questionnaires, interviews, statistical methods for analyzing data, and most importantly, strategies for drawing random or probability samples so that accurate generalizations could be made about the opinions of large populations. These techniques have been consistently improved over the years.

Pioneering Research on Media Effects

Much of the thinking about public opinion during World War II was shaped by propaganda theory and attitude theory. During the war years, two important lines of empirical research were established that had long-standing impact on public opinion theory. Carl Hovland conducted a series of field experiments on propaganda film effects that found important limitations: Propaganda films influence thinking about things that were directly featured in specific films. Attitudes and opinions could not be influenced if they were strongly grounded in personal experience or were associated with strong feelings. Paul Lazarsfeld found in his research that the voting decisions of most people were not directly influenced by propaganda in the media. Instead, voters were more likely to be influenced by face-to-face conversations with other people. Lazarsfeld went on to develop the two-step flow hypothesis, which states that influence does not flow directly from media to individuals, but instead flows first to opinion leaders and then to their followers. Opinion leaders act as gatekeepers who prevent media content (including propaganda) from having direct influence. Together Hovland and Lazarsfeld began the development of the limited effects perspective on mass communication. This perspective fundamentally altered subsequent theories of public opinion.

Since World War II, the growing availability of public-opinion data has facilitated development of a variety of new theories of public opinion formation. These empirically based public opinion theories typically are grounded in many assumptions about (and data concerning) the role of various forms of interpersonal, group, and mass communication. Public opinion is typically conceptualized

as a dynamic phenomenon that is formed through some type of communication process.

The Flow of Information to the Public

During the 1950s, the Cold War provided impetus and funding for empirical research on the flow of information and ideas from media to the public. This research had an impact on development of public opinion theories. Researchers asked how the public could be encouraged to view the United Nations favorably and to take civil defense seriously so that they were prepared for a nuclear attack by the USSR, but direct influence of public awareness in these areas proved difficult. Public awareness of political events and politicians was limited to those that were most frequently reported and talked about with others. Research has continued to find that most people are not well informed about politics or government. This research implies that public opinion is not adequately grounded in knowledge about the social world.

Limited Effects Theory

The research findings of Hovland and Lazarsfeld were consistently reconfirmed by empirical research conducted during the 1950s and 1960s. A view of media effects emerged from this research that strongly contradicted some of the central assumptions of mass society theory. The research suggested that media could not easily be used by elites to manipulate mass audiences, thus providing a powerful means of maintaining their economic and political dominance. On the other hand, this research also contradicts utilitarian theories of public opinion, finding that most individuals vote on the basis of their loyalties to political parties, churches, friends, and families.

After 2 decades, research failed to locate what Hovland termed the magic keys to persuasion. People had many defenses against changes in existing attitudes. They engaged in highly selective communication. They avoided, rejected, or misinterpreted messages that were inconsistent with existing attitudes. To the extent that opinions were linked to or grounded in attitudes, they were also protected against change. Even more discouraging, most people were found to have highly inconsistent attitudes, but they resisted rational appeals to

resolve inconsistencies. The public was, as Raymond Bauer has explained, an obstinate audience.

The Cognitive Turn in Media Theory

In the 1970s, the cognitive turn in media theory development strongly influenced theories of public opinion formation. This turn began as psychologists moved away from a focus on attitude theories and toward theories centered on cognitive phenomena such as consciously held information and beliefs. The most prominent and enduring of the various cognitive theories is information processing theory. This theory conceptualizes people as information receivers and processors. It identifies sensory limitations to the reception, filtering, and retention of information. It argues that overall information processing is grounded in many different cognitive processes, most of which operate below the level of consciousness. Consciousness operates as a master process that manages information processing, but does so with many serious limitations. The theory helps explain why everyday information processing by most people so often fails or produces highly unexpected results. As the theory has been developed it provided useful insight into ways of structuring communication so that more information can be learned.

Agenda-Setting Theory

Another cognitive turn theory is agenda-setting theory developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw. This theory argues that although media cannot tell people what to think (i.e., cannot change attitudes or even form opinions), media can tell people what to think about—that is, media can have a strong influence in deciding the small number of public problems or issues that people will think about at any given point in time. This theory shares with information processing theory the notion that people's capacity to consciously pay attention to topics is quite limited. If media publish lots of news stories dealing with one topic, more people will remember the topic, and they will more or less unconsciously assign a higher priority to it.

Knowledge Gap Theory

Phillip Tichenor, George Donohue, and Clarice Olien proposed knowledge gap theory. This theory

states that as the amount of information about a topic is increased, the gap in knowledge between those who know a lot and those who know very little will increase. The theory helps to explain public opinion research findings that puzzled researchers for many years. Findings showed that information campaigns often failed to produce any overall increase in what the public knew. Knowledge gap theory explains this by asserting that those who know something about a campaign topic before a campaign starts will find it easier to learn new information. They have a preexisting cognitive framework into which they can fit new information. On the other hand, those who do not know much will find it difficult to learn and may even have developed defenses against learning things that they have judged irrelevant. The distribution of information in the population shifts increasingly in favor of those who started out with more information. Researchers have identified one important exception to this theory. If topics are controversial and lead to increased face-to-face communication, then information gaps can be narrowed.

Spiral of Silence Theory

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann proposed a theory that explains how media could influence opinion formation in certain circumstances. Her spiral of silence theory asserts that when media transmit news that states that an issue, position, or candidate is losing favor, then people will become reluctant to talk about and defend that position or candidate. If people stop talking, then media coverage becomes more influential, and public opinion shifts in the direction that media have predicted. She has analyzed the influence of election-news coverage in Germany over several elections and located consistent evidence for her theory. Outside of Germany, findings have been less consistent, but the theory has found some support. One important caveat is that negative media coverage can lead advocates for positions or candidates to talk more rather than less. In some cases, their increased talking could balance other people's reluctance to talk.

The development of cognitive theories has led some critics to argue that there is a trend back toward notions of media power that are more consistent with mass society theory and less consistent with decades of media-effects research. Can media

have specific forms of cognitive influence without exercising important overall power? The answer to this question seems to vary according to the context in which media operate. In their media dependency theory, Melvin Defleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach argue that media become more influential whenever there are major disruptions in the social world. When social change happens so quickly that the people we normally turn to for advice do not understand what is happening, then we rely more on media for information. As we accept information from media, the potential for influence on our beliefs and opinions increases.

Recent Normative Theories of Democracy

Changes in normative theories of democracy have had implications for theories of public opinion. During the 1950s and 1960s, a theory of liberal or pluralistic democracy developed. In his book, *Public Opinion and Democracy*, Valdimer O. Key provided an especially cogent statement of this theory. Key sought to discover why there could be enormous fluctuation and inconsistency in opinions while at the same time there was great stability in voting patterns. The answer was that pluralistic groups provided the foundation for U.S.-style democracy. These diverse groups had many conflicting interests and were bound together by diverse cultures. Political parties were made up of grand coalitions of these groups. People voted for specific parties despite their diverse opinions. Voting patterns were stable because the party coalitions were stable. Pluralistic groups had no direct role in government except through their links to political parties. Thus contradictory opinions had no direct consequences. Parties operated with considerable freedom since they were accountable to groups only during elections, and even then, accountability was limited.

Habermas and the Public Sphere

In 1962, Jürgen Habermas published *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, a book that has widely influenced public opinion theory. This book argues that democratic politics will only be conducted as intended by Enlightenment thinkers when there is an egalitarian public sphere in which everyone has an opportunity to participate

and to express their ideas. Habermas argued that such a public sphere existed during the 1700s, but it was gradually transformed with the rise of mass societies and commercial mass media. In later books, Habermas discussed ways of restructuring public communication so that a public sphere can be created that will permit broad public involvement in politics. Such a public sphere is seen as essential for public opinion formation in a democracy. Recently, new media theorists have drawn on Habermas's ideas to argue that Internet-based communication might be used to create a global public sphere.

Theories of Participatory and Deliberative Democracy

After the development of the liberal pluralist theory of democracy in the 1960s, theories of participatory and deliberative democracy were proposed that challenged its assumptions. These normative theories emphasize the need for and utility of broader public participation in politics and/or broader public involvement in the deliberations that underlie government policymaking. Benjamin Barber challenged liberal, pluralist notions of democracy and advocated strong democracy, a form of government in which an educated public is more directly involved in governance. He has helped to stimulate interest in improving the ways that public deliberation about issues is facilitated and carried out. In general, participatory-deliberative democracy theorists distrust the ways that media and political elites shape public opinion. They call for fundamental changes in opinion formation as a necessary condition for improving democracy.

Conclusion

Public opinion theories have undergone many changes since they were first developed during the Enlightenment era. Optimistic normative theories were initially proposed in which extension of the right to vote was expected to lead to better public opinion formation and more useful and direct public involvement in government. These notions gave way in the 1920s to pessimistic normative and empirical theories that explained the popularity of totalitarian governments, as well as the power of

mass media and of propaganda. By the 1960s, empirical research on media had demonstrated that media had only a limited ability to form opinions and attitudes. Pluralistic theories of democracy explained why there could be diversity in opinions and widespread ignorance about politics but stability in voting for mainstream political parties. The cognitive turn in media research found that media could sometimes play a significant but problematic role in opinion formation. Finally, participatory and deliberative democracy theories have called for new strategies of opinion formation that will allow the public to play a more direct and useful role in democracy.

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See also Agenda-Setting Theory; Attitude Theory; Deliberative Democratic Theories; Journalism and Theories of the Press; Media Effects Theories; Ordinary Democracy; Public Sphere; Propaganda Theory; Two-Step and Multi-Step Flow

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PUBLIC SPHERE

Public sphere is not an exotic concept from critical theory. Although the popularity of the term in the English-speaking world in the past 2 decades is

primarily indebted to the translation of Jürgen Habermas's influential work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, its original German term *Öffentlichkeit* can be translated into more familiar ideas such as publicity, the public, publicness, and openness. Thus, inquiries about the notion should not be limited to the historically specific bourgeois space implied by the English term. In fact, the notion of the public sphere runs deeply through the history of Western political philosophy, and the ways in which the public-private distinction is drawn and reformulated have always been one of the key prisms through which diverse spectrums of political philosophies diverge.

One of the most important contributions of the idea of the public sphere to communication theory is its explicit emphasis on the forms and modes of communication as central to political and public life. The public sphere is indispensable in understanding the political commitment and the moral vision of communication theory. The concept is central to the study of public discourse, media, political communication, and deliberative democracy.

History of a Concept

The origin of the idea of the public sphere can be traced back to ancient Greece. Although there are disputes about the precise characteristics of the ancient public sphere, I rely here mainly on Hannah Arendt whose work still remains one of the most influential reference points. The public sphere, for the Greeks, stood in a sharp opposition to the private realm. The private realm such as the household, home, and family was not something precious to be protected from the vagaries of institutional power as we moderns think, but instead a realm of deprivation. Privacy meant being deprived of things essential to humans, that is, of being seen and heard by other people. This divested nature of the private realm is illustrated by an etymological fact that the current English word *idiot* comes from the Greek word for private. The private realm was bound to the necessity of life and was mainly the place of production (slaves) and of reproduction (women).

The public realm, on the other hand, was the realm of politics, action, and freedom. It was the

space of appearance where one could be seen and be heard by other humans. The presence of others and the plurality of agents constituted the sine qua non of the public realm. In various public settings, such as democratic assemblies, courts, theaters, and battlefields, men (and men only) strived to excel and distinguish themselves from all others. Unlike the private realm where necessity of life yoked everyone equally, the public realm was reserved for individual excellence. Words and deeds were the chief means to acquire excellence, and the best reward for excellence performed in the public realm was immortal fame. Men, as finite beings, were eager to achieve fame that could outlast not only the moment of speech and action, but also the life of the doer of great deeds and the speaker of great words.

Glory, however, always went hand in hand with doom. The public sphere was also full of dangers. Participants in the public realm risked revelation of oneself to others and thus possible humiliation, to say the least. Just as one could achieve excellence and glory, so could he be subject to shame and censure, depending upon his public performance. As Arendt vividly shows, the public sphere was filled with a shining, yet at the same time harsh light.

The meaning of the public realm as a place for glory and fame persisted in the Middle Ages. Habermas captures the characteristics of the public realm in this era with the phrase representative public sphere, or representative publicity. The representative public sphere was confined to one person: the feudal lord. It was public in the sense that the glory of the feudal lord was shown to all members of the society. The various festivals including jousting matches, dances, and theater as well as various symbols such as badges, arms, dress, and coiffure were publicly staged to signify the dignity of the monarch. The feudal pomp and its public display were critical in maintaining and even creating power and authority. The publicity of ceremonial splendor made visible an otherwise invisible political order. The representative public sphere was modeled on theatrical spectacle and staged "before" rather than "for" the people. The common people were a necessary part of the representative publicity, but excluded from its glory.

With the Enlightenment emerged a new meaning of the public: an assembly of reasoning citizens.

The public as a political power that compels state authority to legitimate itself before public opinion is a modern phenomenon. Habermas details the process by focusing on the emergence of the middle-class public in the 18th-century and early 19th-century Europe. With the development of capitalism, a new stratum of the bourgeoisie arose occupying a central position within the public. They were from the outset a reading public and soon came to publicly criticize the activities of authorities that hitherto remained in secrecy. The public sphere in the 18th century was already a counter public sphere in the sense that it emerged through a critique of the established authority and power of the absolutist state.

Salons, coffee houses, and table societies provided forums for free access and open discussion and organized critical rational debate among private individuals. Public opinion came into existence as the outcome of the critical reflection of the public. Previously regarded as vulgar opinion or popular sentiment, public opinion now became the only legitimate source that could bring rule into convergence with reason. Although Habermas admits that the identification of property owners with human beings can be an ideology, he understands the bourgeois public sphere as a discursive realm where unprecedented progress—enlightenment and rationality—could be achieved.

Habermas's theorizing of the public sphere has stimulated a wide range of theoretical and historical studies as well as numerous critics. The following section will focus on two major lingering problems in further developing the notion of the public sphere in the field of communication: (a) the problem of embodiment and (b) the problem of dialogue as the main medium for participating in the public sphere.

The Problematic of Embodiment

Theories of the public sphere rest upon certain accounts of selfhood. The self as a participant in the public sphere must be able to set aside, bracket, and rise above everything particular and personal. Private interests, intense inner feelings, and idiosyncratic partiality are to be suspended. The subjects of publicity are expected to imagine a certain distance or indifference to such particularities as race, gender, class, and culture, which is a process

of abstracting the self from one's own particular absolute. At the kernel of the theories of the public sphere lies the art of self-abstraction.

The art of self-abstraction has also been a key bone of contention. On the one hand, self-abstraction, especially in the long tradition influenced by stoicism, has been regarded as a virtue. Publicity plays a crucial role in providing its participants with a valuable opportunity of self-regulation that can lead toward openness to others. The art of self-abstraction, however, can be not only the ethical moment of transcending the particular, but also a major source of domination because the ability to abstract oneself in publicity, contrary to the rhetoric of openness to all, has always been an unequally available and distributed resource.

The logic of self-abstraction provides a privilege for those whose bodies are unmarked: the male, the White, and the middle class. As Michael Warner explains, self-abstraction from male bodies confirms masculinity, whereas self-abstraction from female bodies denies femininity. Although all individuals as subjects of the public sphere are asked to leave out their particularities, certain particularities such as Whiteness or maleness are scarcely even imagined as particularities. In the face of existing inequalities, this bracketing of the personal can nurture rather than constrain privilege in class, race, and gender. Embodiment as a subject of the public realm still remains not only one of the most significant sites of intergroup struggle, but also a guiding question for theoretical endeavors that imagine alternative forms of the public sphere.

Dialogue as Main Medium of Participation

Discussions about the public sphere have long been haunted by the normative, or privileged, form of communication: dialogue. Theories of the public sphere usually champion procedural norms derived from idealized models of conversation among informed citizens. Although he modifies the model later, Habermas, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, elevates face-to-face dialogue, whether conceptualized as rational interaction or critical discussion. Face-to-face discussion, for him, was the vehicle and process of enlightenment. The outcome from discussion was thought to be in accord with reason, and true

judgment could be formed through discussion. Even public opinion and the public cannot be separated from discussion. Public opinion is the outcome of discussion among private individuals, and it is through discussion that individuals form a public. Although the coffee houses of England, the salons of France, the table societies of Germany differed in various ways, they shared one commonality in that they all organized discussion among private people. Face-to-face interaction in assembly was bestowed as the primary medium of participation in the public sphere.

Habermas's acclamation of conversation goes hand in hand with his distrust of mass communication. Although he understands the print media of the 18th century as the preeminent institution of the public sphere, he sees in the rise of mass-media spectacles the refeudalization of the public sphere. The dream of the public sphere as a locus of embodied dialogue easily compels one to see the contemporary media-saturated milieu as a nightmare, clouding explanations of publicness in the current social and technological condition. The accounts of publicness as dialogical conversation in a shared locale cannot satisfactorily explain modern societies. The development of modern media has created a new form of publicness that is despatialized and nondialogical. The mediated publicness is neither confined to the locale nor necessitates conversation between individuals.

Habermas's privileging of face-to-face conversation becomes more problematic with regard to the possibility of a global public sphere. The size of the public who can take part in face-to-face conversation has natural limitations. Ancient philosophers, including Plato and Aristotle, and modern thinkers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau all advocate the small-scale body politic. Until around the 18th century, there was little dissent from the view that a good polity had to be small in territory and population. Is face-to-face interaction, then, possible on a large scale? In other words, how is the public sphere possible in a geographically dispersed society? The global public sphere becomes

an oxymoron as long as the public sphere remains a place of embodied conversation.

Finally, the adherence to dialogue diminishes the importance of other forms of communication that are spectacular, visible, unruly, physical, and violent. Although political participation in the public sphere has been, and is still, widely conceived within the frame of civil, reasoned, verbal discourse, the restriction of democracy to civil discourse can easily make marginal groups voiceless in the public sphere. Given the history of various exclusions from the public sphere governed by the rules of reason and decorum, the seeds of exclusion may be already sown in the very encouragement of and insistence on dialogue. With the growing skepticism about the reigning protocols of what counts as rational-critical debate, the search for the means of creating the public sphere(s) needs to embrace other modes of public action that disrupt dialogue.

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See also Classical Rhetorical Theory; Communicative Action Theory; Critical Theory; Deliberative Democratic Theories; Frankfurt School; Media Democracy; Public Opinion Theories; Rhetorical Theory

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QUEER THEORY

Taking back the term *queer* to invest it with radically new meanings, including multiple uses of the word as a noun and a verb, queer theory has become an important intellectual movement in recent times. Influenced by poststructuralism, deconstructionism, and postmodernism, queer theory began its development in the U.S. academy, beginning in the humanities in 1990 and in communication in 1995. All of these intellectual traditions that gave rise to queer theory question and challenge, in various ways, traditional notions of certainty, identity, and truth. Used by Gloria Anzaldúa since the 1980s, queer theory, as a provocative phrase and a deliberately disruptive theoretical move, however, is often attributed to Teresa de Lauretis. Although its name might suggest that it is a more formal propositional theory, queer theory is, in reality, a more general approach to theory, research, and cultural politics. It offers a fresh perspective and a set of tools to critically examine, analyze, and understand social relationships, particularly those organized around current constructions of sexuality and desire. In addition, it highlights the centrality of power and power relations in those relationships and the need to examine and understand them in their proper context, historically, geographically, and politically.

Queer theory also offers an approach for engaging in social action, participating in political activism, and contributing to cultural politics. In simpler terms, queer theory is a new lens and unique

perspective that can be used to examine and understand social relations and cultural hierarchies. As a new lens, it is constantly shifting and changing; as a unique perspective, it is continuously reevaluating its utility and historical applications to contemporary issues. For example, queer theory calls our attention to how heterosexual marriage, as a social institution and cultural norm in a number of contemporary societies, serves to elevate the social status and provide numerous psychological and material benefits to married individuals while disadvantaging those who are cohabiting and completely erasing those who do not conform to its definition (e.g., same-sex couples). Recognizing that definitions of marriage continue to shift and change in societies around the globe, queer theory continues to point out different dangers of disenfranchising other individuals and groups (e.g., individuals, regardless of sexual orientation, who choose not to get married; individuals who enter other relationship arrangements, such as nonmonogamous relationships).

Queer theory is a wide-ranging perspective that touches on just about every aspect of communication and human symbolic activity, ranging from how to think about and analyze words and labels to how to think about social groups to how to think about desire, marriage, and institutions generally. This entry provides an overview of queer theory by exploring its foundational concepts, conceptual terrain, applications in communication, and current issues associated with its development.

Queer theory emerged from gay and lesbian studies in the United States, which sought to accurately

represent the lives, experiences, struggles, and contributions of gays, lesbians, and other sexual minorities. Early work in queer theory was influenced largely by the work of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Its focus is on the deconstruction, or dismantling and challenging, of current sexual systems that affect individuals across the spectrum of sexual expressions and desires, including dominant and marginalized sexualities. Queer theory examines the hegemony of heterosexuality—the ways in which heterosexuality provides the norm for current cultural arrangements. John Elia's analysis of relationship construction and Kent Drummond's work on performance of sexual desire exemplify this first-generation research in queer theory. The second-generation work in queer theory, represented by the scholarship of Wenshu Lee, Martin Manalansan, and Jasbir Puar, has broadened its focus to look at discourses of globalization, diaspora, transnationalism, war and terror, and international politics in the post-September 11th world as manifestations of sexual, gender, and racial hierarchies within various cultural contexts. For example, Puar's study of portrayals of Osama bin Laden in U.S. popular culture suggests how war and terror can be viewed from a queer-theory perspective, indicative of the work of this generation. Although their focus is somewhat different, both generations of research in queer theory are guided by a deconstructive impulse—an interest in breaking apart traditional assumptions and perspectives.

Foundational Concepts

One of the foundational concepts of queer theory is normalization. It refers to the process of constructing, establishing, and (re)producing an all-encompassing standard used to measure goodness, desirability, morality, and superiority in a cultural system. For example, in most Western cultures, heterosexuality is normalized—heterosexuality is equated with humanity, and it is the taken-for-granted standard through which all other forms of human social relations and sexual expression and desire are judged and declared to deviate. As such, normalization is a site of social violence (e.g., individuals and groups who do not conform to the norm are treated as deviant or in some instances, punished by law). One of the goals of queer theory is to make the violence visible by unpacking its

power relations, which are often hidden, and naming the symbolic and material consequences of such violence in order to envision and create a more inclusive social world characterized by social justice. For example, it attempts to identify the suffering of individuals and groups who are considered social deviants as well as the social and psychological costs for individuals and groups who stay within the definitions of the cultural norm.

The normalization of heterosexuality produces heteronormativity, another foundational concept. It refers to the structures of understanding, practical orientations, cultural discourses, and social institutions that construct heterosexuality as privileged, morally right, coherent, and stable. Although heteronormativity is everywhere, it remains largely unmarked and invisible. Heteronormativity creates sexual others—those abject and abominable bodies, souls, persons, and life forms that deviate from the heteronormative standard. As the invisible center and the presumed bedrock of society, heteronormativity is the vital and violent force that creates, maintains, and perpetuates the erasure, marginalization, disempowerment, oppression, and annihilation of sexual others (e.g., it produces homophobia; it makes transgender individuals unrecognizable in the legal system). By closely examining how heteronormativity operates and functions in any given situation, queer theory opens up spaces for the critique of hegemonic heterosexuality and creates possibilities for imaging, inventing, and enacting other social arrangements. For example, queer theory allows us to imagine how to create and sustain families and communities that are not bound by traditional definitions of marriage. Although their relationship has a complex and sometimes tense history, it is this type of theoretical impulse and social action focus that connects queer theory to feminist theory.

Another foundational concept is the notion of queer. Originally used as a term of derision and contempt, it has been re-appropriated and resignified in queer theory. It is an elastic, unrestrained, open-ended term with multiple meanings and usages. In queer theory, queer is both a noun and a verb. As a noun, it may mean lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirited, transgender, intersexed, questioning, or different because of the individual's sexual and/or gender presentation and expression (e.g., queer as an umbrella term for the above). It

may also signify non-normativity in numerous social domains including the sexual (e.g., queer as someone who does not conform to social norms and cultural expectations). It may suggest a location, an attitude, or a positionality that is at odds with the normal, the culturally legitimate, and the socially dominant (e.g., queer as someone who is actively working against and questioning the status quo). As a verb, queer is used to identify and describe some radical actions. It can suggest an act of transgression (e.g., to queer gender is to engage in actions, expressions, and performances that dismantle traditional dichotomies of man-woman, masculinity-femininity). It can also be a move to denaturalize—the process of making the familiar and the taken for granted into something unfamiliar and strange so that its underlying power relations may be analyzed and exposed (e.g., to queer marriage is to examine a taken-for-granted institution to understand its gender, racial, material, and national investments). More recently, scholars have expressed serious concern about the racial, class, gender, and U.S. biases of queer theory. For example, E. Patrick Johnson introduced the term *quare*—to call attention to the need to examine how race, class, and gender are always already implicated in our constructions of sexuality—and Wenshu Lee coined *kauer*—to highlight a race-conscious, womanist, and transnational focus on our understandings of sexuality.

Taken together, these concepts are put to use to deconstruct current constructions of sexuality to uncover their underlying ideologies and power relations. The interrogation of heteronormativity, for example, has produced a more complete understanding of the relationship between heterosexuality, patriarchy, race, social class, and nation in various cultural and geopolitical contexts such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Great Britain, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Taiwan, and the United States, among many others. In a post-September 11th U.S. world, these concepts have been used to unpack the intricate relationship between sexuality, citizenship, nationalism, patriotism, and empire. Some of the current research, for example, focuses on queer migrations across cities and nation-states that produce new ways of imagining community, belonging, and citizenship. Others examine queer diasporas that contest and reformulate local cultural conceptions of traditional family

and kinship structures. Some research focuses on queer tourism that creates a complex and uneasy relationship between tourists and local cultures under conditions of global capitalism. Finally, others examine the sexuality of U.S. nationalism and its war on terror in an age of empire.

Conceptual Terrain

As a developing theoretical perspective, queer theory circulates in a shifting and ever-changing conceptual terrain. For example, the primary emphasis on sexuality in earlier work is shifting to a focus on intersectionality and transnational politics. As a critical and deconstructive approach, queer theory concentrates on the contestation of categories and identities. For example, a close examination of the category of terrorist reveals that it is saturated with nationalist assumptions and non-normative projections of race, gender, and sexuality—the image of the terrorist as a brown male body with perverse sexuality.

Queer theory is particularly interested in contesting categories. It poses questions such as “How does a category come to be and what does it entail?” and “How does the category function in the social and cultural landscape and who benefits from the arrangement?” Responses to such questions can provide insightful answers about the historical, cultural, and political circumstances associated with the emergence and maintenance of particular social relations. For example, an examination of heterosexuality as a social category reveals that it was invented in the late-1800s and used to signify abnormal and perverse manifestation of sexual appetite before it became normal and normative in the 20th century. It further suggests that to secure and maintain its normal status, heterosexuality is completely dependent on the abnormal and pathological view of homosexuality—that is, for heterosexuality to be seen as good and normal, it needs to invoke other forms of sexual expression that are deemed bad and abnormal. Through this kind of analysis, one can see that heterosexuality, as a social category, is a social construction. It is hardly natural, and its privileged status in society relies on the vilification of its counterpart, homosexuality.

Another area of focus is on contesting identities. Queer theory views identity as an instrument of

regulatory systems. In other words, the creation of identities produces certain types of people (e.g., homosexuals, feminists) in a society that are judged and treated differently. Such identities can be the normalizing labels of oppressive regimes (e.g., heterosexuals as normal people, homosexuals as sexual deviants) or the organizing mechanisms to fight against that very oppression (e.g., assembling as homosexuals to fight homophobia). In this sense, identities can be used to affirm and pathologize individuals and groups. The process of deconstructing identities in queer theory can shed light on how larger social formations function and maintain themselves. For example, queer theory criticizes popular lesbian- and gay-liberation rhetoric for affirming their sexual minority status and unwittingly reinforcing the homo-heterosexual binary in which homosexuality will always be inferior to its heterosexual counterpart. Instead, queer theory proposes that identities are contingent, provisional, and without essence. Their fluid and ambiguous nature can be used as a site of mobilization against regimes of the normal (i.e., queer as a position and a way to question what is normal and how it came to be in a society).

Applications in Communication

The potential applications of queer theory in communication are numerous. As a theoretical perspective and a methodological tool, queer theory offers important insights about the dynamics of power, normalization, and normativity in a variety of communication contexts. For example, it can be applied to interpersonal communication (e.g., What are the dominant constructions of romantic relationships? How do these constructions empower some individuals and groups while simultaneously disempower others?). Small group and organizational communication could also benefit from queer theory (e.g., how do certain normative identities and practices affect individual functioning in groups?). Similarly, mediated communication research can apply queer theory in many ways (e.g., How do mass media images liberate and constrain sexual, gender, racial, and class performances and expressions?). Queer theory can also be immensely useful in the study of rhetoric and activism (e.g., How can performances of gender and sexuality be queered by highlighting their artificial and constructed nature?).

Methodologically, queer theory provides different ways of relating, gathering, and presenting information that might capture the embodied, affective, and performative nature of human communication, social relations, and public discourse. Ann Cvetkovich's queer ethnography, capturing the mood, feelings, and rhetorical strategies used by lesbian activists in New York, is an example of this method.

Current Issues

As an evolving perspective and a vantage point from which to examine communication and social relations, queer theory faces both theoretical and pragmatic challenges. Theoretically, much of the work of first-generation queer theorists has been critiqued in a number of ways. For example, some critics call our attention to the racial myopia that recenters Whiteness in first-generation queer theory research. Others point out queer theory's gender nonspecificity that ends up re-affirming a male center and erasing transgender subjectivity. Still others argue that the lack of attention to social class tends to reinforce middle-class values. Some note that the focus on U.S. products and social arrangements downplays the increasingly hybrid, transnational, and uneven nature of cultural flow and exchange. Second-generation queer theorists are beginning to address these issues in their work. At the pragmatic level, there is an ongoing debate about the potential utility of queer theory to produce social change and what forms that change should take.

Second-generation queer theorists have been keenly interested in studying new national and international developments in our global world. Such developments include the proliferation of gay and lesbian niche markets all over the world and their corollary focus on consumption rather than politics, the ever-increasing emphasis on marriage and domesticity in gay and lesbian communities, the growing visibility of depoliticized gay and lesbian images in mainstream transnational media, and the emergence of U.S. queer nationalism. Through this analysis, homonormativity, another key concept in queer theory, emerged. It refers to a new form of normalization in gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities. Homonormativity is characterized by a politics that upholds and sustains heteronormative assumptions, relations, and

institutions through a depoliticized gay constituency and a gay culture built around domesticity and consumption. This critical focus on recent developments in gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities in the United States and abroad suggests that queer theory, as it develops, continues to insist on reevaluating its historical applications in contemporary contexts.

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See also Critical Theory; Feminist Communication Theories; Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Theories; Intersectionality; Postmodern Theory; Poststructuralism; Power and Power Relations; Social Justice

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R

RACIAL FORMATION THEORY

Racial formation theory describes political processes that construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct racial categories and their meanings in the United States. This theory counters views of race as a fixed, objective element of human identity based mainly on physical characteristics such as skin color, facial features, and hair texture. Instead, racial formation theory contends that race is an unstable social construct whose meanings change across sociohistorical contexts due to conflicts between dominant and nondominant groups' interests and values.

The perspective that race is constructed, contextual, and contested has important implications for communication studies because racial formation processes occur through communication. The primary tenets of the theory are as follows: Race is a pervasive, pivotal organizing principle of U.S. society; race is an artificial, fluid construction that derives from ongoing political conflicts; political conflicts manifest as racial projects based on links between racial representations and social structures; and racial projects occur at interrelated macro- and microlevels of society.

Ethnic studies scholar Michael Omi and sociologist Howard Winant developed racial formation theory in the late 1970s as a critique of social-scientific approaches to theorizing race in the United States. Concerned that those approaches were reducing the significance of race, and therefore diminishing the potential to abolish racism, they

argued that race is and always has been fundamental to social organizing processes in the United States, including major social conflicts and recurring racial inequities in employment, education, and housing. They contended further that meanings of race are socially constructed and that they arise from conflicts among social, economic, and political forces. To explain these and related issues, Omi and Winant created racial formation theory.

Racial formation theory focuses on processes by which humans create racial meanings. It denotes race as an artificial social construction that varies in meaning depending on the sociohistorical context. The U.S. Census provides a prime example; census forms have always included items that implicitly or explicitly refer to race. The first form in 1790 distinguished Black slaves from White people, while throughout the 20th century, census forms listed 26 different schemes to categorize race or color.

Racial formation theory highlights conflicts over racial meanings and stresses connections between representations or significations of race and social structures. Representations or significations of race include classifications and hierarchies, as well as discourse about race. For instance, in the late 18th century, persons in power in the United States relied on an artificial, arbitrary racial classification system to reinforce and perpetuate a racial hierarchy based on the idea that the white race is superior to others. Known as White supremacist ideology, this typology has been a constant source of struggle among people in the United States. This typology also is reciprocally

related to social structures such as policies, laws, and practices. Connections between representations of racial meanings and social structures form the core of racial formation processes, manifesting as what Omi and Winant term racial projects.

One example of a racial project is slavery. Many White persons conceptualized Black people as inferior beings, which helped to justify relegating Blacks to the lowest level of society and treating them like animals. Social structures such as laws and policies relied on definitions of blacks as inferior to maintain and enforce the racial project of slavery. For example, the U.S. Constitution classified Blacks as three-fifths human. Similarly, White supremacist ideology helped to justify oppressive treatment of native people as well as discriminatory behaviors toward immigrant groups who were not White. This imposed meaning system led to laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. In contrast, the racial project of abolition defined Blacks as human beings and demanded that they receive equal treatment in society. As these examples imply, racial projects can either reinforce or resist dominant representations of race and therefore develop and enact racist or antiracist social structures.

As racial projects develop and institutionalize various racial policies and practices, they can clash with one another and prompt new ones. Due to various racial projects, including slavery and abolition, the major racial project known as the Civil Rights movement arose in the 1960s. This movement facilitated changes in representations of race that altered social structures such as employment laws and educational policies. It also precipitated backlash, resulting in racial projects such as anti-immigration laws.

According to Omi and Winant, numerous racial projects, of varying sizes and consequences, have existed and currently occur in U.S. society at macro- and microlevels of social relations. The macrolevel encompasses social structures such as the government, the media, and businesses. At this level, racial projects connect with economic, political, and cultural conflicts about dominant and nondominant representations of race to form social structures such as affirmative action programs. The microlevel encompasses everyday experiences. At this level, racial projects facilitate forming and transforming individual identities based on

racial meanings, and they can influence how individuals interact with one another based on their understandings of race. The two levels are dynamic and reciprocal. For example, macrolevel policies or norms that support or restrict racial discrimination influence individuals' everyday experiences, attitudes, perceptions (of self and others), and behaviors, and vice versa.

To summarize, racial formation theory depicts race as a sociopolitical phenomenon that is constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed at macro- and microlevels based on power dynamics. This perspective can contribute to communication theory and practice because it provides a framework for analyzing how communication forms and transforms dominant and nondominant meanings of race. Therefore, it shows promise for how to use communication to effect change related to racial issues in the United States.

Brenda J. Allen

See also Critical Race Theory; Critical Theory; Marxist Theory; Social Construction of Reality; Whiteness Theory

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REALISM AND THE RECEIVED VIEW

Many writers describing traditional Western academic culture use the term received view to denote an objectivist, scientific view of the social world. Often the term *positivism* is used instead. More accurately, the term *received view* refers to a point of view that is never questioned, or a belief that is foundational to a theory or culture. It is common for writers to use the term received view to describe contemporary beliefs that need correcting.

There are many instances of a received view in the sciences. One excellent example can be found in biology, where Darwin's formulation of evolution is seldom questioned. There are many recent modifications of evolutionary theory, but they have found little acceptance because of the embedded nature of Darwin's formulation. For example, most biology texts cite the color adaptation of the spotted moth in Great Britain as an example of evolutionary change—as the air around cities grew more polluted and the surfaces of trees became darker with soot, the moths seemingly changed their wing colors, which would help them avoid predators. Many biology texts use pictures of the moths in the polluted areas, which have darker wings. Moths in less polluted areas did not show this adaptation. Almost everyone considers the moths to be compelling evidence of Darwin's evolutionary hypothesis. Actually, the studies purporting to demonstrate the evolution of the moths were poorly done and should not be considered compelling evidence. It appears that the scientists gathering the data were influenced by their wish to find the darker wings. Recently, however, when other scientists pointed out the flaws in the studies, they incurred a good deal of institutional and personal criticism. The researchers that questioned the data about the moths did not question evolution, but only one piece of evidence that is used in its support.

Close examination of the history of science shows that questioning a received view is the way to real discovery. Albert Einstein is universally considered to be the most important physicist of the 20th century. He made his greatest contributions by questioning typical beliefs in physics. Quantum mechanics could well be described as the received view of particle physics, and Einstein questioned the system till the day he died. Richard Feynman, a prominent Nobel Laureate in physics, repeatedly has pointed out that the task of the scientist is to question traditional knowledge and to look for better ways of organizing knowledge.

Realism

The term realism has had many interpretations over the years. Typically, it has been taken to denote the opposite of phenomenology, which holds that reality is actually only the constructions that we make of sense experience rather than the

experience itself. George Berkeley reasoned that when we see a house, we actually see bricks, shingles, and boards, but the concept house is something constructed by our minds. Others point out that the organizing concept house is actually an aspect of language rather than of perception.

Another approach to realism involves a shorthand way of referring to a conservative empiricism. This view denies the reality of intervening variables, such as motivation, instinct, and the like. A prominent empiricist in psychology, B. F. Skinner, was fond of referring to a black box of concepts in psychology that were useful but that could not be directly apprehended. A conservative empiricism may keep us from believing in mental telepathy, subliminal persuasion, and ghosts, but it also has its problems. Many perfectly sensible entities, such as attitude, are hard to defend from an empirical point of view. If we cannot believe in gravity, we cannot believe in attitudes or black holes and end up admitting that they are actually only intervening constructs. Charles Pavitt introduced a better construct, scientific realism, which enables us to allow a measure of reality to these constructs. Recent advances in cognitive psychology and magnetic-resonance scanning provide justification for believing that attitudes are real entities. In addition, Steven Pinker's description of how the mind works provides a strong underpinning for a conservative empiricism.

The Received View in Communication Theory

Many times communication theorists are guilty of simply assuming the validity of theoretical approaches, much like the biologists and the moths. Nonverbal communication is an excellent example of an area that has sometimes relied on a received view—the idea that nonverbal signals reveal a person's true feelings, while the spoken word is a less reliable means of interpretation. This belief relies as well on the assumption of the existence of an unconscious mind. Unintentional acts are often attributed to unspoken desires, which are, on the face of it, unprovable. If a psychologist tells a patient that the patient's behavior reflects his unconscious hatred of women, and the patient protests that he really does not hate women, the psychologist replies that of course he does not

think so because the hatred occurs in the unconscious mind. This circular reasoning has received much criticism, but belief in the unconscious still persists.

As another example, educators often assume that people wish to express themselves, and when a student is reluctant to participate in class or in a discussion, the student is suffering from social fears, sometimes called communication apprehension. Actually, many persons simply do not talk as much as others.

As a third example, a received view in persuasive communication assumes that messages cause attitude change, attitude change creates behavioral intentions, and behavior intentions create behavior. This model is usually demonstrated by elaborate measurement and complicated structural statistics. Examination of the effect sizes of these models strains belief in these causal chains. Many times a person's behavior is quite different from his or her attitudes. Health communication research shows again and again that many gaps exist between what people know they should do and what they actually do. For example, a recent study of pregnant Appalachian women showed that they knew that smoking might injure their fetus, but they continued to smoke in spite of the knowledge.

Communication theorists need to be careful in constructing what they think a useful theory might be and carefully view their reasons for accepting one point or another. The received view is seductive and persuasive. However, it can lead to serious errors of judgment.

Robert Bostrom

See also Attitude Theory; Empiricism; Epistemology; Health Communication Theories; Inquiry Processes; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Social and Communicative Anxiety

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REASONED ACTION THEORY

The theory of reasoned action (TRA or ToRA) is a widely used and strongly supported persuasion theory developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen to identify components that predict behavior. TRA proposes a causal model of the cognitive processes leading to behavioral decisions. In contrast to many theories of behavior change, TRA can be used to guide the content of persuasive messages or interventions. TRA has been applied to a wide range of topics, from condom use to recycling, exercise to substance use. This entry summarizes TRA and an important extension of this work known as the theory of planned behavior.

Scope

TRA was developed to explain influences on behaviors that involve conscious decision making. It specifically excludes behaviors that are impulsive, habitual, or scripted. TRA would not be used, for example, to explain a frequent traveler's getting through airport security. Instead, the theory has been effectively applied to behaviors such as smoking and blood donation, over which the person has some choice. Although a noted limitation of the theory, its focus on voluntary behaviors is practical when targeting behavioral change in interventions.

Components

The ultimate outcome of TRA is prediction of behavior. The model predicts behavior based on seven causal variables—behavioral intention, attitude, subjective norm, belief strength, evaluation, normative belief, and motivation to comply. This section defines each of these and shows how

together they predict behavior. We begin with behavioral intention.

Behavioral intentions—a person's plans, motivations or desires—are the most immediate predictor of one's behavior. For example, people are unlikely to exercise if they do not intend to work out. The intention to exercise itself may be predicted by prior planning such as bringing gym clothes or buying a gym membership. Of course, motivation can be lost and a plan can be dropped. When one is invited out for dinner, a good intention to go to the gym can be quickly abandoned. Thus, intentions are subject to change. Consequently, the intention component provides a good target for behavioral change campaigns because these can influence a person's intentions to perform a voluntary action such as using condoms or getting prostate or breast cancer screenings.

Intentions are not independent, but result from underlying attitudes and subjective norms. An attitude is a general orientation toward a behavior based on a variety of beliefs and evaluations. For example, if one strongly believes that unprotected sex can cause pregnancy and does not want to have a baby, this person will probably have a behavioral intention to use contraceptives. Specifically, an attitude is determined by identifying a set of relevant beliefs, measuring the strength, or certainty, of these beliefs, and measuring their evaluation as well. Once these steps are taken, the researcher

sums these measures together, resulting in an attitude measurement.

Attitudes are specific to performing a particular behavior (e.g., smoking), not some attitude object (e.g., cigarettes). To determine an attitude, belief strength and evaluation are empirically weighted for a specific behavior and group before they are added together. These relative weights are discovered through surveys of individuals in the target audience about a behavior. The importance of attitudes, as determined through surveys, is helpful in designing intervention campaigns to address the component that best predicts behavioral intentions. Attitudes, however, are only one of the variables that determine intentions. The second, which also must be determined by a survey, is subjective norms.

Subjective norms are the social component of behavioral intentions. Subjective norms are composed of normative beliefs (i.e., the view of others regarding the behaviors) and motivation to comply (i.e., pressure to please others regarding the behavior). Subjective norms and motivation to comply are relative, as a person may be more influenced by one group than by another. For example, in regard to condom use, a partner's normative beliefs may outweigh parental normative beliefs.

These variables—behavior, behavioral intention, attitude, belief strength, evaluation, subjective norm, normative belief, and motivation to comply—are summarized in the following table:

Table 1 The Reasoned Action Process

Someone starts the behavior of exercise because...	She or he has the behavioral intention to walk 30 minutes a day 3 times a week because...	(1) She or he has a positive attitude about exercise based on...	(1) His or her strong belief that exercise improves one's health and reduces weight.
			(2) His or her evaluation of being healthy as very important.
		AND	
		(2) She or he holds the subjective norm that others value exercise based on...	(1) Her or his friends' normative belief that exercise is healthy and helps reduce weight.
			(2) His or her motivation to comply with her friend's beliefs.

Thus persuasive messages could affect behavior by providing information designed to build belief, evaluation, perception of norms, and motivations to comply with those norms.

Critiques

Despite TRA's popularity, a number of critiques have been proffered. One of the major questions regarding the TRA is the sufficiency of attitudes and subjective norms to explain behavioral intentions (and behaviors). Several variables besides attitudes and norms have been proposed, especially prior behavior. Some have questioned why intention is needed in the model if it is so highly correlated with behavior. Others have critiqued the conceptual and operational separation of attitudes and subjective norms, which have been strongly correlated in studies. Researchers have also questioned effect sizes of TRA studies, or how much variance in behavior can be explained by these variables. (TRA actually performs extremely well, especially considering poor measurement.) Finally, the TRA has been criticized for the narrow range of behaviors to which it is applied, and this led to the development of the theory of planned behavior.

Theory of Planned Behavior

Ajzen presented the theory of planned behavior to expand the predictive model to behaviors not under volitional control. The theory of planned behavior is very similar to TRA, with the addition of a component called perceived behavioral control (PBC) to predict both behavioral intention and behaviors. PBC is a person's perception of how easy or difficult it is to perform a particular behavior. It is a function of one's beliefs about control and one's perceived power. For example, in assessing skin cancer prevention, PBC might reflect how people perceive sunscreen in terms of cost, ease of application, and messiness.

Conclusion

TRA is one of the most flexible and widely utilized theories of behavior change across a variety of fields including communication, social psychology, and public health. The theory has been generative of research, although there are several questions

that could be addressed. Considerable evidence supports both TRA and the theory of planned behavior. The theory provides very specific information about how to develop the content of a campaign to target a specific population, the most useful application of the theory.

Kathryn Greene

See also Attitude Theory; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories

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RECEPTION THEORIES

See Audience Theories; International Communication Theories; Interpretive Communities Theory; Sense-Making

RELATIONAL COMMUNICATION THEORY

This entry provides an overview of a set of theories that offer a communication-based approach for understanding interpersonal relationships. These theories focus on how individuals interrelate with others through the process of communication and how different patterns of behavior and

meaning characterize and impact their relationships. Relational communication theories differ in a number of ways, but they share a basic recognition of the constitutive, formative quality of communication; of the interconnection between communication and relationship formation; and of the need for a relational level focus in order to capture the inherent socialness of relationships.

A defining feature of relational communication theories that sets this theoretical group apart from the larger arena of interpersonal theories is the emphasis placed on understanding relationships with a relationship-centered approach. The basic, distinguishing feature of a relationship-level perspective is perhaps best illustrated by a comparison with an individual- or monadic-level perspective. Relational communication theories focus on the combined views or actions of the relationship members that provide a mutually produced description of their relationship. By contrast, the separate views or actions of a single, individual member provide a one-sided description of a relationship. A relationship represents a social unit of two or more members; thus, at a minimum, a relational-level perspective rests on a two-sided or twofold view based on the members' combined views.

Clearly, relationships matter. They form the centerpiece of everyday life, from the most intimate relations to more formal relationships. Theoretically and practically, the study of relationships is an important area of inquiry. Theoretical understandings provide insights to the multifaceted aspects of relationships that may offer practical benefits for negotiating one's way through a lifetime of relationships.

The purpose of this entry is to provide a general overview of relational communication theories. After a brief description of the evolutionary influences on the development of a relational perspective, representative theories will be described as a way of illustrating the common threads underlying and the differences between these theories.

Evolutionary Influences

In the 1960s, during the beginning development of the interpersonal area of communication, there were few theories within communication to build on. To fill this void, a majority of the theories were borrowed from other disciplines, most notably

from psychology. Within the context of the time, this was a reasonable choice and, with some early scholars trained in psychology, a fairly natural choice, but it was one that clearly influenced the theoretical evolution of the field. Guided by this choice, interpersonal theories were largely founded on an intrapersonal perspective, with the individual rather than social processes given primary attention. From these beginnings, the psychological approach—centered on the individual and in particular on internal, cognitive constructs—became an early established perspective for studying interpersonal communication and remains a prominent area of research.

By the 1970s, with communication as a discipline still in the early stages of development, there was unrest with what some saw as an over psychologizing of communication and a call for developing alternative perspectives, particularly ones that put communication at the forefront of interpersonal theory. In a way, the early focus of the field both delayed and stimulated new theoretical directions. During this same time period, the influence of system theory was being felt across the sciences and had a major impact on the study of interpersonal communication and how it might be reframed.

The central principles of system theory offered a language of relationships based on the systemic view of the interrelated nature of events. The theory outlined a general framework for thinking relationally. It presented an alternative way of conceptualizing interpersonal communication that differed from the more traditional approach of focusing on singular objects or events. System theory promoted a more holistic, interconnected view of communication processes and the socially constructed qualities of relationships. Many factors are involved in the evolution of a field of study, but system theory represented one of the more general, early influences in the movement toward the development of relationship-focused theories.

Since that time, a number of different theoretical approaches have promoted a shift in attention by focusing on communication processes. Whether a discursive, conversational, or an interactional approach was taken, the qualities and implications of the communicative enactments occurring between individuals became central focal points. This movement beyond the individual toward communication-centered theories is closely tied

to the movement toward the development of relational communication theories. From the 1980s on, there has been a growing interest in the area of relationship studies and, correspondingly, in the development of relational theories from a number of different perspectives. The following descriptions of specific theories will provide a more concrete picture of this group of theories.

Representative Theories

The theories covered do not represent an inclusive review, but are representative of different types of established relational theories that have been developed in large part by interpersonal communication scholars. These theories all center on a communication-focused understanding of relationships, but differ in the aspects attended to and the approach taken. In general, these theories represent two different approaches to studying relationships—a typological approach and a process approach. In brief, a typological approach is based on a general description of different types of relationships, while a process approach is based on the inclusion of the temporal dimension of communication, which provides an ongoing, moment-to-moment description of the relationship.

Typological Approach

Typologies provide an organizing framework for classifying and comparing different types of relationships in terms of their most fundamental characteristics. This approach has a long history dating back to classical sociological distinctions that involve classifying different societal types—folk-urban or secular-sacred societies, for example. Typologies have been a foundational approach across all disciplines, and within communication, they offer a useful approach for understanding human relationships.

Typological constructions can vary in a number of ways—on the number of categories identified, the number and type of the classification criteria, or whether derived primarily from theory or from empirical study. Some typologies are based on more stable, static categories, such as the distinction between social and personal relationships, while others are based on a set of categories that describe distinctions over time, such as stages in moving

from a social to a personal relationship. These differences will be illustrated in the theories described.

Relational Development

In the study of relationships, an early and continuing interest has focused on the development of relationships. In the 1960s the idea that open self-disclosure was a key to healthy personal relations became a very popular notion and formed the foundation of Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor's theory of social penetration. The theory was based on the proposition that as self-disclosure increased, so did the intimacy of the relationship. Social penetration refers to the breadth and depth of self-disclosure. The willingness of the partners to self-disclose was based on a cost-reward appraisal. If the exchange was rewarding, the partners disclosed a wider range of information and more in-depth, personal thoughts and experiences. Thus, the increased knowledge of one another would serve to move their relation toward a more intimate one, a process that was projected to occur in a linear fashion.

A four-stage typology of relational development was based on the proposal that the exchange of impersonal information would occur in the initial orientation stage; in the next three stages, information exchanges would progressively move to increased levels of personal affective exchanges. It was also proposed that relationships would dissolve with a reverse movement through these four stages. Although the theoretical predictions were not well supported by later research, the theory had an important influence on the study of interpersonal relations by being one of the first to view relational development as a communication process. Of further importance, in view of the research findings, the theory was modified and strengthened by incorporating a dialectical view that emphasizes the ebb and flow of relationships and the ongoing tensions of managing both the openness and closedness of self-disclosure.

A related relational typology is Mark Knapp's 10-stage model of the development and demise of relationships. Influenced by Altman and Taylor's social penetration theory, this model presents a staircase, step-by-step description of the movement upward toward forming intimate relations and a downward movement toward the dissolution of these relationships. Typical types of messages

exchanged in each of the stages are identified as well. In later work, by Knapp and Anita Vangelisti, this model was revised to be more dialectic, based on the recognition that not all relationships progress in the orderly manner originally described, but may move backward and forward and often plateau at different stages of development.

The theory of social penetration provides an example of a theoretically constructed typology that served as a foundation for later research studies. The following discussion of the marital and family typologies developed by Mary Anne Fitzpatrick demonstrates in large part a reverse approach of using research as the basis for forming the theoretical typologies.

Marital Typology

The classification of marital types, developed in 1976, is based on each partner's self-reported measures of their views on three primary dimensions of marriage: their orientation toward a conventional ideology of marriage, the degree of autonomy desired, and their preference for avoiding conflict in marriage. By matching the couples' scores, three general types of marital relationships were identified: traditionals, independents, and separates. The following profiles were found: Traditionals hold conventional beliefs, are highly interdependent, and engage in conflict, but would rather avoid it; independents have unconventional belief systems, are interdependent but with a sense of autonomy, and are low on conflict avoidance; separates adhere to a conventional ideology, are low on interdependency, and are high on conflict avoidance.

In these three pure couple types both spouses' views of marriage are in agreement. When husband's and wife's perceptions are different, they are classified as a mixed couple, a category that consisted of the different combinations of the main three types. In about 60% of the marriages, both members identified with the same marital type, with 40% classified as mixed types. In the mixed-couple group, the most frequent pairing is between a traditional wife and a separate husband.

Family Typology

More recently, Fitzpatrick and Ascan Koerner have expanded this area of relationship study by developing a family typology. The typology is

based on the link between relational cognition and communication. It focuses on the different strategies families use to establish shared social realities and on how these relational schemas directly influence and guide the communication patterns of the family. The typology is based on two dimensions—conversation orientation and conformity orientation. Family members' placement on these dimensions is based on their self-reported responses to a research instrument designed to measure each of the dimensions. Conversation orientation is defined as the degree to which family members are encouraged to participate in discussion about a wide range of topics. Families rating high on this dimension spend time together sharing activities and talking about ideas and feelings in an open, spontaneous manner, while those at the low end are far less likely to engage in these types of interactions. Conformity orientation refers to the degree to which families emphasize a uniformity of actions and beliefs that fosters family order and harmony. Families with a high conformity schema have clear family patterns of authority and the expectation that these patterns will be followed; those low on this family scheme will emphasize individuality and independence instead. The typology is based on the combination of families being high or low on these two dimensions, which results in four family types.

The family types are classified as consensual, pluralistic, protective, and laissez-faire. Consensual families are high on both conversation and conformity orientations, a combination that presents tensions between open communication and conforming to others' views, whereas pluralistic families, high on conversation and low on conformity, avoid these tensions as they engage in more open and unconstrained patterns of communication. Protective families, low on conversation and high on conformity, are the most closed, both in their communication and authority structure, while laissez-faire families, low on both dimensions, are the least connected of the family types with limited and often uninvolved interactions.

Both the marital and family typologies have been among the more extensive and influential for the study of familial relationships. The research generated by these theories has expanded our view of the multiple working arrangements of marital and family relations.

Process-Centered Approach

As indicated earlier, relational theories that take a process approach incorporate time as a key dimension. This approach allows a more detailed accounting of the ongoing communication enactments that form the emergent, dynamic qualities of relationships. The following two theories share basic premises, but have different philosophical roots and thus focus on different features of the communication process.

Relational Control

Relational control theory represents a communication-based, process approach for studying personal and social relationships. When this theory was developed by Edna Rogers in the early 1970s, there were few process-centered theories of communication. Thus, a primary goal of the theory was to give central attention to the temporal, influencing processes of communication that, in turn, form the interactive patterns that are descriptive of relationships. With this theory, relationships are viewed as being creatively performed and shaped, built up and torn down, by the members' codefined patterns of relational control. Through the process of message exchange, members reciprocally offer definitions of self in relation to other and simultaneously define the nature of their relationship. In playing out these everyday social dynamics, definitions offered by either party can be resisted, modified, accepted, or ignored. In this way, members actively influence one another with their individual behaviors, yet the socialness of their actions reside in the jointly produced relational patterns of interrelating with one another. Each of these moment-to-moment enactments merges into more encompassing patterned sequences that increasingly capture more of the holistic quality of the relationship.

System and cybernetic theories provided a general foundation for the relational control perspective with the emphasis of system theory on the interconnectedness of system members and the focus of cybernetics on the members' communication feedback control processes. The main features of the theory, however, rest on the work of Gregory Bateson. Relational control refers to the mutual influencing process of message exchange. Central to identifying these processes was Bateson's proposal that messages simultaneously offer two

levels of meaning: content and relational meaning. The content provides referential information on what the message is about, while the relational level of meaning implies how the message is to be taken. In an ongoing interaction, content meaning plays a part, but it is largely at the relational level that interactors codefine their relationship.

Bateson's distinction of relational level meaning provided the basis for indexing message control movements that in combination form the relational patterns of control that allow the study of different types of relationships and the impact of these differences. The concepts of symmetry and complementarity serve as general examples of these pattern formations. Symmetry and complementarity are defined on the basis of the similarity and dissimilarity of sequentially ordered message control behaviors. However, based on relational control theory, many other communication patterns have been identified that increasingly add to an understanding of the interactive dynamics of relationships and how these dynamics differ in different relational contexts.

Relational Dialectics

Relational dialectics is grounded in the dialogic perspective of Mikhail Bakhtin, who views each interaction as consisting of multiple opposing voices. Dialogue is seen as an ongoing process of the simultaneous fusion and differentiation of the participants' enacted views. The centripetal forces of fusion pull members together, while the centrifugal forces of differentiation push members apart in continuing cycles of push-pull oscillations. In taking a dialogical approach, the theory of relational dialectics highlights the ongoing tensions of relationships and how these tensions are managed.

The theory, developed in the mid 1990s by Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery, rests on the central premise that relationships are socially constructed through the dynamic interplay of opposing tendencies continually emerging in the participants' interactions. Relationships are seen as constantly in flux; thus, relations remain unfinalized and always in process. Relational change emanates from the interdependent, mutually negating contradictions, or in dialectic terms, the unity of oppositions. The life force of these ongoing fluctuations resides in the communication processes of the members.

Among a host of dialectics that shape interpersonal relationships, three are typically seen as most central: autonomy-connection, openness-closedness, and novelty-predictability. Each of these dialectics is based on a both-and notion that captures the tensions of being both connected and separate, revealing and concealing, stable and changeable. The management of these and other tensions is an ongoing feature of life. For instance, when one person's view of being closely connected is seen by the other as quite separate, the oscillating push and pull of opposing forces are set in motion. Relational tensions never disappear, but can be managed in different ways.

Four strategies were identified as being more commonly used to manage the dialectical tensions of relationship: selection, cyclic alteration, neutralizing, and reframing. Selection involves making a choice as to which of the opposites to emphasize as an enduring relational theme, such as selecting togetherness over individual interests. Cyclic alteration is a strategy that at different times focuses on one opposition and then the other in an ongoing rotating pattern—alternating time shared together with time spent apart. Neutralizing strategies involve diluting the intensity of the oppositions by compromising or balancing the attention given to each, while reframing refers to transforming the dialectic in a way that views the oppositions as a unity rather than opposites—the recognition, for example, that close relations can only be intimate with the freedom of autonomy.

Managing the multiple oppositional tendencies of relationships presents an ongoing challenge for relational members. With this theory centered on the interwoven dialectic tensions of competing discourses, the theory brings new understandings of the complexities of interpersonal relationships.

L. Edna Rogers

See also Dialogue Theories; Family and Marital Schemas and Types; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Relational Control Theory; Relational Development; Relational Dialectics; Social Penetration Theory

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RELATIONAL CONTROL THEORY

Relational control theory focuses on how relational members interrelate with one another through their communication behaviors. The theory offers an interaction-based approach for studying the interwoven connection between communication and relationship. The basic tenets of this approach assume that communication is an interactive, constitutive process; that relationships are coconstructed; and that the relational dimension of control is basic for describing how relationships are structured. Given these premises, communication is seen as the process by which relationships are formed and shaped by the jointly produced patterns of control between the partners in the relationship. With this brief overview, the central features of the theory are further discussed and illustrated.

The development of relational control theory in the early 1970s coincided with the growing influence of system and cybernetic perspectives on the study of communication. It was also a time when Gregory Bateson's writings, first published in the 1930s, were being brought to light, most notably with the 1967 publication of the volume by Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin, and Don Jackson. The coalescence of these lines of thought brought new ways of thinking about communication and formed a foundation for the development of the relational control theory. System theory and

cybernetics provided a general theoretical framework, with the more particular features of the theory based on the conceptual work of Bateson. These are discussed in turn.

System theory presents a worldview, not of singular events, but of the interrelatedness of events. The organizing principles of system theory focus on the interconnection and integration of the system component parts that form the larger systemic whole. Interdependency represents a fundamental quality of a system. In other words, it is the mutual influence of the interdependent member parts that creates a system, such that a system is more than, or at least different from, than the sum of its parts. The systemic perspective represents a shift in thinking from the study of action to the study of interaction, from the study of individual members to the study of their jointly constructed relationships.

Cybernetics is the study of system control processes with the concept of control referring to the regulative function of information exchange. Cybernetics focuses on how systems are regulated by the ongoing flow of feedback information occurring within the system. In reference to relational systems, the focus is on how systems are maintained, modified, and changed by the cycles of influence that emerge from and guide the members' ongoing communicative interactions. Based on cybernetic processes, a system is continually informing itself about itself through the feedback loops of messages exchanged among the system members.

From the beginning, system thinking was central to Bateson's theory of relationships. To capture the communication qualities of relationships, Bateson focused on identifying interaction patterns that in combination progressively moved toward a more complete description of the larger relational system. In addition, Bateson's approach for describing patterns rested on his conceptualization of the duality of message meaning. Bateson proposed that messages simultaneously offer two levels of meaning: content and relational meaning. The content level refers to referential information that indicates what the message is about, while the higher, relational level of meaning implies how the message is to be interpreted in terms of its implications for the relationship. For instance, the content of a message expressing that another person is always late refers to time, but the relational meaning is typically seen as an expression of disappointment or criticism of

the other's lack of responsibility or concern. Content does matter, but the relational level of meaning always provides the context for understanding the content of a message, and the relational level is where members offer definitions of self in relation to other and simultaneously co-produce the patterns that characterize their relationship.

The metaphor of dance is useful for visualizing the formative nature of relationships. Just as different dances emerge from the combination of different dance steps, how we move in relation to one another via our communication behaviors forms different types of relationship. Analogous to dance steps, individual messages combine into sequences of recurring patterns that create our relationships. Thinking systemically, the individual messages are an essential part in creating the dance, but of central interest are the system level patterns of the whole dance.

Relational control, as indicated earlier, refers to the regulative function of message exchange and adds another layer to the theory. Relational control provides an index of the influencing process of defining and delimiting the interactions of the system members. In the ongoing process of negotiating how we interrelate with others, the relational definition offered by each of the members can be accepted, modified, resisted, or ignored by the other. To capture this process, three types of control moves are identified according to how a message in relation to the previous message defines the relationship. Messages that attempt to direct or assert relational rights are designated as one-up control movements; requests or acceptance of another's relational definition represent one-down moves; while nonassertive, nonsubmissive, leveling control messages are defined as one-across moves. The interlinking of contiguous control movements provides an evolving map of the pattern formations that are descriptive of the relationship.

Two general patterns of communication formulated by Bateson are symmetry and complementarity. These patterns are defined on the basis of the similarity or difference of sequentially ordered message combinations. Symmetry is based on the combination of similar messages, for example, a one-up assertion followed by another one-up assertion, whereas complementarity refers to message combinations that are different but fit together, such as an assertion followed by a one-down supportive

message. These patterns were later expanded to include transitory patterns that index the combinations of one-across messages with either one-up or one-down messages. Based on the type of control and order of the messages exchanged, nine different communication control patterns are formed for describing the interactive dynamics of relationships. Relational control theory has been applied to different relationship contexts from marriage to large organizations.

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See also Cybernetics; Palo Alto Group; Relational Communication Theory; System Theory

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RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Interpersonal relationships serve several positive functions including satisfying basic human needs for companionship and intimacy, expanding participants' sense of self, facilitating the achievement of life goals, and benefiting mental and physical health. This entry explores the influences on and processes of escalating and deescalating voluntary relationships with a particular focus on explanations relevant to the development of close friendships and romantic relationships.

Communication-Based Cues

Voluntary relationships typically initiate when an individual seeks out another person to fulfill certain needs such as a (a) physical needs for affection,

(b) social desires for interaction, (c) esteem needs to feel good about oneself, or (d) instrumental desires to accomplish a task or acquire a tangible resource. In large part, the initial assessment about whether or not another person may fulfill one or more of these needs is tied to judgments of attraction. The physical appearance of another is often a dominant predictor of attraction in the early stages of a potential close relationship. For example, features such as height are commonly noticed quickly by women meeting a man for the first time and may dramatically impact whether a potential romantic relationship is explored. Women across cultures have been found to be attracted to men with a strong jaw line, broad shoulders, and a narrowing of the waist. Across gender and sexuality, body symmetry and body proportionality are typically considered to be attractive.

Although initial forces of attraction may be sparked by physical attributes, how a person communicates during an interaction also plays a substantial role in attraction and relational development. Individuals generally rate people more physically attractive when they have warm, positive interactions with them compared to interactions with more distant others. Warmth is typically communicated verbally through expressions of positive attitude and a concern for others and nonverbally through smiling, eye contact, and showing interest. In addition, the perceived ease with which a person engages in conversation is tied to attractiveness ratings; people appearing as more composed, confident, and less nervous are often deemed to be more attractive. Communication is also integral to indicating the desire to develop a relationship via the use of non-verbal signals to gain the attention and affection of others, including handshakes, smiling, preening, eye contact, or childish expressions. If interested in the development of a romantic relationship, engaging in extended periods of eye contact, leaning toward a potential partner, physically moving around, smiling, and verbally expressing interests are all ways to move a relationship to greater intimacy.

What is communicated also serves to encourage or discourage attraction and relationship development. According to the rule of homogeneity, people seek the company of others who reinforce their beliefs, values, and attitudes. Such information is largely garnered through verbal communication, so much so that what people say about their

attitudes is more important to attracting another than what they actually believe. Other research suggests attraction is not a function of the particular type of communication that is used, but rather the extent to which their communication skills are similar to another with regard to supportiveness, conflict management, and perceptual accuracy.

Models of Relationship Development

Relationship researchers have sought to account for how relationships are defined by distinct communication behaviors at various stages of relational development. Some perspectives assume that we possess socially defined and cognitively embedded schemas and scripts about what should happen in a friendship or romantic relationship, as well as how we should communicate in such pairings. Other models of relationship development focus on how relationships develop through stages that are defined by particular communication behaviors. Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor's social penetration theory is one of the most well-known explanations for how self-disclosure defines relationships; it states that self-disclosure can be conceptualized along three dimensions: (1) depth, which reflects how personal the disclosure is; (2) breadth, which refers to the number of topics discussed; and (3) frequency, or how often the disclosure occurs. Using the metaphor of an onion, Altman and Taylor suggest that there are three layers of self-disclosure: (1) a superficial layer that is easy to penetrate, (2) a social or personal layer that is revealed to most friends, and (3) a very intimate layer, or core, that is seldom revealed and then only to people we trust completely. Research generally finds that the mere process of someone else disclosing to us increases our affection for the discloser and the desire to accelerate a relationship with that person. However, both the depth and breadth are equally crucial to the process of social penetration, and relationships typically develop with fairly equal levels of disclosure by both partners. According to Michael Sunnafrank's predicted outcome value theory, decisions about how much to disclose are a function of an individual's perceptions about the current status of a relationship and the likelihood of a continued relationship. If an individual believes that sharing new and personal information will encourage relational growth, he or she will be motivated to disclose to the other.

Based in part on social penetration theory, Mark Knapp's staircase model defines five stages of coming together: (1) the initiating stage, whereby people attempt to make a positive impression to another via polite, friendly, and superficial messages; (2) the experimenting stage, where impression management needs are still salient, but there is also a growing interest in making an active effort to feel out another person by identifying his or her likes or dislikes, beliefs, and attitudes; (3) the intensifying stage, during which the breadth and depth of disclosure intensifies, as do displays of affection and the tentative use of the term *we* and/or statements of affection such as "I love you"; (4) the *integrating* stage, when two individuals have decided that they are a couple or a unified team, and they are able to anticipate each other's attitudes and opinions and engage in joint activities; and (5) bonding, where partners formally declare their relationship via a socially accepted public form of relational commitment. In the United States, such a statement is usually made by a marriage or commitment ceremony. Whatever the particular event, a formalized effort is made to declare to all that "we are together forever."

Other theoretical approaches to relationship development have focused on the significant turning points that occur in relationships. Events such as deciding to commit to one another, kissing for the first time, or making up after breaking up are all common turning points in romantic relationships. The rise in the popular social networking site Facebook has created a new avenue by which to create turning points for relationships; declaring a relationship Facebook official has become an important public declaration of one's relationship analogous to some public rituals in Knapp's bonding stage.

Models of Relationship Decline

Of course, not all relationships develop to a point of persistent longevity. Most models of relational breakups generally assume that dissolution does not occur in the blink of an eye. Rather, relationships are assumed to pass through several phases. Steve Duck's model of relational dissolution specifies a 4-phase model of relationship dissolution: (1) the intrapsychic phase, where relational dissatisfaction leads a partner to reflect on negative aspects of the relationship, dwell on partner

irritations, and think about what would happen were the relationship to end; (2) the dyadic phase, whereby concerns about relationship problems are explicitly addressed through communication that provokes arguments, long discussions, or the withdrawal of one partner; (3) the social phase, where people turn to their social networks for support and complain about the relationship to friends; and (4) the grave-dressing phase, where the breakup occurs and former relational partners construct a story about the relationship and why it did not work. Although each of the phases is interrelated, it is not assumed that a couple in Phase 1 will necessarily end up at Phase 4; through communication, couples may be able to break the dissolution process.

Another popular model is Knapp's reversal hypothesis, which represents a complement of his staircase model of relationship initiation. Knapp proposes five stages of dissolution: (1) differentiating, whereby each member of the couple starts to behave as an individual, emphasizes differences instead of similarities, and engages in activities without one another; (2) circumscribing, when communication between the couple returns to a more superficial and impersonal level; (3) stagnating, where communication becomes awkward and discussions of the relationship are taboo; (4) avoiding, where partners physically separate from one another and try not to encounter each other in public; and (5) terminating, whereby the partners end contact and decree that the relationship is over. In contrast to models that specify phases of disengagement, researchers have argued that some relationships may end in a sudden death due to a critical incident such as infidelity or violence. Yet for the most part, people eventually go through some if not all of the stages defined by Duck and Knapp as they decide to leave a close relationship.

Relationships start, develop, and decline through a variety of means in a number of ways. Yet from initial judgments about attraction, to declarations of one's innermost thoughts, to actions designed to disengage, communication is integral to the development and progression of every relationship. Due to variability in humans' desires, preferences, and actions, there are a variety of means by which to reap the benefits of close relationships.

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See also Interpersonal Communication Theories; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Relational Communication Theory; Social Penetration Theory

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RELATIONAL DIALECTICS

Relational dialectics theory (RDT) is a specific application of the dialogism theory of the 20th century Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. Given the scope of Bakhtin's work, several scholars in a variety of disciplines (including anthropology, communication, film, literature, linguistics, and political science, among others) have made use of dialogism theory in different ways. RDT uses it to help understand how communication constitutes our social, personal, and familial relationships. RDT is an interpretive theory of how communicators create meaning through interaction in relationships. The term dialectics from RDT emphasizes Bakhtin's conception of meaning making as a struggle between competing, or opposing,

discourses, what Bakhtin called centripetal-centrifugal struggle. A discourse is a system of meaning, or a somewhat unified way of understanding language and other expressive forms. Inconsistencies among various discourses, or systems of meaning, can create tensions, even clashes, that challenge communicators within a relationship. We are not talking here about opposing forces such as those in Hegelian dialectics in which thesis leads to antithesis and then to synthesis, but rather the ongoing interplay of clashing discourses. The focus on competing discourses from a dialogic perspective distinguishes RDT from other dialectical perspectives in the study of communication and relationships. RDT was first formally articulated by Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery in their 1996 book, *Relating: Dialogues & Dialectics*, and a second-generation summary of the theory is Leslie Baxter's in-press book *Voicing Relationships*.

The Utterance Chain

Central to RDT is Bakhtin's concept of the utterance chain. According to Bakhtin, communication consists of messages that link to other messages like a series of chains, a concept others refer to as intertextuality. Sites of potential struggle occur when the chain of utterances reveals a clash of meaning. Four different sites of potential discursive struggle are common: the distal already-spoken, the proximal already-spoken, the proximal not-yet-spoken, and the distal not-yet-spoken. These struggles are between systems of meaning, not between persons. Thus, discursive struggle is not synonymous with interpersonal conflict, which is a clash between people.

The distal already-spoken is the site of struggle where people in a relationship bump up against culture. According to Bakhtin, culture is not a unitary system of beliefs, but a hotly contested process in which meanings are wrought in the moment of struggle for dominance. RDT-oriented research has identified several cultural discourses affecting relationships such as individualism, community, romance, rationality, the right to silence, and the right to speak one's mind. In the discursive struggle of individualism and community, relationship parties grapple with issues of partner autonomy versus relational connection. In the discursive struggle of the right to silence and the right to

speak, relationship parties negotiate issues of openness and closedness. In the discursive struggle of romance and rationality, relationship parties negotiate issues of affection and working on goals as well as issues related to pleasing oneself versus pleasing one's partner. Clearly, the cultural discourses that are brought into the interactions between relating parties will vary from one culture to another, but the discursive site of the distal already-spoken underscores that relating is immersed in culture, which in turn is reproduced or produced anew as relating unfolds.

The proximal already-spoken is the discursive site where the present status of the relationship bumps up against meanings from the past. Parties in relationships have a history that has developed over time, and the system of meaning from that past always has a residue in their current interactions. As parties interact in the present, they draw upon the system of meaning they have built from past interactions together, navigating old and new as they jointly act to keep or alter that inherited system of meanings from their relational past. For example, a romantic couple who used to be just friends doubtless continues some elements of their prior system of meaning (e.g., memories of prior good times together) as they simultaneously change other elements (e.g., the addition of sexual activity and perhaps commitments of exclusivity).

Whenever communicators talk, they are addressing others, a concept Bakhtin labeled addressivity. In anticipating a response from the relational partner or fellow family members, the utterance is chained out to the site of the proximal not-yet-spoken. Here meanings for self and other are worked out. The self-other relation was an important concept for Bakhtin that shifts our thinking from viewing an individual as a sovereign self to a self in relation to others—that is, self requires other for its very being. This self-other relation involves an interplay of similar and different discourses. The meaning of self (and other) is created from the play of meanings the parties share and those that are different between them. If parties create total similarity, they replicate one another, and self (and other) become calcified and cease to grow. If parties are entirely different from one another, they hold no potential for understanding. Thus, the meaning of self (and other) is a dance between similarities and differences between parties.

When addressivity is directed to third parties who are absent from the immediate interaction event, the utterance is chained to the fourth, and last, site of struggle—the distal not-yet-spoken. Distal others can be specific (e.g., the anticipated reaction of absent family and friends) or general (e.g., the anticipated reaction of society in general). In moving beyond the immediate relational partner(s) to others not present, we come full circle back to culture. Especially significant at this discursive site is the interplay of the actual with the ideal. The anticipated response of the generalized other is an evaluative one, in large measure based on cultural ideals. Because different cultural discourses have different ideals, relating parties face a struggle of competing ideals.

The struggles mentioned to this point—autonomy-connection, openness-closedness, affection-instrumentality, past-present, similarity-difference, actual-ideal—merely illustrate the range of meanings at stake in the interplay of competing discourses. This is not an exhaustive list. Meaning is constructed from the dynamic struggle of whatever competing discourses interact at that moment. But competing discourses are often not on an equal playing field; as Bakhtin's terms centripetal and centrifugal suggest, some discourses are centered whereas others are marginalized.

Centripetal-Centrifugal Struggle

In RDT, power is located in discourses, not in individuals as other interpersonal theories suggest. In interaction, competing discourses often jockey for centrality. Centered (centripetal) discourses are more powerful than marginalized (centrifugal) ones in that they are accepted as natural and normal. Marginalized discourses are positioned in opposition to centered ones, but when put in a struggle with these discourses, hold the dialogic potential to transform meaning in novel ways.

Sometimes, however, centered discourses are so dominant that marginalized ones are silenced. This circumstance is what Bakhtin termed monologue, the presence of an authoritative discourse so overpowering that meanings become calcified. Throughout his writings, Bakhtin remained suspicious of monologic tendencies, no surprise given that he spent most of his life as a political outcast in Stalinist Russia. In the context of relationships,

centripetal discourses can function in ways that eliminate alternative possibilities, calcifying meanings for the relationship parties. For example, consider stepchildren whose conception of the ideal family is limited to the nuclear family of first-marriage plus children. This idealized meaning of family dooms the stepfamily to illegitimate and inferior status, foreclosing potential for the parties to adopt an alternative conception of family in which their familial structure could be embraced.

On other occasions, relating parties jointly act to elide, or avoid, the clash of competing discourses, functioning to separate or uncouple them. Three separation processes have received research attention: spiraling inversion, segmentation, and ambiguity. In spiraling inversion, parties emphasize one discourse on one occasion and an alternative discourse on another one; over time, the relationship appears to be spiraling back and forth in an erratic ebb and flow with respect to which discourse provides the centripetal pull and which provides the centrifugal one. The long-distance romantic couple that moves in and out of time together and time apart illustrates this pattern of negotiating competing discourses of autonomy and connection. Segmentation involves a negotiation of competing discourses such that some domains (activities, topics) celebrate one discourse and other domains celebrate the alternative discourse. For example, a given adolescent-parent pair might expect total openness on some topics (e.g., the need for safe sex on the part of the adolescent), yet expect avoidance on other topics (e.g., the sexual infidelity of the parents). Relational partners can also suppress the struggle of competing discourses through ambiguity, which allows each party to hear affirmation of a competing discourse.

At other times, relational parties engage in talk where all competing discourses are in play with and against one another at the same time, although some discourses are still likely to be more central than others. This synchronic dialogue can vary in its antagonism, directness, playfulness, and polemic quality. If the parties each align with a different competing discourse, antagonistic struggle ensues; this form of discursive struggle comes closest to resembling interpersonal conflict. However, antagonistic struggle is a competition between discourses, not a goal blockage between people. Many discursive struggles are nonantagonistic, with the parties

experiencing ambivalence between competing systems of meaning. Discursive struggle can vary in its directness; Bakhtin observed that discourses can hit against one another through a variety of forms of hidden speech, including qualifications, hedges, and implication. Discursive struggle can vary, as well, in its tone, ranging from serious to playful. Parody, for example, is a playful way in which an alternative discourse can be engaged, usually to criticize it. Finally, discursive struggle can vary in how polemic it is. When competing discourses are framed as win-lose or zero-sum conflicts jockeying for dominance, the struggle is a polemic one. Shifts in meaning that can result from such jockeying are power displacements in which centered discourses can become marginalized and marginalized discourses can become centered. Of greater interest to Bakhtin were those meaning ruptures in which the interplay of competing discourses is transformative, and new meanings emerge. He focused in particular on two kinds of semantic transformations: hybrids and aesthetic moments.

Transformational Meanings: Hybrids and Aesthetic Moments

Occasionally, the interplay of competing discourses creates a profound change in the dominant system of meaning. One of these profound changes is a hybrid, which can be thought of as akin to the making of salad dressing. In making salad dressing, very different ingredients (oil and vinegar) cease their zero-sum, or win-lose, relation of incompatibility and come together to create a new entity: the salad dressing. In semantic hybrids, the competing discourses still maintain their integrity, but have been reframed so that their zero-sum competition is transformed in the creation of a new system of meaning—semantic salad dressing, if you will.

By contrast, the aesthetic moment is a transformation so great that the integrity of the separate systems of meaning is lost and replaced with a sense of complete unity. Aesthetic moments are likely to be experienced as peak emotional experiences by relational parties, moments when the parties are awestruck by the apparent seamlessness and sense of oneness of the communicative occasion. Metaphorically, it is productive to think of an aesthetic moment as akin to a chemical reaction: Hydrogen and oxygen are transformed to form water.

Transformations are characterized by a fluidity and indeterminacy of the meaning being made at the moment. Bakhtin argued that some genres of communication hold greater potential than others to achieve transformations in systems of meaning. In particular, he focused on narrative storytelling and carnival-like events as especially rich in dialogic potential. RDT research has noted that interpersonal rituals in general hold potential to transform meaning.

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See also Dialogue Theories; Interpretive Theory; Power, Interpersonal; Social Construction of Reality

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RELATIONAL FRAMING THEORY

See Cognitive Theories

RELATIONAL MAINTENANCE THEORIES

Relationship maintenance generally refers to a group of behaviors, actions, and activities that individuals use to sustain desired relational states (e.g., closeness and/or intimacy) and definitions (e.g., dating, best friends). Individuals in romantic

relationships, cross-sex and same-sex friendships, family relationships, and even work relationships routinely use these behaviors to maintain their relationships. This entry will first explore how relational maintenance behaviors have been defined and will then explore some common relational maintenance typologies as they relate to various relationships. Next, the entry will examine some of the common theoretical perspectives used to understand relational maintenance behaviors. Finally, the entry will conclude with some of the questions and issues that face researchers who want to investigate relational maintenance behaviors.

Definitions

Researchers define relational maintenance in a number of ways. Kathryn Dindia and Daniel Canary, in a review of relevant literature, found that four common definitions of relational maintenance behaviors exist. The first definition is to keep a relationship in existence. Basically, this definition is understood as sustaining the existence of the relationship, which often includes daily routine behaviors. Examples could include sharing a meal with a spouse, calling a friend to catch up, or saying hello to a coworker. Although research indicates that adult friends may contact one another infrequently, even these rare contacts can serve the purpose of sustaining the existence of the relationship.

The second definition is to keep a relationship in a specified state or condition. This definition implies sustaining the current level of the relationship with respect to particular qualities or characteristics. Typically, this has meant maintaining a particular level of intimacy. However, this definition can include any aspect of the relationship partners conclude to be important, such as attraction or understanding. Importantly, relationships can stabilize at different levels of these characteristic. Thus, it might be appropriate and even desired for acquaintances to maintain a minimal level of contact and intimacy, whereas for romantic couples the desired level of intimacy would be much greater. Consequently, the use of relational maintenance behaviors is, in part, determined by the desired level of these relationship qualities.

The third definition is to keep a relationship in a satisfactory condition. This definition refers to the need to maintain a satisfying relationship.

Relationship research often emphasizes keeping relationships mutually satisfying for both parties. This definition differs from the first two definitions in that a relationship can be in existence (first definition), can be stable (second definition), but can still be dissatisfying. Research in-line with this definition typically uses satisfaction as an outcome variable as opposed to longevity of the relationship (i.e., existence of the relationship).

The fourth definition is to keep a relationship in repair. This metaphor actually has two different meanings. The first is to keep the relationship in a good condition. The second is to repair a relationship that has been damaged. These meanings have also been referred to as preventative maintenance and corrective maintenance, respectively. Although researchers recognize that repair and maintenance often overlap, the first meaning (preventative maintenance) is generally accepted as under the conceptual umbrella of relational maintenance, whereas the second definition (corrective maintenance) is generally thought to be outside the conceptual realm of relational maintenance.

Typologies

The study of relational maintenance behaviors gained prominence in the field of communication when Laura Stafford and Canary identified the five primary relational maintenance behaviors commonly used by marital partners. Positivity involves communicating in a cheerful and optimistic manner. Openness means engaging in the direct discussion of thoughts and feelings about the relationship. Assurances include messages that express a desire to continue the relationship. Social networks refer to sharing common affiliations, which can include friendships and family relationships. Finally, sharing tasks means taking responsibilities for one's duties in the relationship. Although this typology is most commonly used to study a variety of relationships, various researchers have extended or altered this list depending on the relationship under examination.

In a continuation of this work, researchers were able to identify seven other relational maintenance behaviors when respondents were asked about their strategic use of maintenance behaviors in dating and marriage relationships. These behaviors were joint activities (sharing time together), talk (discussing multiple topics, but usually not in-depth), mediated

communication (communicating in a form other than face-to-face), avoidance (evading a particular topic or the partner when she or he is in a negative mood), antisocial behavior (engaging in socially unfriendly behaviors such as jealousy or sarcasm), affection (displaying feelings of fondness or attachment), and focus on self (engaging in behaviors directed toward the self to enhance the relationship such as exercising). Interestingly, this study also examined if there were differences in the use of relational maintenance behaviors between married couples and dating couples. The results indicated that married couples reported a greater use of sharing tasks than dating couples and dating couples used mediated communication more than married couples.

Further research was able to identify additional relational maintenance behaviors of importance in romantic relationships. Conflict management means engaging in conflict and disagreements in a patient and understanding manner. Advice refers to providing social support to the relational partner. Other research has indicated that romantic couples use romantic affection and support-comfort in addition to positivity, openness, assurances, social networks, and sharing tasks to help maintain a desirable relationship.

Researchers identified that cross-sex friends use positivity, openness, shared activities, along with no flirting, avoidance, and support. Other researchers added the use of networks, antisocial behavior, relationship talk, humor and gossip, and avoidance of negativity to the list of behaviors employed by cross-sex friends.

In sibling relationships, even another set of relational maintenance behaviors have emerged. Although researchers have found that siblings use positivity, openness, assurances, social networks, and sharing tasks, they also use confirmation, humor, social support, family visits, and verbal aggression to help maintain their relationships. Although relational maintenance behaviors have been studied in a variety of contexts and relationships, it appears as though the type and use of relational maintenance behaviors vary greatly depending on the nature and stage of the relationship.

Theoretical Perspectives of Relational Maintenance

Several theoretical perspectives have been used in the study of relational maintenance behaviors. The

most common of these theories include interdependence theory, equity theory, and an individual differences approach.

Interdependence Theory

Based on a social exchange orientation, in interdependence theory individuals examine their costs and rewards in comparison to their expectations for those costs and rewards. Expectations are the product of each individual's relational models (e.g., parents' relationship) and relational history to form the comparison level (CL). The CL is compared to the outcomes (rewards-costs) to the individual. When the perceived outcomes exceed the expectations (CL), then one is satisfied. Alternately, when the expectations (CL) exceed the perceived outcomes, then one is dissatisfied. Research has demonstrated a strong positive association between satisfaction and the use of relational maintenance behaviors.

A second construct of interdependence theory compares one's outcomes to the alternative activities and potential partners (CL of alternatives). However, examining the relationship between the level of alternatives and the use of relational maintenance behaviors has not yet been undertaken.

Equity Theory

Similar to interdependence theory, equity theory examines rewards and costs in relationships. Equity theory argues that equitable and satisfying relationships exist when the ratio of rewards to costs is the same for each partner. For example, if one partner had a ratio of four rewards to two costs (4:2) and the other partner had a ratio of 2:1, then those ratios would be considered equal. If one partner has a greater ratio of rewards to costs than his or her partner, then that person is said to be overbenefited. Conversely, if one partner has a lesser ratio of rewards to costs than his or her partner, then that person is underbenefited. It is argued that people who perceive their relationships to be equitable will attempt to maintain their relationships, whereas people in inequitable relationships will make less of an effort to maintain their relationships.

Research has generally supported the use of equity theory as a lens to understand relational maintenance behaviors. For instance, when wives perceive the relationship to be equitable, both husbands and

wives self-report the greatest use of the five primary relational maintenance strategies (positivity, openness, assurances, networks, and tasks). Further, underbenefited partners (both husbands and wives) perceived fewer maintenance behaviors on the part of their spouses. In cross-sex friendships, underbenefitedness was negatively associated with the use of relational maintenance behaviors. Furthermore, equity has predicted the use of maintenance behaviors in parent-adolescent relationships. Consequently, several studies examining different relationships have found support for the use of equity theory to understand relational maintenance behaviors in close relationships.

Individual Differences

Some researchers have argued that the use of interdependence theory and equity theory is inadequate in fully understanding why and how people maintain their relationships. Consequently, these researchers have studied individual differences as a way of understanding why people use specific relational maintenance behaviors. One common finding across multiple studies is that women are more likely to engage in relational maintenance compared to men. Further, this finding is true for each of the five primary relational maintenance strategies. However, more recent research suggests that gender, rather than biological sex, may provide greater understanding of the use of relational maintenance behaviors.

Although individual differences may provide insight into the use of relational maintenance behaviors, the research itself is limited. One study has demonstrated links between communication competence and the use of relational maintenance. Other research has linked social composure to relational maintenance. A recent study examined self-monitoring, concern for appropriateness, and Machiavellianism and found associations between aspects of each of these variables and relational maintenance.

Issues in the Study of Relational Maintenance

The study of relational maintenance is not without its issues and controversies. One primary source of discussion revolves around the best way to explain the use of relational maintenance behaviors. Some

believe that equity theory is an adequate and empirically supported way of understanding the use of relational maintenance behaviors in a number of relationships, but especially in romantic relationships. Others challenge the validity and strength of these findings and believe that equity theory is inadequate in providing an understanding of maintenance behaviors. These researchers believe that individual differences provide a more robust understanding of why and how people use relational maintenance behaviors.

Although the debate has both methodological and theoretical underpinnings, it stems, in part, from different assumptions about relationships. Researchers who believe that equity theory provides a legitimate explanation use an exchange orientation. Exchange relationships are governed by the expectation of repaying benefits. Researchers who contest the use and support of equity theory approach relationships from a communal orientation. Communal relationships are governed by the expectation of mutual responsiveness to the other's needs. One pertinent question is which approach is more salient, or prominent, given the relationship under examination. For example, in a marriage relationship is an exchange or communal orientation more appropriate for understanding the use of relational maintenance behaviors? Further, it is possible that both orientations may provide insight into many of our most common relationships.

Another issue is the differences in relational maintenance behaviors between different relational types. Although the original five relational maintenance behaviors (positivity, openness, assurances, networks, and tasks) appear to be relevant in a number of relationships, it also appears that the different relationship types (friend, romantic, family, etc.) engage in relational maintenance in different ways. For example, in a dating relationship affection is a common relational maintenance behavior; however, this same behavior may be considered inappropriate in a cross-sex friendship, as it could be misunderstood as a romantic advance. Thus, there is a further need to examine relational maintenance as it is uniquely represented in the specific relationship being studied.

Alan C. Mikkelson

See also Interpersonal Communication Theories; Relational Communication Theory; Relational Development; Social Exchange Theory

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RELATIONAL ORDER THEORY

See Conflict Communication Theories

RELATIONAL TURBULENCE MODEL

See Uncertainty Management Theories

RELATIONAL UNCERTAINTY

In the study of interpersonal relationships, uncertainty about a partner or a relationship is frequently

explored as one of the central experiences that influences the development of intimacy and closeness. Uncertainty is generally defined as the inability to predict or explain the attitudes or behaviors of another person. The earliest theorizing about the role of uncertainty in relationship development pointed to the ways in which uncertainty is a negative experience that needs to be eliminated for relationships to move forward. Other perspectives have examined the ways in which uncertainty is a natural and sometimes even desirable aspect of close personal relationships. These theories identify relational uncertainty as the degree of confidence that people have in their perceptions of a close personal relationship. From this point of view, relational uncertainty is unlikely to be fully eliminated during the course of relationship development, so it must be managed or embraced as an inherent feature in ongoing relationships. This entry examines the origins of relational uncertainty from uncertainty reduction theory, tracks the shifting perspective on the more persistent role of relational uncertainty in close relationships, and discusses perspectives that suggest relational uncertainty can be a desirable component of relationships.

Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese proposed uncertainty reduction theory to highlight the experience of uncertainty as a mechanism that affects the initiation of interpersonal relationships. The theory suggests that initial interactions are laden with uncertainty, which individuals are motivated to reduce in an effort to increase the predictability of their partner's future behavior. From this perspective, uncertainty is a negative state that people are motivated to resolve or to eliminate. Two features of relationships are especially likely to motivate uncertainty reduction. First, people are motivated to reduce their uncertainty about a partner if they anticipate future interaction with the person because they need to be able to predict how the partner will behave during their next encounter. Second, individuals are highly motivated to resolve uncertainty about a partner if a relationship with that person is perceived as highly rewarding because establishing an intimate relationship is challenging in the face of unresolved ambiguity about the partner. Given that uncertainty is an uncomfortable state that people are motivated to resolve, uncertainty reduction theory identified a variety of strategies communication partners

can use to restore certainty about an interaction. Engaging in these information seeking strategies helps partners reduce uncertainty and increase predictability about a relationship partner. According to uncertainty reduction theory, heightened levels of uncertainty are an impediment to the development of intimacy; therefore, establishing an intimate bond with another person requires that uncertainty be resolved. Yet research has indicated that relational uncertainty is inherent to relationship development.

Relational Uncertainty as Inevitable

Although uncertainty is a broad construct that was initially examined in the context of initial interaction, researchers have argued that romantic relationships and courtships are contexts that are especially ripe for the experience of uncertainty. Leanne Knobloch and Denise Solomon developed the construct relational uncertainty to refer to the degree of confidence that people have in their perceptions of involvement in close personal relationships. They argued that relational uncertainty stems from three interrelated sources of doubt in romantic relationships: Self uncertainty refers to doubts that individuals have about their own involvement in the relationship, partner uncertainty refers to doubts that individuals have about their partner's involvement in the relationship, and relationship uncertainty refers to doubts that individuals have about appropriate goals and behaviors for the relationship in general. Relationship uncertainty exists at a higher level of abstraction than self and partner uncertainty because it focuses on the dyad as a unit. Self and partner uncertainty are focused on concerns at the individual level and contribute to the broader experience of relationship uncertainty.

Relational Turbulence Model

Whereas uncertainty reduction theory predicted a linear relationship between uncertainty and intimacy such that intimacy increases as uncertainty decreases, scholars who are interested in relational uncertainty have argued that the association between relational uncertainty and intimacy is not as straightforward as it might seem. Following their development of the relational uncertainty

construct, Solomon and Knobloch advanced the relational turbulence model to explain how intimacy corresponds with relational uncertainty and other relationship phenomena. In this model, turbulence is defined as heightened emotional, cognitive, and behavioral reactivity to relationship circumstances. Solomon and Knobloch observed that romantic partners experienced increased turbulence during the transition from casual dating to serious commitment. In other words, periods of relationship development marked by low levels of intimacy and high levels of intimacy tend to be relatively tranquil times in the course of a relationship's trajectory; however, moderate levels of intimacy are marked by more extreme emotions, cognitions, and communication behaviors.

The relational turbulence model identifies two mechanisms inherent to the development of intimacy that might be associated with this period of heightened reactivity. The first characteristic of relationship development that peaks at moderate levels of intimacy and generates turbulence is interference from a partner, which arises when efforts to coordinate daily routines create opportunities for partners to interrupt one another's personal goals. The second relationship characteristic that is heightened during the transition to serious commitment and increases turbulence is relational uncertainty. In contrast to uncertainty reduction theory, the relational turbulence model predicts a curvilinear association between intimacy and relational uncertainty. The model proposes that relational uncertainty should be relatively low during early stages of relationship development because people are guided by social norms for behavior during this time. Similarly, relationships that are highly intimate should be characterized by low levels of relational uncertainty because partners have solidified their commitment to one another and have established expectations for appropriate relationship behaviors. During the transition from casual to serious involvement, however, relational uncertainty is heightened because people lack the social norms to guide behavior at this stage and have yet to establish the comfort of a committed relationship.

Tests of this predicted association between intimacy and relational uncertainty have had mixed results. Some studies demonstrated the same negative linear, or straight-line, association between

intimacy and relational uncertainty that was predicted by uncertainty reduction theory. Studies confirming the prediction have revealed a relationship between intimacy and relational uncertainty such that relational uncertainty stays heightened across low levels of intimacy but decreases much more rapidly across high levels of intimacy. In light of these findings, more recent iterations of the relational turbulence model have proposed that perhaps it is not the level of intimacy that gives rise to relational uncertainty, but rather the experience of a major transition in the relationship. From this point of view, relational uncertainty is not necessarily tied to the trajectory of intimacy; it flares up any time partners experience a transition regardless of intimacy level.

Effects of Uncertainty

Whether relational uncertainty peaks at moderate levels of intimacy or is sparked during any major transition in a relationship, research shows that the experience of relational uncertainty contributes to intensified emotional, cognitive, and communicative reactions to relationship circumstances. Studies have shown that relational uncertainty intensifies emotional reactivity because it sparks more negative emotions and increases jealousy. Cognitive reactivity is also more intense under conditions of relational uncertainty such that people feel their irritations are more severe, they perceive more turmoil, and they believe that members of their social network are unsupportive of the relationship. Relational uncertainty also polarizes communication behaviors in relationships because it leads to more indirect communication and avoidance of specific relationship issues. Thus, this perspective highlights relational uncertainty as an inherent component of ongoing relationships that needs to be managed in order to maintain intimacy.

Relational Uncertainty as a Desirable Aspect of Intimacy

Whereas most scholars see relational uncertainty as a negative influence in close personal relationships, some have acknowledged that some degree of relational uncertainty can be a positive and even desirable quality in a relationship.

Managing Relational Tensions

Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery's relational dialectics theory emphasizes the tensions that exist in close relationships between alternative ways of being intimate. Baxter and Montgomery identify core conflicts within personal relationships. The first tension that partners face is between openness versus closedness, which is reflected in competing desires to be completely open with a relationship partner and wanting to maintain privacy. The second conflict is between autonomy and connection, which reflects the desire to enjoy a fully interdependent bond with a partner while still wanting to protect our autonomy. The dialectical tension that is most central to the experience of relational uncertainty is the conflict between novelty and predictability in the relationship. On one hand, this core tension points to the desire for close relationships to be stable and predictable, which suggests that there are times when relational uncertainty should be resolved. On the other hand, this tension highlights the desire for some aspects of the relationship to be unexpected, unpredictable, and unique, which suggests that a complete resolution of relational uncertainty might not be a desirable outcome in close relationships.

Rewards of Reducing Uncertainty

Other scholars have suggested that it is not necessarily having certainty that contributes to intimacy; rather, the process of reducing relational uncertainty is what partners perceive as rewarding. In other words, relational uncertainty gives relationship partners the opportunity to work through conflict and crisis together. Reducing relational uncertainty gives partners a sense of self-efficacy, or the feeling that they have the capability and the skills necessary to surmount relational challenges together. Research has shown that relational uncertainty reduction need not fully eliminate relational uncertainty in order to increase intimacy—even small decreases in relational uncertainty can generate positive regard for a partner and a relationship. This perspective implies that it is good for relationship partners to experience relational uncertainty because it provides opportunities for them to find cooperative solutions to relationship problems.

Conclusion

Relational uncertainty emerged as a communication construct based on the application of uncertainty reduction theory to ongoing personal relationships. Whereas uncertainty reduction theory argued that uncertainty is an uncomfortable state that individuals are motivated to resolve or eliminate for relationships to move forward, other perspectives have pointed to the ways in which relational uncertainty is an inherent and even desirable aspect of close relationships. One point of view is that relational uncertainty is inherent to the development of close relationships, but that individuals need to resolve it in order to prevent negative relational outcomes. The other point of view is that relational uncertainty makes a relationship exciting and it offers opportunities for partners to enhance self-efficacy through relational uncertainty reduction processes. In either case, relational uncertainty is one of the central characteristics to the development of close relationships and it is unlikely to be eliminated in that context.

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See also Interpersonal Communication Theories; Relational Development; Relational Dialectics; Relational Maintenance Theories; Uncertainty Management Theories; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Religious communication theories assume that the meaning and purpose of life derive from a faith tradition grounded in scriptures (holy books), doctrines (collective teachings and beliefs), and communal religious experiences. The Latin word for religious likely derives from *religo*, meaning to bind or tie together, and the root word for communication is *communicatus*, meaning symbolic expressions of thoughts and feelings. In its broadest sense religious communication is a process of reconciling people who have been separated from their spiritual nature with each other and with God. Most Western religious communication theory evolves from the Jewish and Christian traditions and concentrates on the persuasive purposes of influencing the minds and hearts of audiences to believe in God, inspiring moral actions based on those beliefs, and inculcating a religious consciousness and identity in audiences. The prominent ancestors of religious communication are homiletics, psychology, language, and media theories.

Homiletic Ancestry

For centuries, homiletic theory provided training for rabbis, priests, pastors, and counselors about how to construct and deliver homilies. Homiletics derives from the Greek *homilia*, meaning conversation or social intercourse. Augustine and other medieval writers expanded upon classical rhetorical theory to explain the art of persuasive Christian preaching.

Rhetoric

Persuasive preaching consisted of exegesis, written and oral interpretations of scriptures, and sermons, stylistically embellished oratory. Homiletic theory concentrated on pathos, appeals to emotions; ethos, religious knowledge and moral character of

communicators; and *elocutio*, stylistic uses of metaphor, allegory, and irony. Religious messages attempted to recreate the three levels of meaning associated with scriptural interpretation. The literal level presented ideas as facts, the moral level offered guidance for human behavior, and the spiritual level referred to the faith-based truths found in scripture, such as the resurrection of Jesus. In the Middle Ages, homiletic theory applied both to the art of writing letters and to the art of preaching, and it emphasized the role of the preachers (messengers) as engaging listeners, inspiring religious belief, and moving audiences to act in a morally righteous way. The capacity to understand the figurative language of scriptures and deduce the religious meaning was an essential feature of the ethos of religious communicators.

Genres

Homilies are genres, general types of religious messages that share substantive and stylistic features in response to recurrent rhetorical situations. Many species of this genre evolved over time based on differences in religious purpose and situational demands. For example, the jeremiad sermon came into prominence with Puritan preachers who established religious communities based on scriptural beliefs. The vision and ideas of the jeremiad derive from the writing of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, who informed his audiences that they were a chosen people whose mandate was to keep their promise with God, obey his precepts, and become exemplars of godly people and communities. This religious species mutated into political jeremiads that utilize a similar vision, language, and themes, but that promote the political purpose of contemporary inaugurals and public ceremonial speeches. Homiletic theory generated other species that adjusted the style and content to new preaching situations, such as folk, performance, narrative, Pentecostal, and evangelical sermons.

Psychological Ancestry

One successor to homiletics within the Christian tradition is the theory of revivals based on psychological principles. A revival is a communication process led by a team of licensed and lay preachers who try to persuade individuals within large groups

to revitalize their lives by renewing their relationship with God and one another. The purpose of revival communication is not to indoctrinate audiences as much as it is to change the hearts of individuals so that they understand themselves as spiritual beings whose sins are forgiven by a loving and merciful God. The content of the revival derives from scriptural themes and precepts, and the process relies on simple psychological concepts.

Audience Psychology

The revival audience typically consists of backsliders (people who ceased to behave according to scriptural precepts) and people without religious beliefs. The success of the revival depends on conveniently located large settings and lengthy processes of evangelization that instill religious meanings in the minds of audiences. Revivals do not take place in regular church services or by means of inspired sermons as they did during the 18th century. Instead, revivals occur in huge public meeting areas where the audience hears sermons, prays, sings, talks, and receives counseling for long periods of time (protracted meetings) from a team of religious spokespersons.

Psychological Inducement

The traditional revival evolves in stages of psychological inducement. First, the revivalists attract audience attention. Revival teams schedule meeting places where people can sit close together, circulate handbills prior to the meetings, and advertise in local media and even on billboards to attract public interest in attending this religious event. Revival teams adopt distinctive scriptural themes, such as the devil has no right to rule the world, but Jesus should be the governor of the universe. Second, the communication process creates excitement by identifying with tastes of the common people and presenting theatrical performances. A theatrical performance means that revival leaders act according to the feelings and emotions that they seek to convey to audiences and utilize fear appeals to shock audiences into their religious senses by showing that the consequences of their sinful behavior are likely to be personal unhappiness or even damnation to hell. Third, revivalists utilize the anxious seat, a place in front of the

meeting hall for individuals who resist religious persuasion. Some revival leaders interrogate people in the anxious seat to exert psychological pressure and force them to acknowledge belief in God and commit to living according to scriptural and doctrinal precepts. Fourth, authentic persuasion at revivals depends on the audience's proper religious motivations, not only fear and guilt, but a sincere desire manifest in a spiritual awakening leading to behavioral changes.

Public Witnessing

The converted, those who change their beliefs as the result of the revival, come forward at the end of the revival meetings as a response to a leader's altar call. The converts give testimony (witness) before the assembled crowd that they have sinned, repented, and accept forgiveness from a merciful God. Many revivalists record and publish the number of converts as a quantitative measure of the success of the revival.

Psychological inducements associated with group persuasion did not replace homiletic theory, but instead integrated existing rhetorical explications with psychological principles in order to convert large numbers of people in a single setting with multiple messages and messengers. Revivalists used religious language, but except for Jonathan Edwards and Charles Grandison Finney, they seldom offered a theory about how it influences persuasion.

Religious Language Ancestry

The religious-language aspect of the religious communication tradition can be divided into original and derivative approaches. An original approach connects language explicitly to religious activity, and a derivative approach applies to general social actions.

Original Approach

The original approach refers to explicit talk about God and personal religious experience based on appropriations of the terminology and meanings of scripture. Figurative language—tropes, allegories, and metaphors—allow people to share meanings about the supernatural. Religious language is

analogical when it refers to religious entities and beliefs in terms that humans can easily understand, such as the Holy Spirit as the wind and God as a father. This language is also moral since it indicates how people should behave toward one another. The Ten Commandments—honor your father and mother, and you shall not commit adultery, and so on—present guides for moral behavior. Fundamental themes, such as love your neighbor as yourself, inform audiences about how people can put religious precepts into practice. The denotation of religious language is partial rather than complete; its signification points to features of God, the devil, faith, and doubt without signifying a complete essence for these concepts.

Derivative Approach

Kenneth Burke's derivative approach to religious language, logology, explains how religious phrasing and terminology can be applied outside of religious contexts as a means for constructing reality and revealing motives for social action based on humans striving for perfection. One simple concept is god terms, which are words about the supernatural that point to goodness and subsume all other positive terms. God terms carry the blessings of people who use them, expose the human striving for perfection, and disclose motives for social actions. Justice, hope, and peace are examples of god terms. Devil terms signify social repulsion and designate the shall-nots of social behavior; they function like curses for the people who use them by calling attention to humans' inability to reach perfection and revealing motives that impede social progress. Hate, despair, and injustice are devil terms.

Religious language evokes religious understanding through denotative and connotative meaning that signal religious themes, such as covenants with God and other human beings, the presence of evil and sin in the world, the reality of human suffering, and the need for forgiveness. Religious language can infuse conversations, homilies, essays, arguments, and group interactions with religious meaning.

Media Ancestry

Mediated religious communication builds upon homiletic, psychological, and language ancestries.

Theories about religious broadcasting acknowledge the media's use of revival-like psychological inducement strategies and religious language and themes, but these theories concentrate on the effects that mediated religion has on audiences. The electronic church is a potent technological means for evangelizing, transmitting the truth of scriptures, and revitalizing religious beliefs among mass audiences.

Religious Identity

Religious broadcasting usually incorporates traditional psychological concepts, including rival techniques, to create socially constituted meanings that can help audiences to conceptualize and situate their own religious identity within the larger cultural framework constructed by mediated religious discourses. Creating and viewing religious broadcasting is religious activity that permits producers and consumers to share common symbols and values, adopt similar moral precepts, and acknowledge mutually constituted religious identities. Fulton J. Sheen and Billy Graham accomplished these kinds of goals with their broadcast audiences.

Exaggerations about the role of the religious broadcasting in converting thousands of people, however, have generated both strong critiques and new theoretical concepts. One criticism conceives of the electronic church as a defective video vicarage with negative effects that secularize traditional religious practices in ways that radically change their meaning, distort scripturally based truths, and dilute doctrines in order to gain good television ratings. To finance prime-time network broadcasts, some producers may resort to commodifying religion by soliciting money from the selling of Christian memorabilia in ways that trivialize religious practices and beliefs.

Religious Ethos

Broadcasting creates a unique kind of ethos for religious spokespersons. They act as cultural storytellers and place their audiences within Christian religious master narratives about the existence of sin, the importance of forgiveness, and the need for reform of personal behavior. Audiences of religious broadcasts are active, and they expect religious spokespersons to use symbols, language, and themes

that clarify their own beliefs and experiences and validate a faith-based identity. In doing so, religious broadcasters have the potential to develop a positive religious ethos for themselves and create a religious consciousness among mass audiences that was impossible before the electronic age.

One of the negative effects of religious broadcasting, however, is also a potential to damage the ethos of religious spokespersons and impede audiences' understanding of religious content. When televised religion dwells on the personality and stardom of religious messengers, it tends to grant celebrity and diminish religious authority. If religious spokespersons get caught up in the lure of drama, they may select sensational performances and clever messages to amplify the visual spectacle, but this inhibits audiences' reflective thinking about the meaning of God and scriptural precepts in their lives. Religious spokespersons can promote feeling rather than argument by telling audiences what they want to hear and see rather than giving religious justifications for changing hearts and behaviors.

Conclusion

Religious communication theory explains the messages, processes, and effects used by communicators to influence audiences to adopt beliefs and actions in line with scriptural precepts. This type of theory originates in classical and medieval rhetorical theories of homiletics, expands through the use of psychological techniques and processes, gains its substance from religious language, and evolves into theories about the effects of broadcasting that can enhance audiences' religious identity and consciousness as well as diminish the ethos of religious spokespersons.

Janice Schuetz

See also Asian Communication Theory; Buddhist Communication Theory; Confucian Communication Theory; Constitutive View of Communication; Identity Theories; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories; Rhetorical Theory; Taoist Communication Theory

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RENAISSANCE RHETORICAL THEORY

See Rhetorical Theory

REVERSAL THEORY

See Advertising Theories

RHETORICAL SENSITIVITY

Rhetorical sensitivity, a term coined by Roderick Hart and Don Burks in 1972, is a concept related to communicators' attitudes about how to encode, or state, spoken messages. Although the theory identifies various attitudes in this regard, rhetorical sensitivity represents an ideal way to present messages, based on consistent scholarly ideas throughout the 2,300 years of the rhetorical tradition. Rhetorical sensitivity is a way of viewing the world of human interaction, a mind-set that applies to everyday communicative decisions.

Basic Tenets of Rhetorical Sensitivity

Essentially, rhetorical sensitivity is a set of attitudes that lead to thoughtful consideration of how a message should be phrased and framed for best audience understanding and effect. Three main dimensions of a rhetorically sensitive attitude set can be summarized as follows:

1. Thoughtful orientation toward interpersonal candor involves a recognition that not all ideas and feelings should be verbally expressed during interpersonal contacts and that particularly frank rhetorical configurations, or ways of stating a message, can make some ideas bereft of impact. From such a vantage point, rhetorically sensitive communicators weigh the degree of candor most appropriate for making known one's feelings. Thus, the rhetorically sensitive individual reacts to the total situation in deciding how candid he or she should be. This reaction is often a painstaking process of hard intellectual work in deciding what to verbalize in a particular encounter because one's first thought, one's initial reaction, is always suspect as the best way to communicate. Hallmarks of the rhetorically sensitive person on this dimension are discretion, nonspontaneity, and intellectual honesty in striving for the most desirable interaction.

2. Inventional complexity, referring to the many ways in which a message can be composed or invented, affirms that there is a distinction between feelings and the ways in which such feelings can be communicated and that a given idea or feeling can usually be communicated in many different ways. In a given social contact, only part of the complex network of selves that make-up each individual will be given visibility. Viewing interactions in this manner means that acceptance of individual complexity is a necessary and even desirable part of the human condition. Thus, the rhetorically sensitive individual is not unduly concerned with apparent inconsistencies he or she may make in different interpersonal settings and encounters. Arbitrary social conventions have little value from such a perspective because of the complexity imbedded in each encounter.

3. Interaction consciousness, a term borrowed from Erving Goffman, calls for awareness of the complexity of the other in addition to the complexity of the self. Thus, rhetorical sensitivity includes a careful attempt to balance the sovereignty of the self with the intellectual and attitudinal makeup of the other. The rhetorically sensitive individual will carefully construct his or her content and delivery in such a manner as to best affect the other while maintaining his or her own integrity and sovereignty. To maintain such balance, one must be willing to take the time and effort to choose carefully among rhetorical alternatives.

Rhetorical sensitivity, then, takes a rather distinctive stand vis-à-vis interpersonal encounters. However, not all individuals behave in this way. Researchers have identified two additional attitude sets commonly encountered.

The Noble Self and Rhetorical Reflector

Rhetorical sensitivity is obviously not the only attitude set that individuals can hold. Two other major places within the theoretical space of attitudes toward encoding messages were identified in 1976 by Donald Darnell and Wayne Brockriede who envisioned three major types of people—rhetorical sensitives, noble selves, and rhetorical reflectors. Darnell and Brockriede saw such communicators congregating on a continuum, with the polar points being occupied by noble selves and rhetorical reflectors and sensitives claiming the middle.

Noble selves have a unitary view of self. Self is viewed as singular, and consistency is seen as paramount so that any deviation from the consistent self is regarded as hypocritical. Noble selves view themselves as the primary basis for deciding communicative actions. Aspects of the rhetorical configuration other than speaker are viewed as either secondary or unimportant. Since the self is so rigid, fruitful interactions with others are most likely to occur when the speaker and listener are very similar. Also, noble selves tend to desire control and the opportunity to express their own feelings, no matter what the circumstances. Noble selves are very static and thus their encoding is predictable. Communicative choices are seen as automatic.

Rhetorical reflectors, on the other hand, have no self to call their own. Unlike noble selves, they have no singular self; unlike rhetorically sensitive people, they have no repertoire of selves, for at the end of each encounter, the self dies, never to be resurrected. Reflectors view the perceived desires and needs of others as the primary basis for deciding communication actions. Situational and audience components of the rhetorical configuration control communication choices. The self created by reflectors does not act, but rather is acted upon. Reflectors control only in the sense that they try to get others to control them; they do not want to share in choices or risks. Like noble selves, reflectors are very predictable in their encoding, but are predictable not because of a consistent self, but

rather because of the situation and the other person. Reflectors will attempt to offer messages that fully meet the needs of others and of the situation.

Darnell and Brockriede point out that their typology of rhetorical sensitives, noble selves, and rhetorical reflectors are abstract points on a continuum and that actual individuals can vacillate between these three pure positions; they also suggest that individuals can move back and forth on the continuum, with each person perhaps having an average point near one of the three positions.

Measuring Rhetorical Sensitivity

Roderick Hart, Robert Carlson, and William Eadie in 1980 reported the development of the RHETSEN instrument, a multifaceted, multidimensional instrument that contains three scales (the primary scale measuring rhetorical sensitivity, and secondary scales measuring noble self and rhetorical reflector attitudes). This instrument was used extensively in the late 1970s and 1980s to explore attitudes toward encoding spoken messages. Attitudinal sets toward encoding spoken messages were shown to be influenced by many demographic and socioeconomic factors, and to inhabit a unique place in theoretical space distinct from other attitudinal sets such as those toward decoding messages.

Studies using the RHETSEN instrument revealed that, as predicted by Darnell and Brockriede, very few individuals are of a pure type, but embrace varying degrees of all three of these attitudinal sets. Research has shown that it is often more important to understand an individual's overall encoding attitudinal profile than the degree of any one encoding attitudinal set. Research has also shown that one's position is more a matter of perception than objective behavior.

RHETSEN research with self-perceptual reports also demonstrated that rhetorical sensitivity, although a theoretical ideal, may not be ideal for all individuals in all situations. For example, certain life situations such as job and organizational work environment may encourage, foster, or even demand nonrhetorically sensitive attitudes. Noble selves or rhetorical reflectors may function better and have more job satisfaction than rhetorical sensitives in some such situations.

Current Status of Rhetorical Sensitivity

Although quantitative research related to rhetorical sensitivity has decreased since the 1980s, the theoretical concept has endured and application continues in a variety of contexts such as postmodern communication competence and intercultural communication effectiveness. The theoretical framework provided by rhetorical sensitivity, a construct based on the rich rhetorical tradition, provides a solid vantage point to examine and understand the encoding process involved in interpersonal communication.

Robert E. Carlson

See also Attitude Theory; Classical Rhetorical Theory; Competence Theories; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Rhetorical Theory; Style, Communicator; Trait Theory

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RHETORICAL THEORY

Rhetorical theory is the body of thought about human symbol use. The term rhetoric, in its popular usage, typically has negative connotations. Rhetoric is contrasted with action; it is empty words, talk without substance, mere ornament. This contemporary understanding of rhetoric is at odds with a long history of rhetorical theory,

dating back in the West to ancient Greece and Rome, that provides a long-standing foundation on which the contemporary discipline of communication is built.

At the heart of theorizing about rhetoric, whether for the Greeks or contemporary scholars, is what came to be called by Lloyd Bitzer in 1968 the rhetorical situation. Rhetoric occurs in response to an exigence or some kind of urgency, problem, or something not as it should be. Another characteristic of the situation is the audience—those individuals capable of affecting the exigence in some way. In addition, there are constraints in the situation—positive and negative factors that hinder or enhance the possibility that the audience will be able to affect the exigence. Rhetoric comes into being, then, when a rhetor observes or creates an exigence and offers discourse designed to bring the interests of the audience to bear on it. In essence, then, rhetorical theorists address some or all parts of the rhetorical situation—the rhetor and the degree of agency available to him or her; the audience and the constraints available to them; the discourse, message, or symbols used to address the exigence; how the exigence itself is constructed, created, and addressed; and the larger contexts—historical, economic, cultural, and symbolic—in which the situation is playing out. This entry will discuss definitions of rhetoric, origins of rhetorical theory, and some of the major developments and elaborations on rhetorical theory since its classical beginnings.

History and Development of Rhetorical Theory

Aristotle's definition of rhetoric provides a starting point for understanding how rhetoric has been defined: the art of discovering all the available means of persuasion. For the ancient Greeks, rhetoric was the use of logos or logical argument, ethos or speaker credibility, and pathos or emotional argument to construct a persuasive argument. Rhetoric essentially was the art of discourse, of systematically and artfully thinking through the five canons of rhetoric: invention, organization, style, delivery, and memory. Today, rhetoric is generally defined much more broadly as human symbol use, an idea explained later in this essay.

Rhetorical theory is said to have begun in Syracuse on the island of Sicily when a dictator was overthrown, leaving former and current landowners to argue in court over who rightfully owned the land—the original owners or those who had been given the land during the tyrant’s regime. Under the Greek legal system of the time, individuals had to present their own cases in court—they could not hire lawyers to speak for them—creating the need for individuals to become adept at the art of rhetoric. Corax can be credited with the first formal rhetorical theory; he wrote a treatise called “The Art of Rhetoric” to assist those involved in the land disputes. In his treatise, he highlighted the importance of probability to rhetoric; a speaker should argue from general probabilities or create a probable connection or basis for belief when actual facts cannot be established.

Corax’s student, Tisias, brought the teaching of rhetoric to Athens and mainland Greece. The belief that rhetoric could be taught—that eloquence was not something innate—gave rise to a group of teachers of rhetoric called sophists, a term derived from the Greek word *sophos*, meaning knowledge or wisdom. Today we look back on the sophists as philosophers and teachers who not only helped establish the foundations of rhetoric as a discipline, but also were remarkably current in their understanding of the power of language. In Athens, however, they were not seen in the same light in which we view them now. They were distrusted for several reasons. First, many were foreigners, and the Athenians were proud of their city state and judgmental of others—even if they came from other Greek cities and territories. In addition, the sophists charged for their services, at odds with Greek tradition, so some disliked the sophists because they could not afford them. That the sophists claimed to teach wisdom or virtue, which had been seen as an innate capacity that could not be taught, was an additional source of ill will.

But in all likelihood, none of these factors would have been important except for an accident of history—the survival of Plato’s dialogues. Plato, Aristotle’s teacher and a prominent Athenian philosopher, disliked the sophists because they claimed there was no absolute truth. Plato believed in absolute and unchanging forms—justice, virtue, the good—and used his own rhetorical skills to discredit the sophists and their views on rhetoric in his

dialogues. That Plato’s writings against the sophists survived is primarily responsible for the negative associations of rhetoric that persist to this day.

Classical rhetorical theories were dominated by the ideas of Aristotle and Plato. Plato was interested in contrasting what he saw as the limitations of the sophists’ rhetoric (the subject of his dialogue, *Gorgias*, in which he compared rhetoric to cookery) with that of an ideal rhetoric, which he offers in *Phaedrus*. Aristotle was more interested in codifying rhetorical instruction and in developing a pragmatic approach to the subject, in contrast to the moral perspective Plato brought to the subject. Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*—actually a compilation of his students’ notes of his lectures—offers the first systematic and comprehensive treatise of rhetoric.

The important Greece treatises on rhetoric were picked up by the Romans, who were borrowers; as they took over the Mediterranean, they adopted and adapted Greek rhetorical theories for their own needs. Cicero epitomizes Roman rhetoric in that he both wrote about rhetoric and was himself a great orator. Three of his rhetorical treatises were *De Inventione* (*On Invention*), *De Oratore* (*On Oratory*), and *Orator* (*Orator*), and he developed the canon of style—and especially types of style—more completely than any of his predecessors. The Romans were particularly interested in the role of rhetoric in civic affairs, and for them, it was a practical art that demanded natural ability, engagement in the life of the state, instruction, and practice to fully realize the rhetorical ideal.

When a series of dictators assumed control of Rome, rhetoric became increasingly divorced from civic affairs (150–400 AD). Speaking out about state matters was likely to result in punishment, so rhetoric became largely concerned with matters of style and delivery rather than the substantive content of invention. During the Middle Ages that followed (400–1400 AD), rhetoric continued its role as a practical art, with rhetorical treatises addressing letter writing and preaching in particular.

Not until the Renaissance (1400–1600) was rhetoric revived as a subject for philosophical inquiry. The Italian Humanists—linguists, grammarians, and literary scholars—demonstrated a renewed interest in language not seen since the sophists. They believed that language has a central place in constructing the human world—language is the lens through which the meanings of the

world come into being: Whether making sense of thunder in the night sky or of a political election campaign, humans employ symbols to make sense of the phenomena around them.

Rationalism also had its origins in the Renaissance, with René Descartes playing a central role in the separation of reason from feeling and emotion. This focus on reason would dominate rhetorical treatises through the 20th century, with rational argument becoming the preferred type of appeal, aligned as it was with the new ideals of objectivity and empirical, scientific approaches. The development of a new science called faculty psychology suggested there were five faculties governing the human being—understanding, memory, imagination, passion, and will—and reason was directed at the understanding. This led to interests among rhetorical theorists who offered ways to also address the other faculties rhetorically—and George Campbell's definition of rhetoric does just that: enlightening understanding, pleasing imagination, moving passions, and influencing will. What came to be called the modern period in rhetoric, then, sought to understand the rhetorical impulse as it affected all aspects of the human mind across a range of contexts as diverse as letter writing, elocution (the study of delivery), and *belles lettres* (beautiful letters or literature).

The contemporary period of rhetorical theory emerged from several starting points. In Europe and the United States, propaganda efforts during World War II gave rise to various media institutes that were designed to study not only propaganda but also all kinds of communication processes. British and European philosophers—from I. A. Richards in England, Chaïm Perelman in the Netherlands, Jürgen Habermas in Germany, and Michael Foucault in France—began to take up rhetorical issues—though they did not necessarily refer to themselves as rhetorical scholars. They were interested in language and how it functioned—at a microlevel to create or dispel misunderstandings, to adapt arguments to particular audiences, to create the possibility for reason in society, and to understand systems of discourse that implicitly structure societies.

These interests also found their way to the United States where, in 1914, teachers in English who had been teaching public speaking broke

away to form new departments of speech and speech communication, as well as a new discipline of speech with its own national association—the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking (now the National Communication Association). Scholars in these new departments of speech asserted their differences from English by focusing on the criterion of effectiveness to evaluate speeches in contrast to English scholars, whose focus had been on aesthetic considerations. In the 1960s, this singular interest broadened to include multiple methods, subject matters, and various philosophical starting places. The status of rhetorical theory today reflects this diversity: No longer confined to simply the study of speeches or discourse, it is generally viewed as the study of any kind of symbols. In fact, many scholars of rhetoric use the terms rhetoric and communication interchangeably; both terms can refer to the process and product of a human symbolic interaction. In the remainder of this essay, four major developments that characterize contemporary rhetorical theory will be showcased.

Contemporary Developments

First, rhetorical theory now addresses all contexts in which symbol use occurs. No longer confined to the public domains of classical Greece for which rhetoric originally was designed—the judicial context or court of law, the legislative or political realm, and the ceremonial or display function—rhetorical theorists study every kind of context in which symbol use occurs. Today this means studying everything from intrapersonal to interpersonal to public discourse to social movements and mediated discourse. Rhetorical theories address what makes a public, personal diaries as rhetoric, and television, the Internet, and Web sites as rhetorical artifacts. This means that rhetorical theory also includes the study of visual and nonverbal elements, such as the study of art and architecture, buildings and all design elements of cities, and dress and appearance, to sports, to name only a few. There is virtually nothing that is part of the human experience that cannot be looked at from a rhetorical perspective.

Rhetorical theory has also seen a shift away from a strict focus on persuasion as the central focus of rhetoric to an interest in all of the reasons

for which humans create rhetoric. For some rhetorical theorists, all human symbol use is inherently persuasive—no matter what our intent, anything we say or write, whether intentional or not, affects those around us. Other rhetorical theorists continue to focus on delineating how persuasion works in the variety of new arenas for theorizing. Yet others question the persuasive act itself—is it appropriate to ask another to change?—and encourage research into other rhetorical modes, such as invitational rhetoric, that might be as or even more effective than persuasion. In general, then, the focus on persuasion and its possibilities has led to an ongoing interest among rhetorical theorists in rhetoric's relationship to social change.

Another contemporary trend in rhetorical theory is the recognition that there are many different kinds of rhetoric beyond the Western rhetoric with origins in ancient Greece. Eastern rhetorics, for example, look entirely different from Western rhetorics because of their different cultural context. What is seen as persuasibility or conformity to messages in the West is considered politeness, tact, or face-saving strategies in many cultures. Communication apprehension or communication avoidance is considered a deficiency to be dealt with in Western rhetorics; for many Eastern and Native American cultures, silence is a positive trait. And deception, rather than being a moral issue in many cultures, comes down to a matter of face. Although at first rhetorical theorists were reluctant to acknowledge different systems of and approaches to symbol use as rhetorical, today it is understood that every human society makes use of rhetoric—it cannot not do so. Rhetorical theorists, then, are investigating all of the nuances of the rhetorical act in a wide range of cultural contexts.

The recognition that Greek rhetorics were designed for those who had access to the public domain in Greece—elite, well-educated Athenian men—has led to rhetorical theorizing focused in particular on the nature of the rhetor as well. Contemporary rhetorical theorists believe that the characteristics of the rhetor cannot help but make for different rhetorics. When women were able to take to the public platform, they introduced different rhetorical exigencies, arguments, and styles. African American, Latino/a, and gay and lesbian rhetors have been studied to understand the ways the standpoint of a rhetor affects the rhetorics

produced. Whiteness studies have emerged to suggest the ways that standpoint affects how messages are delivered and received. When Harvey Milk, the first gay supervisor of San Francisco, was first running for office (he ran four times before he finally won), he ran as an outsider—he was gay, Jewish, not a politician, and a New Yorker. His outsider arguments appealed to gay members of his audiences, however, essentially creating a gay community that had not existed previously.

Rhetorical theory has come a long way from theorizing designed to help litigants in ancient Greece and Rome. Rhetorical theory now addresses all aspects of the rhetorical situation—exigence, audience, and rhetor—as well as the larger contexts in which any given rhetorical act occurs. Rhetorical theory cannot be divorced from questions about human agency, the role of symbols in the creation of the human world, and the power of audiences to coconstruct that world.

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See also Argumentation Theories; Feminist Standpoint Theory; Invitational Rhetoric; Traditions of Communication Theory

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ROGERIAN DIALOGUE THEORY

Carl Ransom Rogers (1902–1987), psychologist and psychotherapist, developed what he called at different times over his long career a nondirective, client-centered, and person-centered theory of psychotherapy, therapeutic change, and communication that contains an implicit theory of dialogue. This entry explains Rogers's approach to psychotherapy, his concept of communication, and the implicit theory of dialogue.

Biography

Rogers is often described as the most influential psychotherapist in American history, and some consider him the most influential American psychologist. He spent most of his career at academic institutions—Ohio State University, the University of Chicago, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. The last 20 years of his life were spent in La Jolla, California, first as an associate of the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute and then as a founder of the Center for Studies of the Person. He wrote 16 books and over 200 articles and made outstanding contributions not only to the theory, research, and practice of psychology and psychotherapy, but also to education and related fields. He was among the founders of the humanistic approach to psychology.

Among his many honors, Rogers was elected president of the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Academy of Psychotherapists, and the American Association of Applied Psychology. He received the APA's two most prestigious awards, the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award and the Distinguished Professional Contribution Award, the first recipient of each, and he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Concern for Communication

Although Rogers was professionally a psychotherapist, he saw himself also as engaging in communication work. The opening chapter in his collection of essays *A Way of Being* is called "Experiences in Communication," and late in his life he called his caring about communication the overriding theme of his professional life.

Further, Rogers was concerned not only with therapeutic relationships, but with relationships more generally. An essay from his most famous book, *On Becoming a Person*, offered a tentative general law of interpersonal relationships, not as a dogmatic statement but, as was common for Rogers, as a hypothesis that he hoped would be researched. Another essay from that book described the therapeutic relationship as a special instance of all interpersonal relationships. He incorporated both of these ideas into his "Theory of Therapy, Personality, and Interpersonal Relationships, as Developed in the Client-Centered Framework," and he wrote books and articles about family life, education, leadership, personal development, and group processes.

The central idea of Rogers's theory of psychotherapy, and the central thread of his theory of dialogue, concerns the importance of mutually constructed and mutually acknowledged relationship. In stressing mutuality, Rogers was working against the individualistic grain of most American psychology of his time. Rogers believed that if he could communicate effectively, a certain quality of relationship that we can call dialogic would be likely to develop. In turn, that relationship would be helpful and growth producing, not only to the other person, but also to him as well.

Rogers's Approach to Psychotherapy

Rogers's theory of psychotherapy was derived inductively. Rather than begin with an idea of how therapy ought to proceed, he carefully observed and analyzed his own and others' practices and developed his conception of successful psychotherapy from noticing what worked and what did not. In this way, Rogers was an early practitioner of what came to be known as grounded theory, or theory arising from experience.

Rogers's approach to psychotherapy is based in what he called the actualizing tendency, which was

his way of suggesting that every organism strives to grow, to develop to its potential, to actualize itself. Although it can be thwarted and minimized, the actualizing tendency suggests that persons in need do not have to rely on repair by external experts, but can and do develop their own answers, especially in the context of a dialogic relationship. Originally, he called his approach to therapy non-directive therapy because, unlike other approaches, Rogers believed that the therapist should not direct the client from outside the client's experience, but should stay attuned to the directions set by the client and the relationship itself. He changed the name to client-centered to acknowledge that although the therapist does provide some direction the client is indeed at the center of therapy, and later he used the term person-centered approach as his work broadened even further to embrace other contexts.

Rogers also emphasized the self, but again, not because he had a new and original insight about the self or because he believed that people actually possess a core self. Rather, Rogers learned from listening to his clients that they persistently used self to describe their experience of desiring coherence and continuity in their lives. Rogers helped clients understand how self is not a unitary phenomenon, but a social, relational, emergent, and essentially dialogic process depending on otherness.

Rogers's Theory of Communication

Rogers's theory of communication is a subset of his more general theory of therapy because communication is central to therapy and indeed, to all relationships, and because all human relationships—therapeutic and ordinary—have a great deal in common. The same principles that work in therapy, Rogers said, operate in friendships, families, and work relationships. All relationships can potentially enhance personal growth, depending, of course, on the quality of relational dialogue.

Rogers described four conditions that are necessary for a growth-promoting relationship to develop: (a) contact, (b) congruence, (c) acceptance, and (d) empathy. Rogers used different terms over the years to label each of these and shifted somewhat in the priority he assigned each, but from the early to mid-1950s until the end of his life in 1987, he was

convinced, both by personal experience and the research evidence, that these are the qualities that contribute to growth-promoting relationships. Hence, they provide the foundation for his theory of dialogue.

Contact

Contact refers to the degree of psychological involvement between two people. Especially later in his life, Rogers sometimes used the term presence to refer to this condition. Contact is both a necessary precondition of a growth-promoting relationship and by-product of such a relationship. It requires going beyond merely being physically present to one another or even talking with one another and involves being available to the other psychologically and communicatively—being willing and able to enter into a significant relationship with another person.

Congruence

Congruence refers to a matching between a person's experience, feelings, and overt communication at any given moment. Rogers also called this genuineness, realness, and transparency. The more a person's experience, awareness of that experience, and communication of that awareness match up, the greater the congruence. Congruence does not suggest that one should not enact roles (e.g., teacher or student), but that in situations where growth (or dialogue) might be a desired possibility, one should be as congruent or integrated as possible in enacting a role. Nor does congruence mean that one should self-disclose everything to others or become emotionally transparent; rather, Rogers emphasized sharing significant and persistent feelings that are relevant to particular roles and relationships. Congruence is not an absolute condition; rather, there are degrees of congruence, and no one fully achieves it.

Acceptance

Acceptance involves feeling that the other person is valuable and worthy as a person. Rogers famously referred to this as *positive regard* or *unconditional positive regard*, but he also used *respect*, *caring*, *warmth*, *prizing*, and even Martin Buber's term *confirmation*. Acceptance does not

require liking the other person, much less liking or approving of everything the other person says or does. The concept of acceptance refers to a fundamental respect or regard for otherness, even in conditions of disagreement or conflict.

Empathy

Empathy, or empathic understanding, involves accurately understanding another's perspective, feelings, emotions, and meanings as if one were the other person, without, Rogers emphasized, losing the "as if." Empathy does not require abandoning personal ground and becoming caught up in the world of the other, but being able to imagine very concretely the reality of another's life and world. It is a dynamic condition that involves checking and revising human understanding. Empathy is sometimes misunderstood as reflecting the other's feelings or even repeating the last words spoken by the other. Instead, empathy reflects an ongoing struggle to understand others in the moment and to determine whether one's understanding is correct. Some have equated empathy with active listening, which is appropriate as long as that approach implies an active attempt to listen carefully to the other in the service of promoting a relationship, and not, as is too often the case, as a set of listening techniques employed to achieve personal objectives. Some have associated Rogers's empathy with psychologism and mind reading to the exclusion of the intersubjective experience that happens between people, though more recent analyses see his empathy as relational and dialogic.

For Rogers, congruence, acceptance, and empathy are not merely psychological attitudes of a person, even if Rogers occasionally used the term attitudes to refer to them. These conditions are active elements of a relationship that must be present in a person's communication and perceived by the other and cannot be conceptualized as techniques or narrowly construed behaviors.

The Facilitation of Dialogue

In addition to identifying the basic elements of growth-promoting relationships, Rogers also described the relationships among them and even discussed which might take priority in various circumstances. Often he emphasized congruence as

the most fundamental aspect of effective communication. Later in his life, he focused more on the importance of empathy. Evidence from both therapeutic and ordinary relationships shows that these conditions are positively correlated.

Rogers thought that these elements might assume different priorities in different relationships. In ordinary relationships among family members or work colleagues, or between teachers and students or friends, he thought that congruence would be the most important element because, he said, it provides the basis for living together in a climate of realness. In nonverbally based relationships such as parent and infant or a physician and very ill patient, acceptance would be the most important element. And in helping situations, when one person is hurt or confused, anxious or alienated, troubled or terrified, then the deep understanding of empathy is the most important gift one can give to another.

In an interpersonal relationship, one person's congruence is often experienced by the other as clear communication. In turn, this encourages greater congruence in the other. Sensitive empathy helps the other feel understood and to experience at least a degree of positive regard, which often allows him or her to feel more caring about self. An interplay exists between two partners in dialogue such that when one person listens more sensitively, responds with greater caring and respect, or is more careful in identifying and expressing feelings and needs, both parties and the relationship tend to benefit.

For Rogers, therefore, dialogue identifies a quality of human relationships that can be characterized productively by several core relationship and communication conditions. For Rogers, these are not prescriptions that we ought to enact, but when these are present to a significant degree, therapeutic growth—and dialogue—are probably occurring. They are not formulas or techniques, but invitations that open a space for dialogue that, if achieved in one moment, must be reclaimed in every new encounter. Indeed, Rogers often referred to these as crucial moments or molecules of meaning in therapeutic dialogue.

Rogers in Dialogue

Rogers engaged in a number of public dialogues with other noted intellectuals. His dialogue with

philosopher Martin Buber (in 1957) and behavioral psychologist B. F. Skinner (several conversations during the 1960s) are quite well known even today; those with Gregory Bateson (in 1975) and others are less well known. Nevertheless, these dialogues provide interesting opportunities to see Rogers in action, as it were, attempting to work with a partner to establish dialogue. The public dialogue with Buber is especially noteworthy because human dialogue was both the primary topic of their conversation as well as its intended modality. Rogers and his interlocutors were successful to varying degrees, and theorists, researchers, and practitioners have continued to turn to their conversations with interest. Late in life, Rogers also took on larger dialogic challenges, such as facilitating trust in large-group communities, intercultural conflicts, and international relations—work that led to his nomination for a Nobel Peace Prize.

Current Thinking and Research

Rogers was the first therapist to record his therapy sessions and make them available to others (in the late 1930s), which allowed him to be the pioneer in subjecting psychotherapy to systematic research. The Rogerian approach to psychotherapy has been studied extensively, and although some critics have argued that Rogers emphasized a contained individualism more than a thoroughgoing dialogic or phenomenological philosophy, it is clear that subsequent research in psychotherapy has become far more dialogical and relationally oriented as a result of his contributions. Indeed, the reason Rogers's name is cited less often in psychology texts these days is possibly because his work on the therapeutic relationship has been so thoroughly absorbed into the mainstream.

For example, a recent section of the journal *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, and Training* was devoted to examining Rogers's classic and ground-breaking article, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change," 50 years later. This essay provided his most succinct and well-known statement of his communication theory, highlighting the theoretical and practical importance of the therapeutic relationship; it is remarkable that his theory of communication, espoused in a very short article (7 pages),

continues to attract the attention of scholars of psychology and communication over 50 years later.

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See also Dialogue Theories; Empathy; I and Thou; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Self-Disclosure

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RULES THEORIES

A rule is a prescription that indicates what behavior is obligated, prohibited, or preferred in a given context. Rules facilitate the process of communication and make symbolic interactions meaningful. However, rules also vary across communities, languages, dialects, contexts, and time, so what is understood or valued in one place might not be in another. Rules theorists and researchers in communication identify and describe the rules of a speech community, and they use those rules to explain and predict behavior within that community. Although there are many different rules theories in the discipline of communication, the theories share in common certain assumptions about rules, humans, and communication.

Communication rules have existed since the creation of language, with rules about pronunciation, grammar, meaning, and use. Classical Greek and Roman writings about the practice of communication and rhetoric include proclamations about what ought to happen, and elocution books of the 18th and 19th centuries are full of communication rules. From the very first commentaries on communication processes to present ones, there have been observations about the rules that do or ought to influence those processes.

A more recent beginning in the United States occurred within the Speech Communication Association (now called the National Communication Association) in the 1970s with the writings of scholars such as Donald Cushman, Vernon Cronen, Thomas Farrell, Thomas Frenz, Robert Nofsinger, and W. Barnett Pearce, who described rule-governed approaches to communication. In articulating their perspectives, they drew upon the writings of language philosophers like John Austin, Kenneth Burke, Paul Grice, Rom Harré, John Searle, Stephen Toulmin, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Cronen and Pearce articulated their approach to rules in many publications, including their 1980 book, *Communication, Action, and Meaning: The Creation of Social Realities*. Their theory, the coordinated management of meaning, includes rules as a central construct.

In 1976, the Speech Communication Association held a doctoral honors conference on rule-based approaches to communication theory with Pearce as the host. Four years later, Sage Publications published *Communication Rules: Theory and Research*, written by Susan B. Shimanoff, one of the attendees of this conference. Since the early work in the 1970s and 1980s, communication scholars have conducted substantial research on prescriptions that govern communication under various theoretical titles. As noted below in the section on multiple rules theories and in other entries within the encyclopedia, some of these scholars would trace their academic roots differently. But before naming those different perspectives, let us first look at what these theories have in common.

Nature of Rules, Humans, and Communication

Rule is not the only word used by communication scholars when identifying prescriptions. More than 80 synonyms for rule have been identified. The following list includes some of the most common ones used in communication research: codes, conventions, criteria, customs, expectations, games, guidelines, maxims, norms, obligations, principles, preferences, prescriptions, prohibitions, regularities, rituals, routines, standards, taboos, traditions, and values. When communication researchers write about communication competence, they often compare communication performance against rules—that is, they compare the actual behavior of speakers to what members of a speech community consider obligated, prohibited, or preferred. When investigating such prescriptions, it is reasonable to consider such researchers as examining rules, even if they chose a different label.

On the other hand, some of the words commonly used as synonyms for rules also refer to behavior that is not prescribed. For example, one may have an expectation that an individual will be late to a meeting or class because that is his or her typical behavior, it is a norm for that individual, but if the group prefers timely attendance, then the expectation-norm for the individual is not grounded in a rule for that group. A statement about a norm describes typical behavior that may or may not be rule governed. Rule-governed behavior is prescribed.

Rules Are Prescriptive

The prescriptive quality of rules results in rule-governed behavior being judged as meaningful-nonsensical, right-wrong, good-bad, and appropriate-inappropriate. Paul Watzlawick and associates noted that individuals who deviate from rules embraced by others may be judged by those others as irrational (mad) or ill-willed (bad). The prescriptive power of rules makes them powerful sources of socialization and control. Rule theorists view humans as rational beings who prefer rewards over punishments. Since deviations from rules can result in negative sanctions, theorists reason that humans are more likely to comply with rules than violate them. Negative sanctions may take many forms, including explicit reprimands or ridicule, demands for corrections or repairs of violations, deterioration or termination of relationships, ostracism, disapproval, misunderstandings, conflicts, or loss of credibility, face, or attraction. Tracing negative sanctions back to their source is one of the most reliable ways of identifying rules. The purposeful violation of suspected rules, to test their prescriptive force, has been called Garfinkeling after Harold Garfinkel, a sociologist who recommended the procedure as a way to study the rule-governed nature of human interaction.

On the other hand, minor rule violations may go unpunished because to draw attention to such infractions would contravene politeness rules. In addition, a variety of factors, other than deliberate deviation, may influence noncompliance with a given rule; for example (a) an individual may be unaware of a rule because she or he has not acquired it yet or because it is implicit (unstated) rather than explicitly stated, (b) one rule may be in conflict with another rule (e.g., be polite and tell the truth, when the truth might be viewed as impolite), (c) a rule from one group or culture may lead to alternative enactments or misunderstandings in a different community, (d) a rule from one context or time period may not be functional in another, or (e) a deviation may occur because the rule is judged to be flawed or otherwise infelicitous.

Rules Are Changeable and Contextual

Although rules are prescriptive, they are also changeable and contextual. Because rules are human creations meant to serve their needs, humans can and do change them. Humans also

place contextual boundaries on rules. A rule that applies in one context, culture, or time period may be irrelevant or reversed in another. Contextual boundaries for rules may include references to goals, group affiliations, situations, settings, and roles, as well as other factors. Frenztz and Farrell identified three types of communication rules that vary in their contextual scope: (1) form of life rules are applicable in multiple encounters within a communication community (e.g., rules governing parent-child interactions), (2) encounter rules guide a specific type of encounter (e.g., rules governing bedtime rituals), and (3) episodic rules regulate sequential turns of talk within a specific interaction (e.g., a request for water, after the designated bedtime, should be treated, at least initially, as a delay tactic rather than a legitimate request). Communicators use all three types of rules to assign meaning and to guide interactions.

Some rule theorists make a distinction between constitutive rules and regulative rules, while others argue that the distinction is somewhat arbitrary and not particularly helpful. Constitutive rules are associated with certain speech acts. For example, to make an effective or felicitous promise one must be speaking about a future action the hearer would like the speaker to perform, an action that the speaker would not ordinarily do without the promise. Rules such as these describe how a promise is constituted, but they also show how a speaker's behavior is regulated, if she or he wants to make a promise. James Averill noted that the evaluations of acts that violate different kinds of rules may lead to different consequences. From his perspective, violations of constitutive rules lead to misunderstandings regarding the intended nature of the act, violations of regulative rules lead to judgments of inappropriateness, and violations of procedural rules result in evaluations about quality.

Communication Is Rule Governed

Even though rules can be changed and vary from context to context, it is difficult to know how most communication would even be possible without rules and substantial compliance with them. As a symbolic process, communication relies on symbols that are both arbitrary and conventional. Symbols are arbitrary because there is no direct relationship between the symbol and what it represents. Different symbols can be chosen to represent an object or idea, as illustrated in word variations for the same

entity across multiple languages. To make sense of these arbitrary symbols, humans need conventions or rules for their use. In essence, dictionaries are records of rules regarding meanings attached to individual symbols. In every language, there are rules about pronunciation, grammar, meaning, and use. Although scholars have written about all of these types of rules, communication researchers tend to focus more on those related to how communicators create meaning and achieve goals through symbolic interaction. In addition to demonstrating that rules make symbolic interaction intelligible, rule researchers have shown that constructive rules can lead groups to produce better outcomes and to value group members more. Compliance with positive interpersonal rules has been shown to enhance relationships by increasing trust, liking, and commitment.

Researchers have examined communication rules among peers, friends, family members, group members, students and teachers, juries, medical personnel, organizational members, online communities, political communicators, and cross-cultural discourse partners. They have investigated rules for different modes of communication (e.g., face-to-face, telephone, e-mail, television, and electronic postings) and a vast array of interactional practices. For example, the following sentence provides a partial illustration of the broad range of behaviors that can be covered by rules, with the numbers representing different foci: Communication rules in small groups can prescribe (1) who says, (2) what, (3) to whom, (4) when, (5) with what duration and frequency, (6) through what medium, and (7) by what decision procedures. Examples of rules for each of these foci can be found in the publication, "Coordinating Group Interaction via Communication Rules," listed at the end of this entry.

Rule Violations

Although most research has focused on identifying rules and their implications for human interaction, some of the most interesting investigations are about rule violations. Consider, for example, the scholarship of Paul Grice. Grice argued that conversation is governed by a cooperative principle and related conversational maxims, including rules about relevance and quantity. Communicators are expected to make their comments relevant given the context and to say as much as expected, not

more or less. If communicators flout these maxims by violating them in dramatic ways, their utterances lead to inferences not explicitly stated. For instance, if a letter for graduate school admissions contains only a single sentence saying a student has great penmanship, readers are likely to infer that the student is not a good candidate for graduate studies since information about penmanship is neither relevant nor sufficient for making a graduate admissions decision.

Typically, behavior that is consistent with rules is considered more valuable than behavior that deviates from rules, but Pearce and his associates have demonstrated that sometimes communicators get caught in unwanted repetitive patterns when they feel compelled to continue enacting dysfunctional rules. In order to break these destructive communication loops, new rules are needed. Similarly, in researching adaptive structuration theory, Marshall Scott Poole found that successful groups sometimes needed to change the rules they use for solving problems and making decisions. Sunwolf and David Seibold revealed that potential jurors often bring with them implicit rules that contradict practices preferred by the court and that these rules may interfere with justice. In an investigation of divergent communication rules operating in NASA at the time of the Challenger disaster, Lorelle Jabs showed how those conflicting rules may have contributed to the disaster. Each of these examples points to the importance of rule awareness and assessment. Unfortunately, oppressive systems may suppress valuable suggestions for changing rules, particularly if the changes alter the distribution and exercise of power.

Multiple Rules Theories

The rule-governed nature of communication is addressed in a wide variety of theories and these theories could be grouped in a number of different ways. The grouping that follows illustrates the range of theories, but it is neither exhaustive nor definitive.

Verbal Behavior

Following the lead of linguists like Noam Chomsky, William Labov, and Ferdinand de Saussure, communication scholars have described rules that show how communicators use a finite set of symbols and rules for combining those symbols

to create an infinite number of utterances or other symbolic acts that are consistent with those rules. In studying rules for verbal behavior, scholars have investigated rules indicating which sounds are acceptable and meaningful (phonology); rules modifying words to create shifts in meaning, such as how to make singular nouns plural ones (morphology); rules specifying word order, grammar, and sentence construction (syntax); rules connecting words to meanings (semantics); and rules stipulating actions for accomplishing particular communication goals (pragmatics).

Communication rules theories that focus on meaning and/or coordinated interaction aimed at achieving specific goals include: conversational argument theory, conversational maxims, coordinate management of meaning, pragmatics, semiotics (also includes nonverbal behavior), and speech act theory. These theoretical perspectives include references to work by philosophers, linguists, sociologists, and anthropologists, as well as those from the communication discipline.

Conversational analysis, growing out of ethnomethodology and the work of sociologists such as Garfinkel, Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson, identifies rules regarding sequential aspects of discourse such as conversational turn taking (e.g., speak so there is no gap and no overlap), adjacency pairs (e.g., answers should follow questions, acceptances should follow offers), and preferred utterances (e.g., some degree of agreement should be expressed even when disagreeing).

Nonverbal Behavior

Rules about nonverbal communication, which stems from early work by anthropologists Ray Birdwhistell and Edward T. Hall, can be found in the study of proxemics, or space; haptics, or touch; vocalics, kinesics or gesture and facial expression, and other areas of nonverbal behavior. Expectancy violation theory investigates deviations from expectations, only some of which are rule governed, but the findings based on this communication theory are also relevant to rule theories. For example, the expectancy violation theory predicts that violations of expectations by people we appreciate will be evaluated more positively than the same violations by people we do not value. In general, rules research shows that persons who are held in high

esteem, compared to those with lower status, are given greater latitude to deviate from rules.

Communities, Cultures, or Social Identities

Communication researchers and theorists in the areas of ethnography of speaking, performance ethnography, and speech code theory are concerned with communication codes that specify appropriate behavior within particular communities, cultures, or social identities. This work is associated with the scholarship of anthropologist and sociolinguist Dell Hymes who coined the term communicative competence with recognition of the several systems of rules underlying it.

When psychologists Sandra Bem and Alice Eagly write about gender schema theory and gender role theory, they identify different expectations for males and females and they argue that these expectations are used to evaluate behavior—that is, these expectations are treated like rules. Similarly, genderlect, primarily associated with linguists Robin Lakoff and Debra Tannen, posits potential gender differences in speaking styles and associated rules. Gerry Philipsen, within the tradition of the ethnography of speaking, identified gendered rules for speaking like a man in Teamsterville. Communication researchers have used these theoretical perspectives to examine, explain, and predict communication patterns across cultural groups.

Particular Goals or Contexts

Facework theories, including accounts and account giving, face negotiation theory, impression management, and politeness theory, all include references to behaviors that communicators privilege and avoid, based on cultural standards of appropriateness. These theoretical perspectives are often linked to the writings of sociologist Erving Goffman.

The Palo Alto Group (with scholars trained in anthropology, philosophy, psychology, psychiatry) described how rules functioned in families and mental health. A theoretical work by this group, *Pragmatics of Human Communication*, is utilized across the communication discipline, including in family and interpersonal research. Michael Argyle, Monika Henderson, and associates investigated communication rules in 25 different types of relationships in multiple countries, finding

similarities and differences in these various contexts. One rule that is applicable across contexts is respect the privacy of the other person. Communication scholar Sandra Petronio addresses rules for sharing private information regarding oneself or others in communication privacy management theory. In developing her theory, she found the treatment of boundary and privacy by psychologist Irwin Altman helpful. Many communication scholars research rules for the display of emotional expressiveness and responsiveness, and in doing so, they often reference the work of sociologist Arlie Hochschild and psychologists James Averill, Carolyn Saarni, and Stephanie Shields.

Psychologist Karl E. Weick identified rules as one of the resources used by organizational members in the processing of organizing. Drawing on structuration theory by sociologist Anthony Giddens for behavior within organizations, Marshall Scott Poole developed adaptive structuration theory with an emphasis on how group members adapt communication rules and resources to meet their goals and make decisions. The rules members employ are sometimes appropriated from larger organizations or cultural groups.

Summary

In investigating the communication practices that individuals, intimates, groups, organizations, speech communities, and cultures consider obligatory, prohibited and preferred, communication theorists and researchers have brought to the academic conversation conceptualizations, data, and analyses from multiple perspectives and contexts. These theorists also share in common certain assumptions about the nature of rules, humans, and communication.

Communication is a rule-governed process. Without rules, symbolic interaction would not be possible. Some communication rules are particularly helpful in facilitating understanding and fostering inclusive, constructive communication practices. Other communication rules contribute to destructive or oppressive patterns. Rule theorists and researchers tend to embrace the proposition that the recognition and evaluation of

communication rules significantly enhances our ability to make choices that can lead to more productive and humane interactions.

Susan B. Shimanoff

See also Conversation Analysis; Coordinated Management of Meaning; Ethnography of Communication; Language and Communication; Pragmatics; Semiotics and Semiology; Speech Act Theory; Structuration Theory; Symbolic Interactionism

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S

SAPIR-WHORF HYPOTHESIS

See Linguistic Relativity

SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

A scientific approach to communication involves direct, or empirical, and indirect observation of phenomena, testing for relationships among those phenomena and constructing theories using inductive-statistical, deductive-nomological, and deductive-statistical models, as defined later in this entry.

Concerns about propaganda after World War I and vigorous interest in broadcast media were probably the primary impetus for the rise of scientific research on communication in the 20th century. Early communication scientists were interested in accurate, objective analyses of propaganda messages and the effects of new media such as radio and film. Thus, many communication scholars found potential in applying social science methods to the study of communication during this time. Media studies and social psychology took the lead in developing scientific approaches to communication in the first half of the century.

A series of motivational films for soldiers titled *Why We Fight*, produced in World War II, offers an example of the kind of messages of interest to scholars interested in understanding communication scientifically. The Army contracted with Yale

University to evaluate the effectiveness of these films. From this project emerged a new approach to studying communication, emulating other disciplines that used a scientific approach. A book titled *Communication and Persuasion*, authored by Carl Hovland, Irving Janis, and Harold Kelly, reported the results of these now landmark studies. The studies used careful observation grounded in replicable measurement and experiments that use pre- and posttest measurements and control groups.

Since early propaganda, media, and persuasion studies, scientific approaches have become increasingly common and more sophisticated in generating communication theory. This entry is divided into two parts—observation, which is the foundation of science, and theory building, or what theoretical models are used to interpret the data that is discovered with a scientific approach.

Observation

The foundation of science is observation, so in communication, direct emphasis was placed on observable behavior rather than unobservable thoughts as the measurable outcome of communicative stimuli. Defining which behavior to study is difficult, however. The contractions in the pupils of an eye, pushing levers, written statements, buying soap, and voting for president can all qualify as behavior. Communicative behavior includes spoken words, written messages, nonverbal signals, and our reactions to all of these. To study the effect of a message scientifically requires an exact definition of the behavior to be observed. However,

there is an immediate problem with using direct observations as the basic datum of a theory—the behaviors that interest us are not easily observed.

Consider a simple message about dental hygiene, which seeks to motivate listeners to floss their teeth more often. Flossing, however, takes place after meals and at bedtime. To observe flossing, a researcher would need to accompany the subject day and night. The behavior is observable, but to do so is extremely impractical. Other important behaviors are not observable. Voting is, by law, private. Jury deliberations are not available to anyone, let alone researchers. Consumer behavior usually takes place in a store or supermarket far from the lab where the message is tested. It would seem that scientific study of communicative behavior would be impractical at best.

Researchers solved the problem by using secondary types of behaviors, usually some kind of verbal response that has a logical connection to the behavior in question. When a researcher asks, “What kind of computer do you like—a PC or Mac?” those who answered “Mac” would be more likely to buy an Apple computer rather than some other kind (all other things being equal). Verbal responses to similar questions are thought to reflect attitudes and their relationship to more significant behaviors is assumed. Also researchers have contended that attitudes are worthy of study in and of themselves.

Attitudes and actions are not always directly linked, however. Diversity is a typical concern today in that it concedes that students of differing ethnic backgrounds use different learning styles. If a researcher measures an attitude about diversity and finds that a message influenced the attitude, he or she would typically assume that the respondent might well engage in more tolerant teaching techniques. However, there is an openness in attitude measurement that is not always present in other behaviors that makes it more susceptible to social pressure. If respondents possess any ethnic prejudice, they may well keep it hidden and not show it on an attitude test. Researchers have worked hard to find types of attitude measurement that might not be distorted, but the problem is still an important one.

Similar methodological problems are present in the so-called hard sciences. A thermometer is a device that measures temperature, and its use is so familiar that many of us forget that the amount of heat in a body of water and the reading of the

thermometer are two very different phenomena. Geologists read a number from an instrument called a seismometer and assume that great masses of rock have changed position in certain ways. Obviously, the scientist could not directly observe the huge tectonic plate that made the needle jump on the graph. So terms such as tremor, temperature, and attitude are similar concepts in that their definition depends on a specific measuring technique or operation. Nuclear physicists study subatomic particles such as electrons and muons that are not only not observed, but also are by definition absolutely unobservable. They are inferred from other events that are more easily observable such as the trace of the trajectory in a bubble chamber.

These logical difficulties led to the rise of what we call scientific philosophy, which rejects the idea of absolute truth entirely. Only synthetic principles can be known for sure, and other laws deal with probabilities alone. In spite of the difficulties inherent in a scientific approach, researchers still find it of value because it introduces an element of objectivity that is not present in other methods.

Theory Building

The use that is made of the observations varies widely depending on the relationship of the observations to the theoretical structures that result. At least three main approaches are generally used: inductive-statistical, deductive-nomological, and deductive-statistical.

Inductive-Statistical

In this model, observers begin with the characteristics, or facts of a situation, proceed to the empirically connected observations (explanans), and then go on to formulate a general theory that explains the observations (explanandum). And in any particular situation, researchers gather statements together that they think are similar.

This is a model widely used in communication research and employs both logic and probability. It does not claim to make universal truth statements, but rather, on the basis of empirically connected observations, seeks to form an explanatory theory that is very likely to be true. It should be noted that there is no claim here that is universally true, and the explanation is only weakly falsifiable. Nonetheless,

it serves the function of systematically approaching a set of phenomena, testing their interrelationships and forming an explanation that then can be tested by more rigorous means.

Deductive-Nomological

An alternative uses a deductive falsification model sometimes called deductive-nomological. The presence of an already existing perspective is assumed. Either the theory invented under the inductive approach or a theory invented purely from imagination can be subjected to rigorous tests for falsifiability. In either instance, the theory is expressed not as part of the explanandum, but as part of the explanans. The explanandum is the set of specific predictions generated from these general law-like statements. Propositions are deduced from the logical consequences of the theory (in the form of “if this, then that” statements), and operational hypotheses are formed and tested. If the hypotheses are found to be false, the theory is rejected, and a new explanation is formulated. Under this system of reasoning, the process could begin when existing preconceptions (which may already be formalized into theories) are threatened by new observations that suggest revision of old perspectives or development of new ones entirely.

A single negative instance of failure to support is considered by some to be enough to reject a universal hypothesis. However, theories that have survived falsification tests long enough to win some acceptance should not then suddenly be abandoned without solid contradictory evidence. Some writers have said that this is really the only model used in research since no one actually starts research with a completely open mind.

Since this model is a little more complicated, it might help to look at an example. Researchers are interested in the ways teacher immediacy affects learning. Immediacy is defined as the degree of physical and or psychological closeness between people. Teachers achieve this immediacy by their nonverbal and verbal behaviors. A fundamental theoretic assumption could be that students who are more highly motivated (aroused) are likely to learn more than those who are not. This is now expressed in law-like form as the model stated above, and it is possible to test the degree to which teacher immediacy produced a motivated state,

and the degree to which this state produced more learning. In other words, part of a prediction comes from a law-like statement.

It should be made clear that the strict interpretation that a proposition must be rejected as soon as it encounters a single falsifying instance would render this model inappropriate for the study of human communication. It is highly unlikely that invariant laws of a universal nature will ever be found in this area of study. Critics of covering law approaches often cite this interpretation as grounds for rejection without giving evidence that they are aware of other interpretations.

Deductive-Statistical

One more model is an important part of the scientific approach, the deductive-statistical model, which contrasts sharply with the inductive-statistical model. Although the inductive model involves examination of sets of interrelated phenomena that occur with a frequency that make it very likely that some general law is true—and even calls for invention of that law—we have no assurance that the invented law is in fact true. However many times the phenomena described in law-like statements may occur, they do not permit a strong test of the falsification of the laws. What has been proposed as a theory as part of the explanandum may be a plausible explanation, but it must be drawn upon to deduce propositions and then formulate hypotheses that are tested to determine if the law itself works. Except for the statistical nature of the laws, the deductive-statistical model looks the same as the deductive-nomological model.

Laws based on past empirical observations are expressed in probability form. The deductive model's predictions are derived from a computation of joint probabilities. It should be noted that the deductive-statistical model does not meet the strict requirements of a covering law. This means, of course, that the use of the term covering law is not an accurate one in describing a good deal of social science in general and communication in particular.

A somewhat more complex interpretation of the above models appears to be followed in actual practice in communication research as in a number of other areas. Under this interpretation, falsification and support are treated as two sides of the same coin.

Standard inductivist accounts of the confirmation of scientific theories go somewhat like this: Theory implies prediction (basic sentence, or observation sentence); if prediction is false, theory is falsified; if sufficiently many predictions are true, theory is confirmed. Thus, what is described above as a deductive-nomological model for falsifying theories often is, in practice, used for either corroboration or falsification. Researchers often use procedures specified in a falsification model, but implicitly use either falsification or support as the basis for rejection or retention. In other words, some room is left for variation and error and those seeking certain knowledge are likely to be disappointed. This model appears to be far more appropriate to the type of universe studied by communication researchers.

In general, theories formed through the above procedures describe laws of interaction, which we often describe as causal laws. The degree of probability is not always the most important aspect of causal relationships. Such statements also must have empirical content, making them susceptible to measurement; possess nomic necessity, that is, have potential causality; be capable of integration into a system of compatible law-like statements; and be intersubjectively certifiable. These three patterns appear in most empirical communication research. In the last two models, the value of the final conclusions depends heavily on the confidence that we have about the characteristics, or facts of the situation.

Robert Bostrom

See also Empiricism; Epistemology; Metatheory

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SELF

See Humanistic Perspective; Identity Theories; Rogerian Dialogue Theory; Symbolic Interactionism

SELF-CATEGORIZATION THEORY

Self-categorization theory is a social-cognitive elaboration of social identity theory that provides an account of identity salience, or what identities people are most likely to internalize when and why. The core idea is that people have a repertoire of available identities and that these are activated by and take on meaning with respect to social context. When an identity is activated, the associated content predicts social perceptions, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors. Although consistent with the metatheoretical logic of social identity theory (that social psychological outcomes are a function of individual psychology interacting with social context), self-categorization theory expands the scope to explain such phenomena as stereotyping, social influence, group cohesion, and intragroup process.

Self-categorization theory begins with the assumption that people maximize meaning—that they organize a perceptual field so that it makes sense. This is not to say that people are in any way motivated to create meaning. Rather, the idea is that they extract meaning from stimuli by automatically organizing them into categories. A rainbow, for example, is a continuous spectrum of color, but we cognitively represent a rainbow as comprising a set of discrete bands. Each band is perceived as homogenous and distinct from the adjacent band.

More generally, categorization follows the metacontrast principle. Stimuli are perceived as comprising a category to the extent that shared similarities exceed differences with other stimuli.

A researcher would give participants a scale and measure their individual perceptions of the differences between possible categories and calculate the average. The researcher would also measure participants' individual perceptions of the differences within a possible category and calculate the average. The metacontrast ratio is the average intercategory difference divided by the mean intracategory difference, and the ratio between these provides a measure of the extent to which a set of stimuli will be perceived as a category. The more the ratio exceeds unity, or 1, the greater the probability that a category will be perceived. Although this explains the perceptions of nonsocial objects such as trees and rocks as categories, additional considerations are necessary to predict when social categories such as people and relationships become salient.

Before elaborating on the other features of social categorization, it is first worth noting that social categories are cognitively represented as context-dependent prototypes. Prototypes are fuzzy sets of features that best represent a category, and they do so by following the metacontrast principle. For example, compared with Iraqis, Americans might be considered White, individualistic, and Christian, a set of attributes that Americans tend to share and that are not shared with most Iraqis. Compared to the British, however, Americans might be better described as brash, outgoing, and overweight. Because the content of prototypes shifts to make best sense of an identity in a particular context, it is also true that individual people can be more or less prototypical in different contexts. George W. Bush might be considered a quite prototypical American when the comparison is with Iraqis, but John Belushi might be a better example for the comparison with the British. Critically, people internalize the features of prototypes; they self-stereotype or are depersonalized by the prototype, and this provides the content to identity that predicts social outcomes.

Self-categorization theory predicts that categories become salient—that prototypes crystallize—when they fit a social context. As explained below, fit is based on an interaction between the readiness of the perceiver, the arrangement of stimuli in a social context (comparative fit), and the normative significance of those stimuli (normative fit). Perceiver readiness is a catch-all individual variable that recognizes that persons may categorize differently.

Features of perceiver readiness include trait levels of social identification (the degree to which an individual identifies with others in the situation), social values (what aspects of social life are most valued by the individual), and present task demands (how difficult the task is perceived to be). Comparative fit is the arrangement of stimuli under consideration (what stimuli are close to other stimuli, which are distant, and how they tend to fit or not fit together), and the cognitive organization of stimuli follows the metacontrast principle described above. Normative fit is what makes self-categorization theory social-psychological as opposed to purely cognitive. People are more likely to use socially normative, or shared, standards of categorization (e.g., Christian and Muslim than brown-eyed and blue-eyed) because they have social significance and relatively consensual meanings. Taking all three components together, people are particularly likely to find a category salient when it is accessible, there are stimuli present in the social environment that suggest the category is relevant, and the behavior of people conforms with normative expectations. To the extent that any of these criteria of fit are not met, the likelihood of fit, and hence category salience, is reduced.

Taking all of these elements together, self-categorization theory predicts that people perceive social information in terms of categories that are rendered salient by the fit process, that the content of categories is described by a prototype, and if the prototype is self-defining (i.e., it is an in-group prototype rather than an out-group prototype) people are likely to internalize it, and the prototype in turn serves as a basis for self-perception, social judgment, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. This process provides a ready basis for describing when, why, and how people stereotype—they use social categories that fit, and the social category that is used will be represented as a context dependent prototype. It provides a basis for explaining social influence—by bringing one's views and behaviors into line with a prototype, one is essentially conforming to an in-group consensus and differentiating from an out-group.

Self-categorization theory is beginning to make inroads to explaining many communicative phenomena. Recent work explains perceptions of media influence, the role of norms in communication, representations of groups in the media, gender

and language use, and the language of leaders. Future work will likely explain the transmission of social information such as stereotypes, rumors, conspiracy theories, and urban legends.

Scott Reid

See also Accommodation Theory; Attitude Theory; Cognitive Theories; Culture and Communication; Identity Theories; Leadership Theories; Meaning Theories; Media Effects Theories; Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA); Social Judgment Theory

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SELF-DISCLOSURE

Self-disclosure is the expression of personal information that is of a descriptive, affective, or evaluative nature. Personal information involves content that is not widely known and that individuals selectively release. Moreover, acts of self-disclosure vary with regard to the breadth of information that is disclosed (i.e., number of topics) and its depth (i.e., the intimacy of the information). Traditionally, self-disclosure has been restricted to linguistic content spoken by individuals in face-to-face contexts. Recent approaches have expanded self-disclosure to include written forms of communication that take place via the Internet and that may occur between human beings and computers.

Self-disclosure is a communication phenomenon around which an area of inquiry has grown. Having its roots in clinical psychology, self-disclosure has

long been of interest to researchers in communication, and several well-established research areas have emerged. Although there is no self-disclosure theory, there are a variety of theories that have been used to understand the decision to self-disclose, its patterns, and its effects.

Decision to Self-Disclose

Although some instances of self-disclosure may be unintentional, theories used to predict its occurrence often reflect a conscious decision process. Initial perspectives focused on the degree to which self-disclosure was related to individual difference variables such as neuroticism, extroversion, need for approval, and gender. The frameworks that guide this research are tied to specific constructs, and there is little overarching theory.

Subsequent frameworks have focused on the degree to which self-disclosure results from projected outcomes. In 1979, Valerian Derlega and Janusz Grzelak proposed the functional model of disclosure that assumes that self-disclosure is enacted to achieve an individual's social goals such as self-expression, self-clarification, relational development, social validation, and social control.

In 2000, Julia Omarzu provided a more elaborate description of goals in her disclosure decision model. Individuals engage in a sequential decision-making process in which they first enter a situation with a disclosure goal, after which they determine whether an appropriate target is available and whether disclosure appears to be the best strategy for achieving the goal. A person's assessment of the likely rewards arising from disclosure influences the breadth and duration of disclosure, while the assessment of risk influences the depth of disclosure.

Since the 1980s, Sandra Petronio has been developing communication privacy management theory that broadens the study of self-disclosure by embedding it within the processes by which partners manage private information within their relationship. Hers is a dialectic approach in which individuals balance the need to disclose private information with the desire to maintain privacy. To deal with the dialectic, individuals follow privacy rules that control access to private information. The origins of these rules include culture, gender, privacy motivations, contextual constraints, and reward–cost ratio.

Self-Disclosure Patterns

Research in the 1960s and 1970s conducted by Sydney Jourard identified a dyadic effect in which individuals often reciprocated self-disclosure. Reciprocity has been operationalized in a variety of ways, including the degree to which (a) two individuals engaged in an equivalent degree of self-disclosure over the course of a conversation, (b) their self-disclosures were correlated, or (c) the speaking turns in which a self-disclosure occurred prompted self-disclosure on subsequent turns. Social exchange theory has been used to explain such patterns, positing that they reflected the norm of reciprocity or an equitable distribution of rewards.

Some theories have been used to predict when reciprocal patterns of self-disclosure break down. From a social support perspective, self-disclosure of a personal problem might be viewed as a request for assistance, and rather than self-disclose, a more appropriate response is to offer assistance. Jack Brehm's psychological reactance theory is predicated on the notion that people wish to maintain their decision freedom, and the obligation to reciprocate self-disclosure could threaten that freedom. Hence, individuals fail to reciprocate as a means of restoring their freedom of choice.

Self-disclosure patterns may also be observed among members of a network. Within families, there may be secrets that are discussed among family members or a subset of members, but that are not to be discussed with others. Hence, according to communication privacy management theory, when a person self-discloses to another, a privacy rule may be established that prevents the information from being disclosed outside of the dyad.

Self-Disclosure Outcomes

Self-disclosure plays a role in relational development and maintenance. Specifically, individuals (a) like people who disclose to them, (b) disclose to people they like, and (c) like people to whom they have disclosed. In 1973, Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor introduced social penetration theory that posits the association between self-disclosure and liking stems from current and future rewards. Receiving personal information from another is in and of itself rewarding and also signals that the discloser wants to continue relationship. From an information processing perspective, disclosure may

stimulate positive impressions of the speaker (e.g., likable, trusting, supportive) that in turn increases his or her attractiveness. Indeed, some in the helping professions (e.g., therapists, doctors) may self-disclose to their patients so as to build rapport and thereby gather information and gain compliance with their recommendations.

Self-disclosure may also facilitate personal well-being. In 1996, Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary observed in their belongingness hypothesis that people have a strong desire to form and maintain relationships. When they are relationally successful, individuals experience positive affect that in turn enhances their psychological, emotional and physical well-being. Self-disclosure may facilitate well-being by stimulating positive affect and/or by strengthening a relationship. Also, social support perspectives suggest that self-disclosure may yield supportive responses and may lead to a stable social support network. However, these advantages may depend on the reactions of those to whom one discloses. Individuals sometimes experience disapproval, rejection, or insensitive statements after disclosing, and their well-being is diminished.

Possibly the mere act of self-disclosing may be beneficial. Confiding traumatic experiences may prompt an individual to create a coherent narrative that stimulates greater understanding and thereby reduces stress. Alternatively, individuals may be able to unburden themselves of emotions that they were concealing from others. James Pennebaker's research indicates that writing accounts of personal events may enhance well-being even if they are not communicated to others.

Michael Roloff

See also Interpersonal Communication Theories; Relational Development; Relational Maintenance Theories; Social Exchange Theory; Social Penetration Theory

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SEMIOTICS AND SEMIOLOGY

Semiotics is the study of signs and sign systems. It grew out of two entirely separate traditions in the early 1900s: Semiology (sémiologie in the original French), proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure, a linguist in Switzerland, as an extension of psychology; and semiotic, proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce, a philosopher in the United States, as an extension of the study of logic. The term semiology is still used, though more often in Europe than in the United States; the term semiotic (singular form) is rarely used; the term of choice in the United States today is most often semiotics (plural form) in an attempt to consolidate areas of research. Related terms are semiosis, the process of making and using signs (which everyone does), and semiotician, someone who performs semiotic analysis (usually assumed to apply to those with training). The relevance to communication theory is that semiosis is the basic process of human meaning construction standing at the center of all human communication; semiotics is thus the study of how humans construct meaning for themselves and others, a central concern for communication scholars.

Signs

If semiotics is the study of signs and sign systems, then defining each of those terms provides an obvious beginning point. Signs are the building blocks of semiotics; everything else rests upon their analysis.

Saussure described signs as a duality, each one having two parts: the signifier, the visible or present component, and the signified, the invisible or tacit component. This relationship permits references to invisibles (such as processes, emotions, social roles, or units of time) as well as to concrete elements of the world not currently present (such as a person or thing). Peirce divided signs into three components: the sign, or representatum; the object, that to which the representatum refers; and the interpretant, the meaning it conveys (alternatively, the third part is sometimes understood to be the person making the interpretation). It does not matter whether signs are viewed as having two or three parts; in either case, there is more than one, which leaves a gap between the thing and the meaning it conveys. This can lead to misunderstandings. Polysemy, the fact that one sign can have multiple signifieds or interpretants, can also lead to miscommunication, for the meaning one person intends may not be the meaning another understands. This ambiguity can have negative consequences (confusion, anger) or positive (complexity, leading to the ability of a single sign to convey multiple messages simultaneously).

Signs are generally divided into types. Peirce named 66 types; of these, three are accepted as the most important. They are distinguished by the type of relationship between the signifier and signified. An icon has a relationship of similarity (a photograph is an icon because it normally looks like the person or object depicted). An index has a relationship of contiguity or connection, thus an index points to what it stands for (if their wedding cake topper is saved by the couple to be eaten on their anniversary, that is an index because it was originally part of the wedding cake and only conveys meaning as a result of that connection). A symbol has a relationship of arbitrariness (that the word *cat* has no whiskers, as Gregory Bateson famously noted, means it is a symbol). Nearly all words are symbols, and certainly all of them are signs (whether in spoken or written form), which is why the study of signs is so central to the discipline of communication. Without the ability of sounds to convey information—that is, without the ability of words to operate as symbols—it would be impossible for any reader to decipher the words in this, or any other, encyclopedia entry, or any other verbal text for that matter.

Sign Systems

A set of signs is called a *sign system* or a *code*. Meaning comes not just from the individual sign, but more importantly from the set of signs within which it appears. Codes include language, gestures, food, clothing, objects, dance, and music. In real life, just as no one sign stands alone, codes must be understood in terms of their mutual influences. Language is the central semiotic code because without it we could not analyze the others. Several levels of analysis within language often serve as metaphors for analysis of other codes: semantics (the study of the meaning of individual words), syntax (the study of how words are joined together into utterances), and pragmatics (the study of how words are used in interaction). Also, the distinction between *langue* (literally language, understood to mean the sum of all words in a given language) and *parole* (literally speech, an actual utterance, which could never include all possible words) often serves as a metaphor for analysis of other codes. For example, *langue* would include all the political speeches ever given, but *parole* would refer to a particular political speech given by one candidate on a specific night.

A set of signs can be either a paradigm or a syntagm. For example, in the clothing code, all of the shoes owned by one person would be a paradigm (a set of signs from which social actors use only one at a time), while the shoes, pants, and shirt worn by that same person would be a syntagm (a set resulting when discrete signs from different paradigms are combined). The social fabric is made up of the interactions of different signs drawn from various codes and used in new combinations to convey meaning in specific contexts.

The fact that meaning comes not from a single sign, but from the various sorts of sets within which it can be understood led Roland Barthes to develop the metaphor of the kitchen of meaning, that place where interactants prepare meaning and thus, the place analysts must visit in order to interpret human behavior. In the same way that a single sign can be polysemic and thus complex, so can a set of codes be ambiguous. Thus, meanings are multiplied, and potentially, contradictory messages are conveyed simultaneously. For example, when someone utters an insult, participants must decide whether it was intended literally or as a

tease. Each text is situated in a particular context, so interpretation depends in part on nonlinguistic information available as supplement to the words: Was the speaker smiling? And what was the past history of such insults among these same participants? Understanding meaning correctly leads to confirmation of the existence of a community of practice; misunderstandings demonstrate difference in assumptions and can serve to destroy any appearance of shared community.

A set of codes is called a *semiosphere*, or less technically, a culture. When one group assumes that Thanksgiving requires elaboration of the food code (serving a turkey, sweet potatoes, etc.) without equal elaboration of clothing (participants wear blue jeans), it is the mismatch to another group assuming that elaboration in one code requires similar elaboration in another (such as Japanese tea ceremonies, where different codes—food, clothing, objects—are expected to be equally elaborated) that creates a difference worthy of analysis.

Semiotics as a Communication Theory

Semiotic theory does not have a single disciplinary home; communication did not invent it and does not own it; therefore, communication theorists must read widely to keep up with what others write. Semiotics has, at different points in time, been adopted by scholars in anthropology, folklore, linguistics, psychology, sociology, English literature, and comparative literature, to name only the major strands. Early theory development owes much to Russian formalism and Prague structuralism, but it was several French and Italian scholars (most significantly, Barthes and Umberto Eco respectively) who brought semiology to international prominence. In the United States, Thomas Sebeok was the champion, organizing conferences, editing collections and book series, and generally promoting semiotics to all. He is particularly known for introducing zoosemiotics, the study of how animals convey meaning through various forms of communication.

Perhaps due to this eclectic background, semiotic theory can be used to analyze virtually any of the parts of the field of communication: interaction, media, organizations, health contexts, popular culture, and more. This works largely because all parts of the field are based on the construction

of meaning through messages; the context, and whether the message is face-to-face or mediated, linguistic or nonlinguistic, does not change that. Semiotic analyses tend most often to be qualitative, as with other forms of textual analysis, rather than quantitative, although there are examples of both. A semiotic analysis typically examines how some particular text (which could be a word, image, film, magazine ad, song, ritual, etc.) is used to construct what sort of meanings. Texts can be constructed by a single producer for one person or for a general audience (as with a magazine advertisement), or they can be jointly constructed by all of the participants (as with a conversation), but in any case, the meanings may vary by participants. As a result, semiotic theory is particularly useful as a tool to examine the misunderstandings common to intercultural communication.

Semiotic theory is well known (and often critiqued) for its hyperelaboration of new vocabulary and concepts that can be used to analyze human experience. Only two concepts will be mentioned in this entry as a way to demonstrate what can be done with semiotic analysis: *bricolage* (a term coined by Claude Lévi-Strauss) and *intertextuality* (coined by Julia Kristeva, an extension of the type of sign known as an index; also known as indexicality). Both refer to the construction of new meaning out of old signs. In bricolage, previously existing signs are literally brought together to create a new whole, as when a tourist collects postcards as souvenirs. The same objects exist elsewhere, but this particular collection is unique, conveying specific information to the collector.

Intertextuality refers to connections between texts; it often refers to how past meanings or texts provide much of the relevant context for the interpretation of present signs. The practice of sampling in hip-hop music, when a small piece of an actual past song is integrated into a current one, is a form of intertextuality. Similarly, looking at an object that was a gift may bring memories of the giver, or the occasion of the giving; a reference in a film to words or objects from an earlier television show—as when the car from the TV series *Starsky and Hutch* appeared at the end of the film of the same name—shows intertextuality operating. Both bricolage and intertextuality point out the ways in which humans recycle bits of the past to create new meaning in the present and thus are central to

understanding many types of texts, not just one. Semiotic theory shows meaning as jointly constructed by multiple participants rather than as intrinsic to the sign; as such, semiotics can be a valuable method of deconstructing, or analyzing, how communication works.

Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz

See also Discourse Theory and Analysis; Hermeneutics; Language and Communication; Meaning Theories; Poststructuralism; Simulation and Media; Social Construction of Reality

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SENSE-MAKING

The term *sense-making* (*sensemaking*) began to appear in communication-field literatures in the late 1970s. There has been an explosion of usage in the past decade. Although the term is used most often without definition, the term now has significant presence in models and theories of many kinds. Navigating what authors mean by the term involves crossing difficult terrains. With increased

attention to communication technology spread into every cranny of life, one finds sense-making references in every field that has turned attention in some way to communication research. Simultaneously, the ways in which interdisciplinary interests have increased in importance has meant that approaches to sense-making from other fields are increasingly being cited. The purpose of this entry is to make sense of sense-making by reviewing origins of these theoretical attentions and distinguishing between the five visible approaches cited in communication-relevant literatures.

Although the terms sense-making (with a hyphen) and sense-making (without a hyphen) are most often used in everyday language interchangeably and without consciousness of potential differences, authors specializing in the focus use the terms consistently in one grammatical form or the other. For purposes in this entry, in general discussions, sense-making will be used. For descriptions of approaches developed within specific research communities, the term of choice in each community will be used.

The Turn to Sense and Sense-Making

The word *sense* seems so familiar that it is too often assumed to carry with it common understandings. Dictionaries show the term used foundationally to refer to products of human sensory activity—that is, uses of the human senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. In these uses, emphasis is placed on human perceptual capacities to sense accurately what is transmitted via the senses. Over time, some definitions have evolved to include terms such as intelligibility, intuitive knowledge, meaning, and natural understanding. These terms focus on more than the products of sensory activity because they refer instead to the interpretations or understandings resulting from cognitive processes rather than focus on perceptually based activities per se.

In the latest evolutions, some authors go further. They emphasize cognitive processes in frameworks that assume sense-making as socially based activity. This evolution focuses on definitions of sensing that may involve the integration of information and inputs from a wide variety of sources over time as well as the making of sense through social interaction.

Finally, some authors, focusing on how sense-makers navigate between their internal worlds and

external circumstances, expand the focus to include a broad set of intrapersonal sense-making activities that are assumed to apply to both communicating with self as well as with others. These approaches deliberately move away from the original emphasis on sensing as accurate perception to individual reflection involving not only what is commonly called cognition, but also emotions, intuitions, spiritual hunches, and other ways in which humans are assumed to make sense of their worlds, both internal and external.

These latest evolutions zone in, in different ways depending on authors, on how sensing can be assumed to involve processes of communicative engagement—intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational, and societal. Here one sees a marked move from the original emphases on individual perceptual processes to emphases that begin to redefine sense-making not merely as interpretation, but as dialogue, both internal and external.

The differences described above between evolving approaches mirror the same tensions that mark communication study. In literatures focusing on communication-relevant topics, five different approaches to sense-making have high visibility. Although it is not known who first used the term, sense-making made its first appearance in the 1970s in two communication research communities—one focusing on organizational communication, the other on audience and user studies. Since then, significant communication-relevant theories have been advanced within the fields of human–computer interaction, cognitive-systems engineering, and knowledge management. Even though one now finds these five different approaches cited by growing numbers of authors, most references to these approaches simply assume they represent different substantive theories or methods when in fact their differences are more profound.

One difficulty in comparing the approaches arises when one attempts to array the distinctive features of each; a closer examination finds important exceptions. They differ both in philosophical assumptions as well as in substantive claims and empirical analyses. Usually, philosophic assumptions driving the sense-making worldview have been more important than making connections between these assumptions and more specific theory-building and empirical efforts.

Yet despite difficulties in comparing approaches, the common turn toward sense-making as worldview is one of two important manifestations of attention to sense-making as theory in the communication field. One characteristic that all the sense-making approaches have most in common is their interest in applying more humanistic ways of understanding human behavior to helping systems communicate more effectively. The second important manifestation of the turn toward sense-making is the presence of substantial literatures emanating from five research communities. Each of the five is described below. In each case, the relevant sense-making community is actually a subcommunity within a larger field of interest. For brevity's sake, in the presentations below, each sense-making subcommunity is represented by the name of the author most identified as providing impetus for the turn to sense-making. All five authors have frequently collaborated with others.

Five Theories

Organizational Communication: Karl Weick's Sense-Making

Weick is an academic social psychologist working at the intersections of social psychology, organizational studies, and communication theory. His turn toward sense-making began in the early 1970s. His research focuses on sense-making as a process involving how individuals in organizations comprehend, construct meaning, search for patterns, redress surprise, and interact with each other in pursuit of common understandings as a basis for organizational action, particularly in the face of high risk and complex situations. Weick conceptualizes sense-making as a necessarily fluid process. He generally works from theory to research practice back to theory.

Weick has researched such organizations as jazz orchestras, firefighters, aircraft carriers, and power plants. His approach generally involves extended field studies combining observation and interviewing with a primary emphasis on eliciting narratives focusing on personal philosophies of reason, value, and actions. Paper-and-pencil tools are sometimes used for data collection as are workshops with organizational representatives. Systematic analyses involve triangulation of interpretations (usually by multiple researchers) using grounded-theory

approaches. Research has usually culminated in recommendations to specific organizations as well as generalized mandates for organizational life. An example is the mandate for organizations to seek diverse and individually distinctive interpretations from participants without fear of punishment. The aim is to avoid the oversimplification and hubris that can catapult organizations to a collapse of effective sense-making.

Audience and User Studies: Brenda Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology (SMM)

Dervin is an academically based communication methodologist. Her methodology, in development since the early 1970s, is defined as an approach for studying communication as communication. This involves implementing a set of metatheoretical premises in methods that explicitly call for attending to communicating both internal and external as cognitive, emotional, physical, and spiritual step takings via which humans make sense of their worlds and unmake and remake sense as they move through elusive and changing situations.

Built upon a complex edifice of assumptions, the methodology positions communication as communicatings, as the movings humans are mandated to as they make sense of their movements through the discontinuities of time-space. This emphasis on verbing is central to Dervin's assumption that studying communication within established noun structures rarely captures communication as communicative. Rather, nouns freeze descriptions of reality for purposes of system prediction and control.

Dervin's methodology has been applied in many contexts both for audience and user studies and for the design of communication-information systems, messages, and procedures to better serve human needs. Most frequent applications focus on studies and applications relevant to communication campaigns, pedagogy, audience reception, information seeking and use, and journalistic practices. Her work is most widely applied in library and information science.

In practice, application of SMM to both research and practice involves interviewing with instrument structures extracted from SMM's metatheory. Interviews eliminate researcher and system nouns insofar as possible. Specific kinds of open-ended structured queries are asked, such as the following:

What happened? What conclusions did you come to? What questions did you struggle with? What stood in your way? How did events relate to power? How did they relate to your sense of self? What helped? What hindered? How?

Outcomes are presented both qualitatively and quantitatively. Research outcomes repeatedly have tested the basic premise that attributes of human sense-making bound to time and space are more useful for design and policy than those that portray traits across time and space. Practice outcomes generally involve dialogic interventions. A central premise is that spontaneous communication procedures usually implement extant power arrangements. Major emphasis is placed on interrupting this hegemony with disciplined and dialogic communicative design based on sense-making principles.

*Human-Computer Interaction:
Daniel Russell's Sense-Making*

Attention to sense-making as a worldview made its first appearance in the field of human computer interaction in a 1993 seminal paper by Russell and coauthors. This body of work has been implemented primarily in the context of understanding how users search for meaning while navigating data bases to answer task-specific questions. The work focuses on application to practice, particularly to design of hardware and software interfaces for interactive computing systems.

The thrust in this work is understanding how users choose, use, change, and shift between different cognitive and external resources to reduce the costs of information processing tasks. Russell sees these processes of navigating as the sense-making left underappreciated in studies of information retrieval.

Research focuses on examining the discrete cognitive steps, stages, and strategies users use to navigate data bases and to seek increasingly effective representations. Emphasis is placed on understanding sense-making in specific information retrieval situations and explaining and predicting user behavior so as to inform technology design. Typically, research involves qualitative and quantitative analyses of online use histories, sometimes coupled with in-depth interviews and field observations. User behavior is sometimes examined as it naturally occurs; sometimes to test specific design tools.

Among Russell's basic premises is an acceptance of situational uncertainty and how sense-making involves finding structure in seemingly unstructured situations. This very premise girds another—that users do not navigate systems in orderly ways as prescribed by external experts.

*Cognitive Systems Engineering:
Gary Klein's Sense-Making*

Klein, a cognitive psychologist, works as a consultant in the field of cognitive systems engineering. He has implemented his focus on sense-making since the mid-1990s in corporate and governmental sectors, including particular emphasis on applications to defense. His projects typically involve analyses of work to inform the design of technologies to better serve human needs.

Generally, he defines sense-making as an umbrella term for collaborative efforts aimed at building intelligent systems. He has specifically stated he does not want his approach to sense-making to be confused with a broad focus on how people make sense of experience. Rather, he defines sense-making as a purposive and ongoing effort to understand emerging connections and trajectories between people, places, and events so as to act effectively.

His primary empirical method has focused on understanding what goes on inside people's heads—what they think and know, how they organize and structure information, and what they seek to make sense of. The Klein approach studies sense-making at macrocognitive levels where behavior is positioned in terms of actor views of complex socio-technical systems that undergo unexpected changes requiring revision of current understandings.

Klein's research approaches involve performance observations, interviews, and incident accounts focusing on how informants navigate gaps between initial understandings and incoming data, and in particular, how accounts are reframed in order to abandon current rigid explanations.

*Knowledge Management:
David Snowden's Sense-Making*

Snowden, working out of the field of knowledge management, applies his focus on sense-making to the improvement of organizational capacities to address intractable problems and complex, uncertain situations. He has been identified as a major

figure in the movement toward more humanistic approaches to knowledge management since the mid-1990s.

Like Weick, Snowden emphasizes that organizations need to move away from top-down hierarchies, seek diverse inputs, focus both on failures as well as successes, and encourage collaborative sense-making. He also emphasizes storytelling and uses communication interventions in organizations as both research input and application to practice.

Snowden's sense-making approach differs from Weick, however, in significant ways. He works out of organizational settings rather than academia, defining his project as naturalizing science-based approaches to decision theory and sense-making and bringing together both academic and practitioner perspectives. With his background in both philosophy and business administration, he makes frequent references in his work to literary and science-fiction examples.

Snowden's current consultancy implements action research principles using participatory and discovery methods so that issues and problems are explained in a coevolutionary process. His research and action are, thus, one and the same, and he has developed a number of proprietary tools for analyzing themes of narrative, complexity, and networks and applying these directly into practice. Like Dervin, Snowden also emphasizes explicitly the development of specific alternative procedures for organizational dialogue so as to enable more effective sense-making—making sense of the world in ways that allow more effective action.

One of Snowden's organizing concepts is *cyn-efin*, a Welsh term referring as noun to habitat and as adjective to being familiar. The importance of the concept is that Snowden assumes that it is a sense of place that enables one to advance different storytellings and imagine alternative narratives of what happened and what might be possible. Snowden invites organizational participants to differentiate between different kinds of sense-making gaps so they can gain insights into their organizational assumptions and inner workings and see beyond to alternatives.

Brenda Dervin and Charles M. Naumer

See also Audience Theories; Cognitive Theories; Complexity and Communication; Computer-Mediated Communication; Dialogue Theories; Epistemology;

Grounded Theory; Interpretive Theory; Metatheory; Narrative and Narratology; Ontology; Organizational Communication Theories; Organizing, Process of; Stories and Storytelling; Structuration Theory; Trait Theory

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SIGN

See Meaning Theories; Semiotics and Semiology

SILENCE, SILENCES, AND SILENCING

There are major and significant differences in the meanings of the words *silence*, *silenc(es)*, and *silencing*. Silence concerns nonlinear brain processes; silences concern sequential linguistics and interactions; and silencing concerns restricting the speech and expressions of our selves and/or others. This entry defines and discusses these three kinds of communication, all of which are more important than previously thought.

Compared to studies of spoken communication, silence, silences, and silencing have received relatively little study. This may be because silence is often considered to be the ground in Western societies and spoken language the figure. Silences are

like the white of this paper, while this print is like spoken language. From some Asian perspectives, silence can be sometimes considered a figure, and spoken language can be the ground, a yin-yang balancing. Our first focus is on silence, a very general and elusive concept and process sometimes mixed up with the idea of silenc(es).

Silence

For thousands of years, wise people have commented on the virtues and negativities about shutting up or talking. There have been hundreds of quotations, sayings, and maxims about what was considered silence over the years. For example, around 280 B.C. we find Epicurus the Stoic saying that God gave people two ears, but only one mouth, that they may hear twice as much as they speak. Around 53 B.C., we find Cicero, the Roman statesman-rhetorician, commenting that there is an eloquence of silence to be found in conversations, and around 42 B.C., we find Publius Syrus noting that a person who does not know when to speak does not know when to be silent. We find similar statements about silence in Asian historical documents and in Hebraic and Biblical documents. Also, much of wisdom discussed in theological and mythical circles concerns many beliefs about the silent worlds of a higher order: eternity is silent, infinity is silent, no-thingness is silent, death is silent, the night is silent, and our unconsciousness is often silent.

Almost all writers on silence have only dealt with linguistic and interactive silenc(es) and refer to any one of them as a silence, a confusing approach. Current brain studies show that silence does indeed exist as processes of traditional and religious practice and belief, as well as intrapersonal aspects of spirituality, contemplation, and meditation. Such processes have been largely neglected or even negated in much of behavioral communication research as unimportant simply because silence seems elusive and measures are not apparent or are difficult. Silence will be shown in this entry to concern valid neurological processes, metaphorical narratives, and aesthetics. More importantly, silence concerns synchronous psychological temporalities, or various temporary psychological states occurring together, and the nonlinear brain processes necessary for creating spiritual aspects of

consciousness. To believe in deep silence, then, is to believe in spirituality.

Seldom are people from Westernized cultural groupings conscious of their silence because it is hidden from consideration as a no-thing and often is invisible or is out of awareness to them. This seems to be the case where speeded environments, haste into the future, and instantaneous cellular and Internet communications are common; the past (memories) disappears as fast as so-called modern progression will allow. The faster an environment, the less silence. This seems so because all sound concerns a friction caused by movements. Faster human conduct means more friction; more friction means more noise and less silence.

The late John Cage, an experimental music composer and artist, discussed silence as not existing in the physical absolute because something always happens that makes a sound. This idea should awaken us to a world of sounds that are below our abilities to detect them—butterfly wings flapping, bacteria chortling, the gracefulness of slow wind, the clicking of ants, the roar of the tiny creatures of the sea. Slowing of one's motion and stilling our selves are sometimes related to falling silent. Stillness is highly related to silence in that, in the view of Aristotle in his *Physica*, death is the extinction of heat. Without heat there are no kinetics or movements and therefore, no friction. No friction means no possible human sound. It follows that an absolute physical silence can occur only at death, and only the dead or deities could possibly be witnesses to this silence. Much of religious thought and experiences are related to the idea of an absolute silence.

Silence can concern not only beauty, peacefulness, and happy endings, but also beliefs about hellish deaths, nothingness, timelessness, and the unknown. Silence is deep and profound, whereas silenc(es) are more shallow and connected to the profane worlds of everyday life. Silence concerns a sacredness of place and of temporality, a space and time far different from the space-time sequences and linearity of the profane worlds of everyday life, scientific thinking, and the time keeping of objective consciousness. Anyone who cannot escape from a standpoint of temporal succession to be able to see all things in his or her simultaneity is probably not capable of understanding anything about the metaphysical order of the world. The

image of harmony or peaceful silence is connected to contemplative processes and transformational brain processes. Two of these processes are termed *narrative* and *transcendental* kinds of consciousness by Karl Pribram, founder of holonomic brain theory and a leader in brain studies. The third kind of consciousness outlined by Pribram is called objective consciousness and is used in our everyday lives of order, structure, rationality, habits, and the like. Places and spaces of harmony appear to be created as after images of narrative and/or transcendental consciousness. These quasi-linear and nonlinear brain-energy transformations often seem to concern the motifs of light, radiance, illumination, brilliance, pure wisdom, and deities as light and love. In this definition, we have a neuroscientific description of brain-mind as spiritually metaphorical and descriptive of silence that is very congruent with a number of contemplative and meditative traditions in psychology, as well as religious philosophy or theology.

Silence concerns that which is solitudinal to an extreme. One creates a sacred space in order to create a congruent temporal experience. Clock time and any sense of sequence must disappear, and one must become unconscious of an exterior reality, or what Pribram discusses as exformation as opposed to in-formation or formation within. Solitude is an act of absenting one's self and others. Significantly, one must become absent from one's own verbal thoughts. Self-consciousness is a distraction to achieving a deeper and rewarding silence. One attempts to create a lengthy peacefulness in a social vacuity. To be transfixed in a synchronous oneness, to be absolutely alone, can seem frightening to those habitually glancing at and watching their watches so watchfully and being busy as bees (business). A carefully planned solitudinal environment, eliminating all possible distractions, appears to be necessary to achieving a deeper silence.

Mystical experiences are also the stuff of silence, a feeling of timelessness and liberation from the self, where words no longer have a place. Mysticism involves a denial of time in experience and nature, declares them both as illusory and unreal. Myth works in a similar manner. Myth carries us back to a sacred time, an atemporal world, beyond profane or everyday objective time, timing, and tempos. Both mystical and mythic experiences involve an escape from words and spoken language. The

concept of unconsciousness also concerns a kind of silence. We can fall into a deep, unconscious world of sleep or daydreaming when we absent or void ourselves from everyday life.

We often hide memories from ourselves, revising them slightly, every time we recall them. Soon the memories are changed and become other than what we originally remembered. They become the stuff of daydreams and mental wanderings. Upon reentry into our everyday lives, we often do not know where we were or what we were thinking in our daydream journeys. We remember a silence, and sometimes, important insights can result. We not only repress our memories and revise them; the past disappears into silence. Even hypnosis cannot revive most memories lost forever. These lost memories can be said to be another kind of silence. The elderly know of lost memories only too well as dementia and Alzheimer's disease. That which is forgotten is a huge storehouse of silence.

Important to understand is that some silence does occur that is not as hypnotic, as is the case with deep silence. Narrative silence is abundant in terms of life experiences, traditional beliefs, superstitions, traditional stories, life rehearsals, and many kinds of psychic experiences common in different socio-cultural groupings. These more metaphorical, or narrative kinds of consciousness, concern an art of silence, an aesthetics of silence. Day dreaming is a flight, a personal escape, from everyday experience. Day dreamings concern nostalgic wanderings, heroic ventures, psychic fugues, relational and sexual fantasies, obsessive-compulsive reveries, and so on. There are many poetic or narrative statements that point to narrative consciousness, such as the Arabic proverb: the dog barks, the caravan passes.

Silences

The literature on silenc(es) is voluminous and complex. There are entire traditions in linguistics and psycholinguistics about the study of pausing, studied by certain auditory experts. Pausing includes silences, hesitations during speaking, listener distractions from the spoken word, and breaks and shifts of many kinds in taking turns in interactions. Hesitations are made by public speakers, as well as by persons during interpersonal and group interactions; the scope of the functions of silences during communication cannot be covered fully in this

entry. The study of silences has really just begun in terms of the history of communication studies. When alone and quiet, there occur longer kinds of silence; but when we are with others, we are involved in shorter silenc(es).

Unlike silence, silences are related to linguistic and interactive sequences and a linear objective time. Silences can be both individualized as well as common to the linguistic regularities of particular groupings of people sharing similar spoken and interactive mannerisms. These regularities are called the functions of silences. Silences not only are breaks in spoken continuity, but also are the lengthening or shortening of vowels. These vowel alterations seem to create informational effects that indicate emotional tones and attitudes of speakers. Slowing speech rate often concerns a kind of pausing for attitudinal and affective effect. Of course, there are lengthy silences because of fear of speaking, reticence, autism, and a number of social and psychological pathologies.

There are many kinds of filled or vocalized pauses—indicating indecision, thinking about what to say, revisions while talking, hesitations, uncertainties, and so on. The degree of complexity of information is involved in blending propositioned inner speech with actual spoken constructions. These activities can result in conversational and group silences of some significance. Inexperience in conversing with others, especially strangers from unfamiliar cultural groupings, can produce lengthy puzzlements, silences or kinds of hesitations during momentary, here-and-now, interactions. Kinds of uncertainty seem to have high correlations with what can be called interactive silences, as they imply actual communication contacts and momentary perceptions taking place. There seem to be silences that sometimes indicate a wide range of feelings about certain topics by interactants, about sharing private information about difficult problems, or about difficulties in speaking with valued others. Many pausings seek to control or foster revelations of emotional meanings in our expressions. During interactions, shared silent pauses, hesitant speech, or vowels that are lengthened to slow down the rate of speech, are often indicative of emotional changes taking place in a speaker's voice that are valuable for developing listener understanding and empathy.

Silences are also breaks in communication interactions between people, providing many different

kinds of dyadic, turn-taking signals, as shown by the work of Starkey Duncan and his students. The study of turn taking can be and has been innovative in understanding communicative interactions. Turn taking involves the psychology of control or being granted the freedom to speak by one or more participants. Turn taking also involves uncertainties or delayed responses during interactions as well as acts of dominance and submission by focal participants. Many of these interactive silences are common, but need further study. There are occasions where finding words or a voice to speak is extremely difficult, such as at sad or traumatic events, in hospital waiting rooms, during great losses, at funerals, and so on. Topics or subjects of conversation that are sensitive or taboo are often avoided by longer pausal or interactive silences by participants. Obvious, too, is that one can create longer silences with others by avoiding them as much as possible, or avoiding them completely.

Silencing

One way in which people often use silencing that is obvious, but seldom mentioned, is for the purpose of concealing the nature of one's self and one's mental abilities or knowledge. Concealment by silencing one's self is a major American characteristic and common to many other cultural groupings, too. Many people, especially in some Asian societies, feel that Americans talk too much, clarifying and explaining and trying to make their meanings more and more certain. But such talk often happens because these Americans feel that it is only through talk that meanings are conveyed, and silences do not imply communication for them. Small talk among Americans can act like silences for them to avoid more intimate sharing. In this regard, Jean-Paul Sartre, the existential philosopher, once humored that, if anything, silence is good conversation!

Silencing is a method of persuasion to restrict talk, motion, behavior, and the muting of many forms of communicative expression. Silencing occurs in all sociocultural groupings. Silencing is a mode of acculturation in the rearing of children and in the maintaining of social norms and order and can be used to control others and create status hierarchies. Many of the statements about how people use silence and silences under other sections

of this entry are really about how they restrict the speech of themselves and others. We are reminded of Seneca's famous statement, to silence another, first be silent yourself.

Muted group theory is all about silencing, about how certain groups, especially women and minorities, are politically and repressively kept out of public view by restricting their voices or participation. It has important implications in the study of fair access to public media. There are groups that are shunned for one reason or another—gender, inequality, poverty, racism, ethnicity—by other groups everywhere in the world.

Silences toward another can be a double-edged sword. Grudges, stereotypes held, interpersonal judgments, ignoring, zoning laws, prejudices, and so on are all ways in which people can be silent toward others and therefore beget silence in response. Negatively held silences are reciprocated with a blade that cuts in both directions interactively. Americans do, in fact, practice the silencing of others as much as, if not sometimes more than, many other sociocultural groupings. There are many silences in many cultures of the world, where infrequent talk is understood as important to maintaining normative relations. Unfortunately, in some countries of the world, to speak out in opposition to oppressive controls is to be punished severely, imprisoned, or killed.

Michael Taussig discussed the idea of public secrets as those that everyone seems to know, but for various reasons people cannot and will not talk about. He shows that many lengthy silences are actually taboos against talking about sensitive subjects held by many people. Of course, there are many kinds of repressed expressions or silencing in situations of moral, social, and political taboos.

Perhaps the most powerful discussion of the repression of speech as a major function of silences is that offered in 2006 by Eviatar Zerubavel. He discusses the idea of an elephant in the room, one that no one can see because people do not want to see it or have been simply blinded by a shared secrecy from seeing or noticing the elephant. The elephant represents a big issue, major conflicts, problems involving guilt, and topics difficult to discuss, such as incest, rape, crimes, and ignorance. Zerubavel notes that these are conspiracies of silence(s). They are what Zerubavel views as the heavy sound of silence, rules of denial, learning to

ignore, and rules of irrelevance. They also include taboos, ideas about what is tactful, the politics of denial, the social structure of denial, and problems of those brave enough to break these conspiracies of silence. Persons who break the conspiracies of silence are often rebels who are resisted and often anger those who maintain the conspiracies.

Tom Bruneau

See also Chronemics; Cognitive Theories; Muted Group Theory; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Paralanguage; Spiral of Silence

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SIMULATION AND MEDIA

Simulation is commonly described as a process of replication that produces a copy without an original; it is a duplication of an object or concept that lacks an exact corresponding reality. This copy is called a *simulacrum* (plural, *simulacra*). Amusement parks, reality television, and some art forms are frequently cited instances of simulacra. For example, on the reality television show *Survivor*, places, situations, and interactions have been constructed by media to depict a real that is not authentic. Simulation is highly relevant in communication theory because media and technology are instruments that reproduce fabricated signs and symbols to influence how humans connect. This entry will define the theory of simulation, overview its association with signs and media, provide examples of simulation in operation, and discuss how simulation works to change identities, ways of knowing, and social relationships.

Simulation has been examined by various scholars in many disciplines. Plato, Friedrich Nietzsche, Gilles Deleuze, and Walter Benjamin are among the many philosophers who have looked at the relationship between reality and copies. However, French theorist and critic Jean Baudrillard specifically pointed to contemporary media's role in simulation. Baudrillard's simulacrum is typically characterized as a postmodern theory of how media, technology, and consumerism have detached the once natural relationship between signs and reality.

Baudrillard noted three orders (types) of simulation, each corresponding with different points in history. First, in an earlier, premodern era, signs accurately represented an object or concept (e.g., a painting). Second-order simulacra corresponded with the industrial revolution, where mass production blurred the relationship between reality and copies (e.g., prints of a painting). In the third order, as a result of technology and media, signs are now detached from the object they symbolize, and these disconnected signs comprise the simulacrum and its related concept, the hyperreal (e.g., mass produced t-shirts with imprinted images of Andy Warhol's Campbell's Soup Cans—originally a mass media critique that has now been commercialized). In present consumer societies, Baudrillard argued that copies are not necessarily superior or

inferior to the objects they represent. Instead, as signs no longer accurately stand for what they represent, copies precede and ultimately become their own kind of truth and reality.

Simulation creates the simulacrum that eventually leads to the hyperreal. Although simulacra are copies without an original, the hyperreal is made up of a manic assortment of copies of simulacra. In this process, people have become more preoccupied with consuming things and less concerned with the functions of the things they consume. Yet what they actually consume are products of capitalism that aggressively advertise reality to be something it is not. In the hyperreal, a cookie is no longer a cookie. Instead, it is a mass-marketed symbol of loving grandmother's down-home cooking, endearing childhood memories of the smell of baked goods, and a form of comfort and happiness. People do not simply use products; instead, they tap into fabricated signs and symbols that media put onto the products. Baudrillard used the term *ecstasy* to further describe the exaggerated spiral that things become in the hyperreal; things take on a larger-than-life form, and people become overwhelmed and confused by the dizzying amount of meaning embedded in messages. Ecstasy in the hyperreal is being crushed in a Walmart line on Black Friday as people rush to buy cookies, *Survivor* DVDs, and Warhol t-shirts.

The roles of media and technology in shaping reality are important in this discussion. What is meant by real or true depends on how it is viewed and defined, but Baudrillard argued that reality has been replaced. There is not an existing reality that media portray; rather, media actually create and moderate their own form of the truth (e.g., photojournalists asking subjects to recreate a scene because the first shots were blurred or not up to par). In cultures dominated by hyperaggressive media and consumption, media exert power when they make and then patch together copies of copies that end up influencing how humans live.

In the simulacrum, people become oblivious to the fact that their experiences are not real, a process that profoundly shapes their perceptions and relationships. Viewers who watch and engage in *Survivor* do not reflect upon the fact that the show is constructed. Viewers are not pretending that the program depicts a fabricated world; instead, they are unaware of how much has been created. Baudrillard

offered the example of illness to show this point. If someone fakes being sick, he or she does not actually experience symptoms; he or she is simply pretending, and the truth is not lost. However, if someone feigns an illness, he or she actually produces real symptoms (as experienced by psychosomatics), but does not know the symptoms are fake. A simulated illness blurs the difference between reality and simulation, as it is unclear if feigned symptoms are real or not, since they are claimed to be felt.

The concept of simulation allows scholars and critics to explore various issues, including politics, entertainment, medicine, military engagements, and to explore how people relate to space and nature. For example, pharmaceutical firms have controversially promoted medications in television advertisements, many of which are for ailments that revolve around disorders and syndromes. One example, Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS), is characterized by twitching and aching body parts that lead to pain and sleeplessness. RLS is based on something that exists—that legs do twitch. However, the question is whether twitchy legs have been turned into a syndrome by patching together signs to create a patterned and marketable disease for people who may not have it. RLS medications were created to treat Parkinson's disease, but were found to coincidentally decrease leg twitches and were then aggressively advertised to RLS sufferers to increase sales. In this example, media, technology, and consumerism play powerful roles in reproducing syndromes that defy traditional definitions. The controversy is whether or not a pharmaceutical industry whose livelihood depends on drug sales turned twitches into a syndrome and then aggressively marketed the medications to inform consumers that they are inflicted with RLS.

This is not to say that ailments are not real or that developing medications is not needed. However, it does allow a critic to see how the line is blurred between treating people with preexisting illnesses and creating syndromes with vague assortments of symptoms so others who do not meet the requirements can be diagnosed. In other words, it is unclear which came first—the syndrome or the drugs used to treat it. This process affects how ailments are perceived, diagnosed, and treated.

Essentially, media and technology produce goods and concepts that exaggerate the way things are. Again, there is often some remnant of material

reality to simulated phenomena. However, media take nuggets of signs, create other signs, separate them from their original object, and distort and manufacture them into something that does not exist. As a result, people are oblivious of their meaningless, bizarre, and acontextual worlds.

Scholars who use simulation are ultimately concerned with how media manipulate signs to promote consumption, to produce value systems and ways of knowing, and to impact social relationships. There are consequences when people live fabricated lives, where experiences occur without understanding histories or contexts, and when they lose track of different ways of knowing. Simulation allows scholars to see larger contexts, such as how taking drugs to treat ailments happens in the context of living in societies that promote sedentary lifestyles and psychological alienation that increase our illnesses. In the RLS example, that people are told they need medication can be an artificial need posed as being natural by powerful companies and a myth encouraged by consumerism. Media feed these needs as they constantly advertise drugs and encourage people to ask their doctors. Essentially, in the simulacrum, some syndromes and disorders are created to make consuming medication seem like the only natural treatment.

Although simulation can be a provocative theory of commodity culture in an age of media, it can be used as a theoretical lens and tool to study technologically advanced cultures to recognize that the social relationships people have are often mediated by consumption. Simulation underpins economic, political, and social processes and functions, where reconstructed signs control the way humans think and act. The products and concepts people think about and consume end up mediating their communication and relationships with others and with their environment. This can be observed in many conversations, where a great deal of talk revolves around consumption and technology (purchasing, managing, and protecting homes and cars, shopping, holidays, entertainment, finances, etc.). Simulation asks us to realize that media tell people to want, buy, throw away, want, and then buy again, creating a simulated, ecstasy-filled hyperreal lifestyle that distracts us from thinking about their lives, and each other, differently.

Elizabeth A. Dickinson

See also Critical Theory; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Postmodern Theory; Power and Power Relations; Semiotics and Semiology

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SKILL, COMMUNICATION

See Cognitive Theories; Communication Skills Theories; Competence Theories; Intercultural Communication Competence

SOCIAL ACTION MEDIA STUDIES

Social action media studies is a research approach that emphasizes the interpretive activity of media audiences in everyday contexts. Social action media scholars typically employ ethnographic methods in their investigations. The claims arising from this research are often idiographic in scope—that is, the explanations of audience behavior are limited to the conditions of the case under study. However, the findings of social action media studies have also contributed to broader conceptualizations of the cultural forms, identities, and competencies of media audiences.

In many respects, this approach posits a profoundly different view of audiences from the media-effects tradition, or even as compared to other active-audience traditions such as uses and gratifications. In the social action perspective, media

content does not possess an essential meaning, nor do the explanations for media usage or effects originate in the individual's exposure to messages. Instead, social action media studies begin from the assumption that human beings construct meanings of media technologies and texts within collective frames of understanding. This assumption sets the basic terms for asking such questions as the following: What are the social practices of media usage in particular contexts? How are these practices learned, shaped, or altered over time? How do people select aspects of the mediated culture as resources for defining their roles as social actors? In what ways do the uses and interpretations of media help to engender in social actors a sense of cultural identification, solidarity, or resistance?

As these questions indicate, analysis of the protean quality or variability of meaning lies at the heart of social action studies. The semiotic domains of everyday life give rise to—and place constraints on—the situated performances of media usage. But the mutability of these symbolic resources also makes it possible for people to exercise considerable creativity in how they interpret and manipulate media texts for their own purposes.

Social Action Theory

The theory of social action media studies derives from a variety of constructivist philosophical and scientific traditions. As Gerard Schoening and James Anderson have noted, these traditions—which include cultural hermeneutics, phenomenology, pragmatism, and the interpretive sociologies—commonly subscribe to a view of human beings as sentient, self-reflexive agents who construct reality through their own communicative efforts. The works of Max Weber and Alfred Schutz are particularly important in elaborating, respectively, the ideas of social action and intersubjectivity. Another theme of major significance is that of the everyday world. The everyday has been treated somewhat differently by Schutz, Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, and other thinkers. For media scholars, the term has come to signify the self-evident base of social knowledge that enables people to function easily in contemporary life. Not only are the media of mass communication concrete features of the everyday, but also they constantly circulate signs that audience members use simultaneously as

knowledge and methods for interpreting the social world.

The propositions of social action media theory have been most thoroughly developed by Anderson. According to Anderson, most of human behavior is organized into routines, with a routine being a line of action invested with cultural meaning and governed by a certain grammar and syntax. (Only involuntary and unintentional behavior falls outside the scope of a routine.) For example, the familiar routines of going to work in the morning, waiting for a bus, and text messaging each exhibit a coherent expression of purpose. Several aspects of routines bear some discussion. First, routines constitute symbols—both to oneself and to others—of what is going on in a scene of social life. Once we decode the outward signs of a routine unfolding in our midst, we can participate in it by the competent expression of our own role. (Clearly, the ability to recognize a routine is unevenly distributed in society; to the technologically uninitiated, for example, the meaning of text messaging may be quite opaque.) Second, routines can be nested inside one another. Waiting for a bus can be a regularly scheduled subroutine of the broader script of going to work; similarly, the subroutine of text messaging may be inserted in a culturally appropriate manner at many points as one goes to work in the morning. Third, people always can (and do) improvise on the theme of a routine. According to Anderson, a performance is an expressive improvisation on a routine; thus, the meanings of a behavior shift when we perform it in the context of a different routine. Finally, the way one engages in meaningful action is always under the supervision, comment, and critique of others. These others are not always traditional authority figures; much more commonly, they are simply the communities to which we belong (whose codes of conduct we internalized long ago) or specific social actors in the scene whose potential or actual judgments affect our own production of appropriate performances.

Social action, then, is the process of behaving meaningfully in the everyday world. Media content and technologies come into play as iconic, indexical, or discursive resources in the semiotic of social action. In this sense, audiences create their own texts from media content in order to accomplish their diverse purposes. It is not necessary to be

exposed to a television program to experience its effects in everyday life—through a conversation, for example—or to use its culturally resonant signs in a social routine. The insinuation of media into the performance of social routines can even reshape expectations of what a routine should be (as when, for example, the widespread use of text messaging changes notions of what it means to have a conversation). In social action theory, it is of great importance that these accomplishments of meaning signify to oneself and to others the constitutive reality of their actions at any given moment. The implication is that an act of interpretation is neither abstract nor generalized across contexts. Rather, acts of interpretation both produce—and retrospectively make sense of—the social contexts in which they occur.

Empirical Research

The beginnings of social action media studies can be traced to 1 year, 1978, when communication researchers James Lull and Anderson (and his colleagues) each presented papers at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, advocating the use of ethnography to study television viewing in family settings. They noted with no small irony that after decades of media research, little was known about how people actually integrate mass media into their daily lives. They promoted a research agenda of studying families' media usage up close and in great detail. Further, they argued that only qualitative methods—especially, the participant-observer methodology of ethnography—could carry out this agenda by introducing researchers into the domestic settings where (at that time) most media are located, thus enabling them to partake of the culturally intimate acts of content consumption and usage. Despite concerns that family members would not behave normally in an observer's presence, Lull, Anderson, and other scholars demonstrated that case studies of family life can yield insights into the meanings of mediated communication. An influential step forward was Lull's 1980 article, "The Social Uses of Television," which used exemplars from several years of ethnographic research to show that family members use television as a practical resource in their lives.

Mass communication studies employing the social action approach flourished early in the 1980s. Researchers went into the field to document and

subsequently report the media-use practices of families, children, fan groups, youth subcultures, and other social collectivities. The articulation of social action principles by Anderson, Lull, and others, in tandem with the growing popularity of British cultural studies, helped to ignite this burst of research activity. This historical moment was also marked by the emergence of another type of audience research: reception analysis. The main difference between the social action and reception approaches is that the latter focuses almost exclusively on the text–reader relationship. In the usual formulation of reception analysis, researchers compare the ideological meanings already encoded in a text with the readings of the text that audience members generate by virtue of discursive resources and cultural value systems deriving from their social locations (gender, race, class, etc.). Although reception analysts occasionally considered the social context of media, their explanations were typically inferred from interviews rather than observational data. By the late 1980s, reception analysis had established dominance of the intellectual terrain in qualitative audience research. The inherent difficulty of doing field research was partly responsible for this declining position of social action media studies. Another reason is that the social action approach did not apply as well as reception studies to issues of ideological influence by the media industries and the power of media texts.

During the last 10 years, however, interest in ethnographic studies of mediated communication has seen a modest revival. This methodological turn has been accompanied by a return to social action-oriented questions of how audiences engage with media content and technology in specific contexts. For example, Mark Ritson and Richard Elliott's 1999 study of the social uses of advertising employed observational and interview data to explore some ways in which meanings of television ads become transformed by British adolescents for relational and ritualistic purposes. Other researchers are studying the manifold forms of social activity that new communication and information technologies have made possible. In much of this research, community is displacing the audience as a metaphor—and in some cases, as a literal description—of media user activity. For example, Geraldine Bloustien's 2007 ethnographic project examines the serious play of youth who employ an array of

cultural forms—including live performances, DVDs, Web sites, blogs, group e-mails, and so on—for creating a community centered around music production, marketing, and consumption. Still others are investigating questions about the media's role in the construction of identity in a postmodern world. Often combining a social action approach with theories of postcolonialism, gender, or race, these studies—like Antonio La Pastina's 2004 ethnography of telenovela reception in a rural Brazilian community—often focus on a culture's social practices for appropriating media content and images.

More so than the research of 2 decades ago, the recent wave of social action media studies is characterized by a greater reflexivity about the researcher's actions. Media ethnographers are now more apt to discuss their entry into a scene, their own reactions to the cultural membership, as well as their impressions of how others perceive them. They are also more willing to encourage some of their subjects to act as commentators—or even critics—of what they write. Social action media scholars are certainly not unique in sharing some responsibility for the consequences of the knowledge they produce. However, as Anderson has noted, the social action researcher always operates inside a social arena, sharing in the lives of those who have allowed themselves to be studied. This commitment entails an ethical burden that is perhaps more explicit and demanding than other forms of communication study.

Thomas R. Lindlof

See also Ethnography of Communication; Hermeneutics; Interpretive Communities Theory; Interpretive Theory; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Phenomenology; Postcolonial Theory; Pragmatics

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SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATIVE ANXIETY

Social anxiety refers to psychological distress experienced in reaction to the mere presence of people, whereas the term *communicative anxiety* is used to describe the fear associated with either real or anticipated communication with others. It should be fairly obvious that communication scholars would focus most of their attention on anxiety associated with communication. Communication scholars have, in fact, conducted numerous studies designed to develop an understanding of communicative anxiety principally because anxiety in social situations is the antithesis of social composure. Compared to composed communicators, those who are communicatively anxious avoid social interaction when possible, speak less when required to engage in conversation, are less fluent, and experience far more physiological distress.

Researchers have measured the constructs of social anxiety and communicative anxiety in several ways. By far the most popular is through the use of questionnaires that require respondents to note the amount of anxiety they experience in a variety of social situations, including public speaking and conversations with strangers. Although less frequently used, researchers have measured physiological responses such as heart rate as well as behavioral manifestations such as trembling, blushing, and disfluency. In a few studies of children, researchers have used the assessments by parents, teachers, or peers as a measure of a child's level of social anxiety.

One of the major theoretical issues explored in the research literature is whether social and communicative anxiety are characteristic facets of personality or whether they are merely transitory conditions brought on by features of the environment and demands of the situation. A huge body of research has accumulated in which communicative anxiety has been examined as a personality characteristic or trait. James C. McCroskey coined the term *communication apprehension* to refer to the trait version of communicative anxiety. Communication apprehension refers to the enduring predisposition or proneness to experience anxiety when required to communicate with others. Over the years, research has shown that many people do seem to display a predisposition to experience communicative anxiety. Highly apprehensive people experience anxiety more frequently in social situations and with more intensity than do people low in the trait. Furthermore, research has indicated that people high in communication apprehension make a number of life choices designed to minimize contact with others. Choosing a profession that requires little or no contact with other people is an example of such a choice.

Research also shows that aspects of the situation can influence the level of anxiety felt during social interaction. For most people, speaking to superiors, being placed in a conspicuous situation, being unprepared, or receiving negative feedback elevate transient anxiety levels. Short-term or transient anxiety is called state anxiety. Research also shows, however, that not only do people high in trait communication apprehension experience higher levels of anxiety when these types of situational factors are present, but also they tend to exaggerate the

potency of these features. For instance, highly apprehensive speakers interpret the same feedback as more negative than do people low in the trait.

Another question that has been tackled by researchers interested in social and communicative anxiety concerns the origins of the predisposition to experience social and communicative anxiety. One school of thought is that communication apprehension results from a history of negative reactions from significant others such as parents, peers, and teachers. According to this view, people who experience a pattern of predominately positive response to their communicative efforts developed into adults with no or little fear of communication. In contrast, children who were ridiculed or punished in other ways for expressing themselves grow up to associate the prospect of communicating with embarrassment and humiliation.

An alternative theory suggests that a wide array of communicative behaviors and traits, including social and communicative anxiety, are largely products of genetic inheritance. Numerous studies have shown that personality characteristics such as introversion, social anxiety, shyness, and social composure are much more similar for identical twins than for fraternal twins. These findings have been interpreted as evidence for a genetic inheritance model of personality because identical twins are genetically identical, whereas fraternal twins are no more genetically alike than any other siblings. Many of the studies examined whether the similarities in personality traits were affected by home environments. However, this research showed that identical twins separated at birth who never met until adulthood were very similar in personality, but that fraternal twins, even though raised together, were quite different from each other. These findings led researchers to believe that genetic inheritance is the most important determinant of individual traits.

Researchers have also begun to suspect that differences in brain functioning may contribute to social and communicative anxiety. Studies have shown that lower levels of electrical activity in the right-front region of the brain relative to the left-front region are associated with deficits in self-regulation of behavior and emotion. In a nutshell, the right-front region is important to self-control. Studies have shown that socially anxious people display this pattern of brain activity.

Finally, communication apprehension researchers are beginning to consider the role of prenatal experience on social and communicative anxiety. An impressive body of research indicates that patterns of prenatal hormone exposure affect several aspects of personality, including those related to one's tendency to approach or withdraw from others.

Michael J. Beatty

See also Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory; Communibiology; Competence Theories; Emotion and Communication; Learning and Communication; Trait Theory

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SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

Social construction theory addresses the processes by which people jointly construct their understandings of the world. Advocates assume that meanings are developed in coordination with others rather than separately within each individual or in the world of things, making social interaction the loom upon which the social fabric is woven. A variety of terms has been used to identify this line of thought (social construction of reality, social constructionism, social constructionist, social constructivism, social constructivist), but the current term of choice is simply social construction, which can refer both to the process and to the movement of scholars who use this approach. Recently, several related terms have gained popularity, including coconstruction or joint construction (used to emphasize people working together), constitutive (used as a synonym, as in the constitutive approach), and the shortened version construction.

The term social construction was introduced in Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's book *The Social Construction of Reality*, but it has roots in American pragmatism and symbolic interactionism. Berger and Luckmann combine certain assumptions of sociology and philosophy, and the theory has since been taken up by other disciplines as well, including particularly education, psychology, and communication. Berger and Luckmann wanted to understand the construction of knowledge, not the communication process behind it, so many of their points are actually irrelevant to what is studied today by communication scholars under the phrase social construction.

In the communication field, two elements are most relevant: (a) the central assumption that people make sense of experience by constructing a model of the social world and how it works and (b) the emphasis on language as the most important system through which reality is constructed. The resulting implication is that conversation serves as a critical tool for reality maintenance. This entry is organized around the main parts of the social construction of reality, the special role of language, and social construction as a theory.

Three Parts

The Social

One of the implications of social construction theory is the acknowledgment that social reality requires interaction between people. Construction is social in the sense of requiring collaborative rather than individual effort. Whatever exists in the social world does so as a result of the words and/or actions of people talking and interacting together. Each culture or social group develops its own understandings of the world, creating its own meanings for behavior and how this is to be understood. People, acting together, develop traditions over time, and then begin to take them for granted. Status is a typical example: The fact that we treat presidents or CEOs differently than janitors or waiters has little to do with physically obvious differences, relying instead on socially granted characteristics. Margaret Mead demonstrated in the 1930s that gender roles were not linked to sexual characteristics: What one culture expects of men, another expects of women. The different ways groups create their own meanings underscores the significance of

the context relevant to interpretation of a particular social construction. People create the meanings for behavior that make sense within their own group; the same behavior has different meanings to members of other groups. This applies equally to understanding the significance and implications of a word, an action, an object, or a media product.

Construction

Central to social construction is the verb to construct, which implies building something, making something, or bringing something into being that had no existence previously. The construction metaphor leads researchers to study how people make things such as families or emotions, which do not have material substance, appear to have substance and definition. Following James Carey, social construction is generally understood to incorporate four stages: construction, maintenance, repair, and change. First, social actors develop a concept and then figure out ways to make it concrete. For example, a Girl Scout badge represents knowledge gained in a particular area, and knowledge normally remains invisible.

Second, people need to actively maintain a particular social construction if it is to remain viable, for if it is no longer relevant, it will be ignored and thus dissolve. Finding a grandfather's army uniform with medals on it that no longer are used—and are thus meaningless to descendants—shows how social meanings change or even dissipate if not actively maintained; the film conventions from the 1930s are not followed today, or if they are, they convey different information.

Third, social actors need to periodically repair their constructions because aspects may be inadvertently forgotten or deliberately changed over time. Wearing Scottish tartan as part of a punk teen's outfit demonstrates change in meaning of that particular sign. And finally, there are many times when the construction that worked in one time period conveys a message that is no longer supported, so it needs to be changed for the next generation. The married couple using two single beds means one thing in a 1950s sitcom, but another in 2008. These steps imply a greater role for current participation in the construction of the social world than might otherwise be assumed: Each generation reaffirms and maintains some parts of the social world, repairing or recreating or discarding other parts.

Reality

Social construction theory implies a distinction between the physical and social realms. Most people think of physical reality by and large as a given since they do not now and never will actually create parts of the natural world: mountains, trees, animals, plants (despite the potential of cloning). People do, however, create social meanings for these and other parts of the physical world (think of rainbows or money, both of which have physical existence matched to social conventions). In addition to adding meaning to the physical world, people definitely do create the social world. Many things have social reality without having prior physical existence (including social roles, relationships, or religions). This means social actors invent texts of various sorts, whether verbal (stories, conversations, arguments) or visual (brochures, press releases, flags), as well as understandings of the significance of these and other social productions. All these texts may appear natural or obvious, yet must be recognized as human inventions.

Social construction includes a range of views, generally framed in terms of strength. Weak social construction theory accepts that there is an underlying physical reality upon which most social constructions are based: There is a mountain, but the common understanding of a mountain as a challenge to hikers is a human addition; there is a rainbow, but the various connotations (from the biblical promise not to impose a second flood, to its use as a symbol of gay pride) are social constructions. In contrast, strong social construction theory argues that the very concepts of real and unreal are socially created and thus question whether there is in fact a mountain or rainbow. If humans cannot understand a mountain or rainbow in any other terms than the meanings that have been constructed, then physical reality is for all intents and purposes socially derived. Because physical reality appears to create constraints to what can be known, most current theorists in communication and other fields fall into the weak social construction camp.

Language

Social actors use language to make things happen: Naming things gives them substance and makes them real. Thus language, the most important social construction, moves to center stage as the key topic

for analysis. Each group develops its own set of linguistic codes at various levels of complexity: languages (such as English), dialects (African American vernacular English), registers (medical jargon), and systems of use for each of these. Studying language makes it immediately apparent that not everyone shares the same assumptions, for simply walking into a room where people are speaking an unfamiliar language clearly shows the constructed nature of the social world.

The linguistic code each person uses during interaction helps to construct the self that is relevant for a particular moment. In social construction theory, the self is not unitary, but multiple, so there is always a choice of which self is relevant in a particular context. For example, someone may be simultaneously a daughter, lawyer, tennis champion, and cancer survivor. This works for media as well as for interaction, which is why there are dialect coaches for films. Directors use the way particular actors talk as a vehicle to convey information, thus constructing the personality, history, and social status of that character. No one uses the same way of talking in all contexts, and everyone has a range of selves relevant to different interactions: Even within a single physical setting, the same person can display identities as parent and customer in quick succession through linguistic choices, usually made unconsciously. This is what Berger and Luckmann meant by saying conversation functions as a critical tool in reality maintenance.

The largest topic to which social construction has been applied has been the social construction of identity, especially cultural identity. This links to language by way of narratives; it is through story construction that people make sense of experience and give it shape, and so some researchers have examined narratives told in various contexts as a form of identity construction through language. Other scholars have examined other aspects of how language shapes the social world, including power, conflict, negotiation, or accounts. Because therapy can be, among other things, a way to rewrite someone's life stories, it has been a particular focus of research.

Social Construction as Communication Theory

Social construction theory is critical to communication because it is through communication that

we construct the social world and our understandings of it. We create the social world through our words, our actions, and our media products. Interaction is no less a social accomplishment than is the creation of a film: Both require considerable creativity and coordination on the part of participants. For this reason, social construction theory lends itself particularly well to discussion of the connection between the macro and micro. Most often this implies using analysis at the microlevel (specific words, images, actions) to examine a macroprocess (or structure, or institution). For example, a study of how people use words describing race, or what roles individuals of different races have been given on television, can help to reveal how racism has been maintained (or how it can be dismantled).

From the start, social construction theory has implied reflexivity (an awareness of the researcher's role in conducting research) and questioning of taken-for-granted assumptions, especially in the construction of knowledge. Reflexivity means stopping to ask questions about what is occurring rather than taking matters for granted, and then letting the questions (and their answers) influence future choices. One implication is that researchers need to discover their own assumptions and biases in order to account for them. Central to social construction are questions about what scholars know and what forms of evidence are accepted as valid. These questions are equally relevant to other theories, of course, but are explicitly considered less often. Perhaps since social construction theorists focus on the created nature of knowledge and information, they are more likely to ask questions about their own activities as well as the activities of those they study.

Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz

See also Constitutive View of Communication; Coordinated Management of Meaning; Language and Communication; Semiotics and Semiology; Social Interaction Theories

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SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

Social exchange theory (SET) is a set of ideas derived from several theories (e.g., equity theory, interdependence theory, resource theory) focused on the manner by which humans acquire resources. The roots of the aforementioned theories are located in several disciplines including anthropology, economics, psychology, and sociology. Consequently, they differ with regard to their characterizations of exchange. Because of this diversity, scholars using SET as their conceptual framework sometimes differ with regard to the tenets of the theory and its foundational work.

Regardless, a set of assumptions are attributed to SET. These assumptions have guided research on interpersonal (e.g., self-disclosure, relational development, and maintenance) and organizational communication (e.g., negotiation, social networks) and have been incorporated into theories focused on related processes (e.g., dual-concern model of negotiation, investment model, selective investment theory, social penetration theory).

Central Assumptions

Human beings need resources to survive. To facilitate meeting their needs, humankind learned to directly exchange resources or distribute a pool of

resources among members of a social system. When acquiring resources, individuals enact behaviors that have proved successful in the past and that they expect will result in benefits in the current context or in the future. Hence, they are self-interested. To reduce the likelihood of exploitation, social systems develop norms or rules that prescribe how resources should be exchanged or distributed. Direct exchanges (e.g., doing favors) are guided by a norm of reciprocity that dictates that receiving a resource obligates one to return a benefit and until reciprocity occurs, the receiver of a resource is obligated to be respectful and supportive of the giver. Distribution of resources within a social system (e.g., employee salaries) is governed by rules that identify the basis upon which resources should be allocated (e.g., relative contribution, need, status, equality), the procedures used to determine the distribution (e.g., individuals should have voice in the decision making), and how the distribution is announced (e.g., decision makers should fully explain their actions in a sensitive fashion). These conventions increase feelings of deservingness, and when they are violated, individuals perceive that they have been treated unfairly and try to restore fairness or seek resources elsewhere. When exchanges have been successful, stable exchange relationships and social networks are formed. Stability alters the importance of exchange norms (e.g., meeting needs becomes more important than reciprocity), and norm deviations are tolerated to a greater degree.

Communication Implications

Just as the capacity for resource exchange developed as humankind evolved, so the capacity for language evolved as a means for facilitating exchanges. There is a natural connection, then, between social exchange and communication. Indeed, SET has implications for understanding aspects of interaction.

First, interaction can be viewed as a means of exchanging symbolic resources. Individuals have cognitive filters that are used to translate actions into resources. Hence, resources are symbolic representations of the behaviors that occur during an interaction. Resources include love, status, information, services, goods, and money. When interacting, individuals can perceive that they have exchanged resources (e.g., compliments increase one's status)

or have had resources taken away (e.g., insults diminish one's status). Interaction can reflect positive (mutual compliments) or negative reciprocity (mutual insults), and resources can appropriately be exchanged for similar, but not identical resources. In some cases, individuals differ with regard to what resources were exchanged as well as whether positive or negative reciprocity occurred.

Second, interaction is a means of negotiating the exchange of resources. Sometimes individuals negotiate the terms of exchange prior to entering into it. By doing so, they reduce uncertainty about the nature of the future exchange as well as form a contract that might be used to legitimately enforce the terms of their agreement. Negotiations may involve explicit (e.g., direct statements) or implicit (e.g., hints) forms of bargaining (e.g., exchange of offers and counteroffers), argumentation (e.g., reason giving), and coercion (e.g., threats). Negotiators vary with regard to their concern for their own outcomes versus their partner's outcomes. Exchange agreements that meet the needs of both parties are most likely when the individuals are mutually concerned about their own and each other's outcomes.

Third, interaction is a means by which individuals create exchange relationships and networks. Although factors such as proximity can influence the ability of individuals to form exchange relationships, individuals still have some choice. When considering partners, individuals estimate what others have to offer, and interaction plays a key role in their estimates. Individuals may signal their worth by displaying resources either verbally or nonverbally and by providing samples (e.g., brief, but positive initial interactions). Early positive interactions may signal that another is trustworthy and possesses valuable resources.

Fourth, interaction is a means by which individuals maintain and repair their exchange relationships and networks. Although most relationships involve positive interactions, negative events can occur that challenge their continuation. Hence, individuals must find ways to keep the relationship strong and overcome challenges. These actions may involve discussing the relationship, assessing individual needs, sacrificing, and accommodating each other's negative actions. Such actions reflect commitment to the relationship that results from prior investments, relational satisfaction, and the perception that it is the best alternative.

Criticism

Controversies have emerged about SET's characterization of individuals as strategic and self-interested, whether it is sufficiently precise so as to be falsifiable, whether it has logical consistency, and whether it is universal. Communication critics question how much SET informs about the vast array of processes that occur during an interaction and suggest that cognitive theories provide greater insight.

Michael Roloff

See also Cognitive Theories; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Negotiation Theory; Relational Development; Relational Maintenance Theories; Self-Disclosure; Social Penetration Theory

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SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

The core idea of social identity theory is that people are motivated to maintain or achieve a positive social identity, but that positive social identity results from the standing of one's in-group vis-à-vis other groups. Groups are engaged in a struggle for power, prestige, and status, and depending upon the nature of this struggle, groups live in relative cooperation or competition. Using this framework, social identity theory was initially

concerned with explaining social cooperation and conflict and changes between the two, but it has since burgeoned into a general approach to group processes and intergroup relations. The generative power of the theory derives from its interactive metatheory—the idea that individual psychology resides in and interacts with social relations between groups.

Specifically, according to social identity theory, groups vary in status position, these status positions are perceived as more or less subjectively legitimate and stable, group boundaries can be more or less permeable, and people vary in their commitment to their in-groups. These five variables place constraints upon the motive for a positive social identity, which ultimately leaves people with three classes of identity-management strategy—social mobility, social competition, and social creativity.

Social mobility is a strategy used by individuals to produce positive social identity by either leaving one's group to move up the status hierarchy, in the case of subordinate group members, or endorsing limited assimilation of lower status group members, in the case of those in dominant groups. The critical prerequisite for social mobility is a belief in the permeability of group boundaries, and it is typically accompanied by a lack of commitment to one's in-group and the belief that the status order is stable and legitimate. Linguistically, social mobility is exemplified by subordinate group members abandoning their language in favor of dominant group languages and by dominant group members endorsing tokenistic assimilation and single-language policies such as English-only instruction for children.

Social competition (sometimes referred to as social change) is a collective strategy that is aimed at reversing the social order in the case of subordinate group members or undermining social change in the case of those in dominant groups. People who endorse social competition are typically highly committed to their group, see little possibility of moving to another group, and see the status order as unstable and/or illegitimate. Instability is the critical variable that encourages attempts at social change. Examples include subordinate groups engaging in linguistic revival movements (e.g., Welsh, Catalan, Hawaiian) and dominant groups that implement mass arrests, lynchings, and beatings of those in subordinate groups or in the most extreme case, genocide.

Social creativity is a collective strategy whereby subordinate group members aim to preserve positive identity in the face of a highly stable status order, and dominant group members distance themselves from lower status groups. The preconditions for social creativity are identical to those of social competition except for the belief that the social order is stable. Those in subordinate groups may endorse solidarity-based stereotypes (“We are the salt of the earth”), while eschewing status-based stereotypes (“We are poor”); they might reject the basis for stigmatization (“Black is beautiful!”) or find an even lower status group to compare themselves with. Those in dominant groups are most likely to pursue social creativity when they have status, but not power. European aristocrats have continually shifted their accents and phrases over time in an effort to maintain a suitable distance from subordinate group members who could otherwise mimic good breeding by cultivating their accent. This process may account for the relative stability of American English (which is replete with archaic English terms, such as fall, sick, trash, and molasses) compared to English in England (autumn, ill, rubbish, and treacle, respectively).

In the field of communication, the most direct relatives of social identity theory include ethnolinguistic identity theory, communication accommodation theory, and their explanations for multilingualism, language attitudes, and communicative shifts. In essence, communication accommodation theory assumes that people manage social distance using communication and that this is motivated by a desire to show similarity and liking or to establish positive social identity. The ways in which these motives are realized are described by ethnolinguistic identity theory, which retains the identity-management strategies described in social identity theory.

More recently, social identity theory has been extended theoretically to account for representations of minority and majority groups in the media and patterns of media usage. It has been found that people use media that gratify social identities and that representations of minorities in the media typically are biased in a stereotypical direction. It has been proposed that media-usage patterns reflect social identity management strategies and that shifts between these strategies are likely to be governed by information in the media that leads people to alter

their perceptions about the relative legitimacy and stability of status relations between groups. The interactive metatheory has been refined and extended in the form of self-categorization theory, which has been used to explain, among other things, social influence, stereotyping, and leadership endorsement. In communication, self-categorization theory has been used to explain third-person perceptions, group-status formation within small interactive groups, and the uses of language by leaders to establish influence and power.

Scott Reid

See also Accommodation Theory; Communication Theory of Identity; Identity Theories

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SOCIAL INFORMATION PROCESSING THEORY

The social information processing theory (SIP) explains how communicators who meet through text-based computer-mediated communication (CMC) develop interpersonal impressions and relationships. Introduced in 1992 by Joseph Walther, SIP provides an explanation for how aspects of the communication process interact with technological features of media to foster the development of affinity and attraction in online

environments. Since then, the theory has been utilized to explain online impression- and relationship-formation processes across a variety of social and task contexts including international workgroups, dating sites, and social networking venues.

Similar to social penetration theory and uncertainty reduction theory, SIP explains relationship development. However, SIP employs verbal and temporal cues as central influences on relationship formation. The theory uses both sets of cues as parameters under which communication and technology may combine to produce impersonal, interpersonal, or hyperpersonal relationships. Recent developments in testing SIP have identified factors that provide motivation for SIP processes.

Prior to its introduction in the early 1990s, the predominantly held view was that relationship formation via CMC formats was not possible because they provided only one channel for interaction—text (or verbal). This supposed deficiency, particularly when compared to the multitude of channels inherent in face-to-face (FtF) interaction, led to the creation of several similar theoretical positions espousing its negative effects on messages and interpersonal relations. Termed collectively as the cues-filtered-out perspectives, the positions assumed the presence of nonverbal cues was a necessary condition in order to form positive impressions of and warm relationships with others online; restricting access to said cues—as text-based formats do—was thought to be an inherent drawback of CMC, thereby making such tools less useful for pursuing social goals. Thus, early perspectives assumed a deterministic link between the number of nonverbal cues made available by a medium and the type of communication it produced: Fewer cues equaled less affiliative and warm communication. SIP offered an alternative perspective.

Verbal Cues

SIP does not dispute that computer-mediated tools restrict the number of nonverbal cues available to communicators—text-based formats such as e-mail and instant messaging rely on typed messages rather than on visual and/or audio ones. The theory holds that these typed messages are equivalent to the verbal channel in FtF. SIP does, however, dispute the claim that this makes computer-mediated tools less useful for interpersonal impression and

relationship formation. Unlike the earlier cues-filtered-out perspectives, SIP proposes that communicators adapt to any limitations imposed upon them by a medium. Communicators use verbal cues to convey social information and relational messages that would be readily available visually or through other channels capable of conveying more nonverbal information (e.g., FtF or telephone). As a result, social information about, for example, communicators' physical appearance and sense of humor must be expressed in writing online. Relational messages of affiliation and attraction conveyed via multiple nonverbal channels in person may be translated into verbal forms. In this sense, communicators may adapt to having fewer channels available by expressing themselves in writing.

Receivers use the verbal context of typed messages to infer social information about senders. The type of language used, nature of emoticons employed, presence-absence of typographic errors, and even the username of the sender, for example, may influence the nature of impression formed. Thus, because communicators must rely on typed messages as their primary channel, the verbal cues they contain are potent influences on ensuing interpersonal impressions and relations.

Temporal Cues

SIP also holds that temporal constraints, or the length of time communicators have to exchange messages, are a central influence on the type of relationship they form. Logically, if a communicator has only one channel to use for communication in CMC and (as noted above) multiple in FtF, it follows that it would take longer to achieve the same goals when employing the prior. Early studies that resulted in the cues-filtered-out perspectives did not recognize this. Instead, in comparisons between CMC and FtF, they limited the amount of time communicators had to interact, resulting in claims that CMC was better suited for work-oriented interaction.

SIP predicts that when communicators are allowed only a limited amount of time to exchange messages, impersonal relationships—or those lacking much intimacy or affiliation—are expected to result. For example, messages exchanged by communicators in workgroups would focus on addressing whatever task goals are at hand, with few if any messages directed at addressing social goals. Because

typing a message takes longer than does speaking the same words, the number of messages exchanged through CMC, relative to FtF, will be smaller. As a result, available time gets dedicated to task completion and not to relationship development.

When communicators are allowed to exchange messages without any temporal constraints, the theory predicts interpersonal relationships—or those that show a level of development comparable to one developed by FtF—will result. For example, communicators in workgroups can dedicate more messages to getting to know their partners and to sharing social information while still addressing their task.

Under certain circumstances, the lack of temporal constraints may lead to relationships that exceed the affiliation and intimacy levels typically achieved in person. These hyperpersonal relationships are the result of (a) senders selectively presenting themselves to create a positive impression, (b) receivers interpreting messages in a biased manner that overattributes positive characteristics, (c) mediated channels allowing for greater control over message creation (e.g., e-mail), and (d) feedback that produces a self-fulfilling prophecy of positivity.

Motivation

In its original form, SIP assumed that communicators would be as motivated to form relationships online as they are in person. Tests of the theory have identified factors that heighten this drive: anticipated future interaction and skepticism.

Anticipated future interaction refers to the prospect that communicators who meet online will continue to have contact into the future. Communicators who expect contact with their partner in the future are more likely to exchange more messages and develop a relationship than those who do not. Skepticism refers to a communicator's attitude towards the use of CMC for friendship formation. Communicators who are less skeptical report forming more friendships online than those who report higher levels.

Artemio Ramirez

See also Computer-Mediated Communication; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Relational Development; Social Penetration Theory; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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SOCIAL INTERACTION THEORIES

Many theories have been used to investigate social interaction; four having historic connections and theoretical overlap will be briefly described in this entry, together with a few major concepts from each: interactional theory, social communication theory, dramaturgical theory, and interactional sociolinguistics. They are similar in their efforts to investigate human interaction broadly. All four theories assume that participants socially construct their relationships and interactions through their communication and that communication is a situated, multiparty accomplishment. All examine the extraordinary orderliness of everyday face-to-face interaction and the ways in which participants collaborate to create that order and the

resulting meanings for themselves. In addition, these theories share assumptions about the need to conduct research through direct observation of actual behavior. Some of the concepts may seem familiar, as these theories were developed in the 1950s and 1960s, and thus have served as the foundation for some later theories.

Interactional Theory

Interactional theory emphasizes ongoing relationships created by particular words exchanged in a specific interaction; the significant starting point is that people can and do create their relationships with others every time they interact. Gregory Bateson is the key theorist; although interactional theory was not his phrase (he just said he studied communication), it has come to be the term of choice. Carol Wilder and Janet Beavin Bavelas have been responsible for conveying many of Bateson's ideas to communication scholars; Bavelas was an original member, with Paul Watzlawick and others, of what is often called the Palo Alto Group because it was based at the Mental Research Institute (MRI) in Palo Alto, California. Bateson was trained in anthropology, later adding significant interests in biology and cybernetics, but because his most productive period was spent at MRI, his ideas have been widely utilized by family therapists. Due in large part to the uncommonly broad range of disciplines he studied, Bateson is particularly well known for his ability to search out underlying patterns of communication, sometimes using his observations of animals as the vehicle to discovering important interaction patterns in human behavior (as with the concept of metacommunication, developed as a result of watching sea otters at a zoo). A few key concepts are described in this entry.

Metacommunication

Metacommunication is usually defined as communication about communication. People convey two sorts of information with every message: the content of the message and a second, metacommunicative message about how the first message is to be understood. Metacommunication can be explicit or implicit. Explicit metacommunication includes requests to clarify intended meaning, as when someone asks, "Did you insult me deliberately?" Implicit

metacommunication is not normally stated in words, yet it conveys information about meaning. For example, when someone uses the words, "I hate you," the dictionary meaning is negative, but if the frame is teasing, then the interactional meaning is in fact the reverse of the literal sense of the phrase.

One Cannot Not Communicate

Bateson proposed that it is impossible to communicate nothing, usually phrased as one cannot not communicate. One easy example is that even silence conveys information in a conversation, so the invitation that remains unissued, such as not being invited to a family Thanksgiving dinner, can provoke a response. Ray Birdwhistell is often credited with this insight (especially for examples involving nonverbal communication), but Birdwhistell credits Bateson with the original idea.

Feedback

The cybernetic notion of feedback emphasizes the way in which social actors constantly adapt their language and behaviors to one another. Interactional theory differentiates between two types of feedback relationships: symmetrical (where participants vie to remain even in terms of status among other possible characteristics) and complementary (where participants react oppositely so that when one draws closer, the other draws away). Even when the term is not explicitly used, the concept of feedback has had considerable influence across multiple theories.

Double Bind

Double bind was the phrase used by Bateson and colleagues in the Palo Alto Group to describe what happens in schizophrenic families when one family member receives two messages requiring contradictory actions at a single time. For example, telling someone to be spontaneous ensures that he or she cannot be; after all, he or she is then just following instructions, the opposite of spontaneity. In most cases, the messages are not operating at the same level so that the paradox is not apparent (see above description of metacommunication). It turned out that double binds are common in many relationships. For a double bind to operate, action is required, but any action chosen brings negative consequences. The popular expression "you can't

win for losing” conveys the heart of the matter: whatever choice is made will be wrong.

Social Communication Theory

Social communication theory presents a set of related assumptions: that communication behavior has pattern, is learned, context bound, multimodal, and multifunctional. The primary theorist, Birdwhistell, was trained as an anthropologist and knew Bateson, leading to some overlap with interactional theory. Although Birdwhistell is best known as the inventor of kinesics (the study of body motion communication), a topic emphasized in his publications, he actually taught his students to study interaction far more broadly. Birdwhistell understood body movements to be an integral part of communication; today nearly everyone takes this for granted, but in the 1950s it was a novel idea. In addition to later work by Birdwhistell’s colleagues Albert Scheflen and Adam Kendon, social communication theory integrates related ideas from Erving Goffman and Dell Hymes.

Pattern

The beginning point of social communication theory is the assumption that people interact in patterned, systematic ways; thus, their moment-by-moment interactional choices are not random, neither are they due simply to individual preferences. This implies that unstated rules govern interaction and that most people follow these rules, even if they cannot name them explicitly. If behavior can be appropriately described as rule-governed, then it also must be relatively predictable and analyzable. If communication behavior were not rule-governed, there would be no consistency to what we observe, and we could not study it. There is substantial overlap with the way interactional theory looks at pattern; the difference is that Bateson was more likely to look at patterns connecting apparently disparate aspects of the world, while Birdwhistell was more likely to look at patterns within a single context.

Learning

People are not born knowing how to communicate. That there are cultural differences in how members of different groups interact demonstrates

this; if communication were innate rather than learned, most such differences would not exist. Each new child learns how to communicate according to the norms governing his or her particular sociocultural group; thus a Korean infant adopted in the United States grows up speaking English rather than Korean.

Context

Meaning is determined by such contextual factors as participants, physical location, preceding events, and so on, so an adequate interpretation of behavior requires that it be understood in, rather than out of, context. There is no precise definition of context that will cover all relevant factors for every interaction; context is the sum of all knowledge required to understand what is happening in any interaction as well as the participants understand it. Each interaction is interpreted in light of all prior interactions, so taking context into account in an analysis implies recognizing that each interactional moment forms part of the context for all ensuing moments.

Multimodality

Although earlier theories of communication assumed that only language was essential to understanding, social communication theory insists on the relevance of multiple channels of behavior, today termed multimodality. One implication is that communication is continuous—if not only words, but every movement a communicator makes is potentially relevant, no other option makes sense. The link to interactional theory’s concept that one cannot not communicate will be obvious. Birdwhistell explained this in terms of it being impossible to convey no information through body position: however a person stands, some information is provided to others, whether about health, age, gender or ethnic identity, frame of mind, or degree of involvement in the interaction.

Functions

Equally, while some theories assume that the primary function of communication is to convey new information (known as the referential function), social communication theory considers multiple functions to be relevant, including most importantly

metacommunication (discussed above) and phatic communication. The term phatic, first proposed by Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, refers to all interaction by which people assure one another that they are still interacting. The fact of communication is more important than the literal content of the message. When we say, “How are you?” as a greeting, this is taken as a phatic expression of connection, not a literal inquiry into health. Social communication theory suggests that this is in fact the most critical function because without the constant but mundane acknowledgment that communication is possible, the less frequently offered new information could go unrecognized.

Dramaturgical Theory

Goffman established his reputation as a sociologist by proposing the interaction order—that structure governing everyday encounters between people—as a legitimate topic of study. His approach, most often called dramaturgical theory for his central metaphor of interaction as a stage, overlaps with social communication theory because he was Birdwhistell’s student as an undergraduate in Canada and later his colleague at the University of Pennsylvania. Dramaturgical theory explores the social construction of the self, relationships, and social reality through attending to language and interaction. Goffman pioneered the use of microanalysis (analyzing details of behavior that others were likely to consider irrelevant) to study interaction. The main strands of research in language and social interaction today—including conversation analysis, ethnomethodology, ethnography of communication, and language and social psychology—are all different ways of studying this interaction order.

Goffman, and thus dramaturgical theory, established a well-deserved reputation for hyperelaboration of analytic terminology, as each book introduced new vocabulary. Many of his terms have become widely accepted by scholars across theoretical traditions, but the sheer numbers of technical terms mean that many have been essentially ignored. Dramaturgical theory assumes social selves are always interacting with others, so the relationships that connect individuals to the social world serve as the locus of investigation. Goffman divided contexts of copresence (people present at the same place at the same time) into gatherings

(when people are copresent, but not necessarily interacting) and occasions (social events having temporal and spatial boundaries, with participants likely to interact). In either, face engagements exist as a joint focus, such as a conversation. Any time social actors wish to hide an activity or discourage involvement, they can make use of an involvement shield, such as reading a newspaper; use of shields permits civil inattention (not paying obvious attention to others). Goffman frequently examined the link between relationships and public life, introducing such concepts as a single (person alone), a with (person obviously with another), and tie-signs (evidence of relationship). He examined remedial work (efforts to repair interaction) such as accounts (explanation of what occurred); discussed social identities (membership in categories, including age, race, gender) and their associated social norms, rules, and interpersonal rituals; and analyzed how interaction rules create reality. One of the key insights of dramaturgical theory is that because social rules are easily broken, participants’ sense of reality can be easily shattered.

Impression Management

Dramaturgical theory examines the self as a social product, introducing the influential concept of impression management (attending to information one participant conveys to others). Behavior is divided into information one gives (deliberately) and gives off (inadvertently), drawing a distinction between focused interaction (when people cooperate to sustain a focus of attention, as in conversation) and unfocused interaction (when people glean information through observation, as in noticing a stranger’s clothes). Particular emphasis is on the rules of conduct binding actors together, specifically, face (positive social value a person claims) and facework (actions taken to maintain face). Impression management as a concept has been widely taken up by interpersonal and organization communication; face and facework have been extensively studied within intercultural communication.

Front Stage-Back Stage

Extending the metaphor of life as a stage, dramaturgical theory distinguishes between front stage (where the self is visible, as in the dining room) and back stage (where it is hidden, as in the kitchen).

The social self can be examined in a wide range of contexts, from a total institution (a place to live and work, cut off from society) to the plight of someone with a spoiled identity (any attribute that discredits them). People thus are understood to display multiple roles and identities in different contexts (a mother in relation to one's child, yet a child in relation to one's mother), including different aspects of a single context (parents wrapping Christmas presents for children at night, yet saying they come from Santa Claus the next morning).

Frames

The concept of frames (contexts within which language and behavior are understood) was borrowed from Bateson and interactional theory. Due to this history, frames were designed as an explanation of how interactants provide metacommunicative messages—that is, they provide an additional layer of information about language or behavior in an event under analysis. Dramaturgical theory expanded substantially upon the notion of frames, adding such related concepts as keying (the way in which a frame can be reinterpreted) and strips (a piece of the stream of behavior).

Interactional Sociolinguistics

Like the other theories discussed in this entry, interactional sociolinguistics examines actual communication behavior and focuses on small moments of interaction. Like intercultural communication, it emphasizes contexts where diverse cultural participants come together. Today it is widely practiced by scholars in sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, and discourse analysis. The key theorist, John J. Gumperz, and the one who invented the name, was trained as a linguist, but like Birdwhistell, is best known in communication for expanding our understanding of interaction to include more than just words. Much of his research has focused on paralanguage, especially the intonation patterns used by different speakers of the same language (e.g., speakers of English from India have trouble in England due to differential use of intonation patterns, despite their fluency in the language). As this example demonstrates, this theory is most often used to examine intercultural contexts, although the application of this theory to gender miscommunication by Deborah Tannen has been hugely popular.

Gumperz is best known to interaction scholars as coeditor, with Dell Hymes, of the book that shaped the ethnography of speaking—*Directions in Sociolinguistics*—and interactional sociolinguistics clearly shares many theoretical (and methodological) assumptions with that tradition. In focusing on nonlinguistic aspects of communication, it also shares a great deal with social communication theory, although there was no direct link to Birdwhistell, but rather to the earlier linguists who also influenced Birdwhistell's ideas. It was not Gumperz, but Hymes who worked with Birdwhistell and Goffman, thus ensuring some overlap of theoretical orientations.

Speech Community

Gumperz wrote the definitive description of speech community in 1968, so obviously this is a critical concept to interactional sociolinguistics, though it plays a role in other theories as well. A speech community is a group of people who share at least one linguistic code and norms for understanding its use—that is, everyone who speaks the same language and shares ideas of how to define the words used as well as the intonation patterns used to speak those words, makes up a single speech community. A more recent, overlapping term is *community of practice*. In either case, the focus of study is a single group with a shared set of norms and practices who form a community either literally (as when people live in the same neighborhood) or metaphorically (as when they interact without necessarily sharing geographic space, such as those who share a religious belief system). Identity practices are framed by speech communities; social actors are normally able to name the various speech communities of which they are part, whether these be nation-states or online chat rooms.

Code Switching

Each speech community must have, at a minimum, one linguistic code (defined as a language, dialect, or register) to use for purposes of communication. Examples of languages would be English or Spanish; examples of dialects would be African American vernacular English, or Chicano English; and examples of registers would be baby talk, or doctor talk. Code switching occurs when speakers

use two or more linguistic codes within a single interaction. Often it is assumed that code switching occurs when members of different language communities come together (as when a native Spanish speaker who also knows English integrates a few words of Spanish that even monolingual English speakers can be expected to know—such as *mañana*). However, it is also possible that members of a single speech community will share multiple codes (such as dialects and registers), moving between these depending on context (e.g., when the same student uses standard English for a written assignment, but a nonstandard form in text messaging). Code switching examines how it is that speakers of multiple codes move between them during interaction to convey meaning in either of these situations. For example, when do bilingual parents choose to use either of their languages with their children? When do doctors use technical medical terms to describe a disease to their patients, and when do they translate these into colloquial terms?

Contextualization Cues

Interactional sociolinguistics particularly concerns how background knowledge and experiences of social actors serve as resources in a given interaction. Contextualization cues describe all of the past experience used to convey meaning to participants in a present encounter. As such, this concept overlaps with the theoretical concept of metacommunication in interactional theory: Both examine the way in which messages about how to understand a particular utterance are conveyed. In both cases the focus is on how interpretation and meaning are constructed by interactants and on how past experiences influence present understandings. One of the important implications of understanding the role of contextualization cues is that they explain why people of different cultural backgrounds so often encounter difficulties in communicating. In keeping with this, a common example of a contextualization cue is the intonation pattern of an utterance: The same words take on quite different meanings depending on how they are spoken.

Conclusion

Together, interactional theory, social communication theory, dramaturgical theory and interactional

sociolinguistics substantially set the stage for the study of language and social interaction within communication. The major theorists were all part of an overlapping network of scholars interested in understanding interaction, forming a good example of what is sometimes termed an invisible college. Bateson was the broadest theorist, not limiting himself even to human communication, but expanding to include animals as well; as a result, he focused on the description of underlying patterns of behavior. Birdwhistell is responsible for the assumption that it is communication (including nonverbal aspects) rather than language that needs to serve as the focus of study, an idea widely accepted today. Goffman, the most popularly successful, convinced many others to investigate seemingly insignificant moments of everyday interaction. Gumperz showed how to understand miscommunications, especially when these are due to cultural differences. Together they developed important theories of communication behavior that enrich our understandings of language and social interaction.

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See also Conversation Analysis; Cybernetics; Ethnography of Communication; Ethnomethodology; Kinesics; Language and Communication; Palo Alto Group; Pragmatics; Relational Communication Theory; Social Construction of Reality; Speech Act Theory; Symbolic Interactionism; System Theory

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SOCIAL JUDGMENT THEORY

The popular American journalist, Sydney J. Harris, once wrote that when he hears people say that life is hard, he wonders what they are comparing life to. His point, of course, is that perceptions are relative. Next to one person, another person might seem unlucky; next to another, that same person might seem fortunate. This notion—that we make judgments based on comparisons—forms the basis of social judgment theory, sometimes called assimilation-contrast theory and social judgment-involvement theory. The theory makes important contributions to understanding communication and attitude change, explaining the ways in which listeners distort, judge, and respond to persuasive messages on the basis of prior attitudes. The major principles and concepts of the theory explored in this entry include the structure of attitudes, assimilation and contrast effects, and the role of message discrepancy and ego involvement in attitude change.

The person most often credited for developing and testing social judgment theory is Muzaffer Sherif, although Carl Hovland and Carolyn Sherif were also important contributors. The theory emerged from early research on psychophysics, which suggested that context influences people's judgments of physical stimuli. Sherif and Hovland applied such principles to the study of attitudes in

a monograph that was published in 1961, shortly after Hovland's death. Later, in collaboration with his wife and colleague, Carolyn Sherif, M. Sherif further developed the theory, and other researchers have refined the theory as well.

The Structure of Attitudes

A unique feature of social judgment theory is that it conceptualizes an attitude as a range of possible positions on some issue rather than as a single point along some continuum of possible positions. By way of illustration, here are several positions, some extreme and some moderate, on the topic of how society should approach the use of marijuana:

1. Any person convicted of using marijuana should receive a severe prison sentence.
2. Any person using marijuana should be convicted of a misdemeanor.
3. Any person using marijuana should receive a stiff fine.
4. Any person using marijuana should be referred to a substance abuse program.
5. Marijuana should only be legal for people using it for medicinal purposes.
6. Any person who wants to use marijuana in private should be free to do so.
7. Employers should not be permitted to drug test employees for marijuana.
8. The government should legalize marijuana and promote its use.

Social judgment theory argues that, for any given person, the positions on this continuum can be categorized as falling into one of three areas or latitudes. First, the latitude of acceptance includes all the positions on a continuum that a person finds acceptable. Among these acceptable positions is the person's most preferred position, known as the anchor point. In addition, the latitude of rejection includes all the positions on a continuum to which a person is strongly opposed. Finally, the latitude of noncommitment includes positions on the continuum that a person feels ambivalent about. If, for example, Jillian agreed most with position 2—that marijuana use should result in a misdemeanor—position 2 is Jillian's anchor point. Although she may prefer this position, she may

believe that imprisoning, fining, or referring marijuana users to substance abuse programs (positions 1, 3, and 4) would be all right, too. Together with her anchor point, then, these positions represent Jillian's latitude of acceptance. Meanwhile, if Jillian is adamantly against allowing the private use of marijuana, making employee drug testing illegal, and legalizing or promoting marijuana, positions 6, 7, and 8 fall within her latitude of rejection. If Jillian feels neutral about whether marijuana should be legal for medicinal purposes, position 5 falls in her latitude of noncommitment.

Assimilation and Contrast Effects

Anyone who has ever noticed that the same swimming pool might seem especially cold after he or she has been in a hot Jacuzzi, but especially warm after having been in a chilly room, that person is familiar with the ways in which previous experiences can distort perceptions. Social judgment theory maintains that persuasive messages can be distorted in much the same way. Just as a hot Jacuzzi might become a person's external benchmark for judging and distorting the temperature of a swimming pool, a person's anchor point (or most preferred position on an issue) works as an internal, psychological benchmark against which other positions on a continuum are evaluated and distorted. As such, the theory helps explain how two people can respond to the same message in completely different ways. In the example above, for instance, social judgment theory predicts that a person with an anchor point at position 2 (marijuana users should be convicted of misdemeanors) and a person with an anchor point at position 8 (marijuana should be legalized and promoted) will most likely perceive a message advocating position 1 (prison sentences for marijuana users) quite differently. The theory maintains that a message falling within a person's latitude of acceptance is distorted favorably and perceived closer and more similar to the person's anchor point than it actually is (assimilation effect). A message falling inside a person's latitude of rejection is distorted negatively and perceived as farther from and less similar to the receiver's anchor position than it actually is (contrast effect). The theory suggests that this process occurs somewhat automatically, with people categorizing and responding to messages with little or no awareness.

Message Discrepancy and Persuasion

A key concept in social judgment theory is message discrepancy, or how much the position being advocated in a persuasive message differs from a receiver's anchor point. According to the theory, a person is most persuaded when the position being advocated falls very near the persuadee's latitude of rejection, but not inside it. In more technical terms, social judgment theory predicts a curvilinear relationship (think of an upside-down *U*) between message discrepancy and persuasion. Indeed, although messages aimed at a person's latitude of acceptance are basically preaching to the choir, those aimed at a person's latitude of rejection are likely to be rejected outright. In fact, messages that are too discrepant can lead to a boomerang effect in which people's attitudes shift even farther away from the message being advocated. Instead, then, to be most effective, persuaders should argue for positions falling inside the receiver's latitude of noncommitment. This point reinforces the importance of audience analysis to the process of persuasion. To avoid sending messages that are too discrepant with a person's anchor point, a persuader must know the location of the person's latitudes of acceptance, noncommitment, and rejection. Moreover, if persuaders suspect that the position they are advocating may be highly discrepant, research related to social judgment theory suggests that the audience may be more tolerant if the message is ambiguous rather than clear. In addition, the theory suggests that credible sources widen latitudes of acceptance, thereby making discrepant messages more tolerable.

Ego Involvement

Ego involvement refers to how closely an issue is linked to a person's identity or sense of self. People whose values are strongly linked to an issue are said to be ego involved. For example, a person who was raised to believe that marijuana use is morally corrupt and is a member of Citizens Against Marijuana would probably be ego involved on that issue. Because they are so committed, the anchor points of ego-involved people tend to fall on the extreme end of a continuum. They have wide latitudes of rejection, and because they dichotomize positions on an issue, they are unlikely to feel neutral on any

position (i.e., they have narrow or nonexistent latitudes of noncommitment). When confronted with messages that are discrepant with their anchor points, ego-involved people feel annoyed, frustrated, and tense. In an effort to guard their sense of self and personal values, they react to threatening messages in a personalized and biased way. Not surprisingly, then, ego-involved people are intolerant of discrepant messages and in turn, are more prone to contrast and boomerang effects. Consequently, it is difficult, if not impossible, to persuade an ego-involved person. In contrast, people who do not have strong, established attitudes on a topic have narrower latitudes of rejection and broader latitudes of noncommitment. As a result, they are more tolerant of discrepant messages.

Additional Contributions to the Theory

Like any good theory, social judgment theory has been heuristic, stimulating research, which in some cases, has suggested limitations of and changes to the original conceptualization of the theory. Three will be noted briefly. First, although social judgment theory initially predicted that ego involvement would be associated with a narrow latitude of acceptance, later research suggested that the breadth of a person's latitude of acceptance is not affected by ego involvement. Instead, ego involvement affects the size of a person's latitude of rejection (wide) and latitude of noncommitment (narrow or nonexistent).

Second, Alice Eagly and Kathleen Telaar have argued that, contrary to social judgment theory, the width of a person's latitude of acceptance does not affect attitude change because it produces biased perceptions. Instead, the width of a person's latitude of acceptance reflects how certain a person is about his or her attitude on an issue, which in turn affects how persuadable that person is on the issue. In other words, compared to people with narrow latitudes of acceptance, those with wide latitudes of acceptance are less certain about their attitudes and as a result, are easier to persuade.

Finally, scholars have wrangled over the role that ego involvement plays in the process of persuasion. Based on inconsistencies in research, for instance, some have questioned social judgment theory's prediction that involvement inhibits attitude change.

The elaboration likelihood model, for example, predicts that involvement motivates people to pay close attention to persuasive messages. Consequently, if the arguments in a message are strong, involvement should facilitate rather than inhibit persuasion. To reconcile this issue, Blair Johnson and Eagly argued that there are different types of involvement that past research has failed to distinguish. Two of these are value-relevant and outcome-relevant involvement. Value-relevant involvement is linked to enduring values embedded in a person's self-concept. As such, Johnson and Eagly suggested that value-relevant involvement is synonymous with and should replace the term ego-involvement. In contrast, outcome-relevant involvement (issue involvement) has to do with a person's current goals or outcomes (e.g., a cancer patient with the goal of using marijuana to minimize physical pain). Based on this notion, Johnson and Eagly analyzed a large number of previous studies and found that, consistent with social judgment theory, value-relevant involvement inhibits persuasion. Meanwhile, consistent with the elaboration likelihood model, outcome-relevant involvement facilitates persuasion when arguments are strong, but inhibits persuasion when arguments are weak. Despite such findings, the nature and functions of these types of involvement in attitude change are still debated.

John S. Seiter

See also Elaboration Likelihood Theory

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SOCIAL JUSTICE

Scholars from a wide range of academic disciplines have grappled with the concept of social justice. Communication scholars have contributed to that conversation by articulating a communication approach to social justice that (a) explains how individuals, groups, organizations, and communities that are under-resourced and marginalized are excluded from important discourses affecting them and (b) urges communication scholars to employ their resources (e.g., their theories, methodologies, pedagogies, and other practices) to challenge and change those exclusionary discourses. This entry explains the conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical commitments and practices of communication and social justice scholarship.

The communication approach starts by recognizing that social justice is a deeply contested symbol with virtually no agreement about what it means and how it should be measured or assessed. Consequently, rather than arguing for a particular definition for the term, this approach articulates four premises associated with a social justice sensibility that can guide communication scholarship (both research and teaching).

The first premise is that a focus on social justice foregrounds ethical concerns, meaning that scholars should start by being clear about whose interests are privileged by their scholarship. Scholars make choices about what phenomena they study, how they study those phenomena, and to what ends they put findings from their scholarship—choices that favor particular interests and not others. The communication and social justice perspective exhorts scholars to choose to stand against domination, oppression, and other social injustices. This approach, thus, does not pretend to be

neutral; it takes a preferential option for those who experience social injustice. This stance does not mean that all communication scholarship should promote social justice; it does, however, advocate for creating space in the communication discipline for such scholarship; argues that because communication scholars are embedded within systems (e.g., economic, political, social, and cultural) that oppress and exploit others, they cannot remain ideologically neutral in what they research and teach; and calls on communication scholars to own their research and teaching choices (which tend to privilege those with many resources at their disposal, such as large for-profit organizations) and to be explicit about whose interests they privilege.

The second premise is scholars' commitment to analyze how systems of communication (e.g., dominant discourses, social structures, and patterns of interaction) produce and reproduce injustice. Although scholars typically focus on individual cases of injustice (e.g., a person awaiting execution on death row), the communication and social justice approach strives to change systems that create and sustain injustice (e.g., societal acceptance and use of the death penalty). Communication and social justice scholars, thus, may seek first-order change in the short term to reenfranchise those who are marginalized into the mainstream, but ultimately, their goal is to produce second-order change that gets rid of unjust systems.

The third premise is communication scholars' adoption of an activist orientation, trying, as best they can, to change unjust systems. They strive to accomplish this goal by engaging in first-person perspective research, intervening directly into unjust systems by facilitating communicative practices (e.g., helping people to dialogue, offering communication skills education, and producing written and visual materials) and documenting the nature and effects of those interventions. Such scholarship stands in sharp contrast to traditional third-person perspective research in which researchers are positioned outside the stream of events and describe, interpret, critique (e.g., in critical organizational communication research, critical or ideological rhetoric, and critical theory), and/or (in applied communication research) offer recommendations and suggestions for others to enact. Although those traditional, normative research activities are important for understanding, sometimes evaluating, and perhaps encouraging

others to intervene into and change unjust systems and thereby contribute to promoting social justice, those practices often have not encouraged or sanctioned interventions by researchers because they privilege developing and testing theory (for academic audiences) over the applied activist scholarship (to benefit those who are under-resourced and marginalized) prioritized by the communication and social justice perspective. Hence, rather than being spectators who watch and ponder the world without affecting it, a stance in line with the word *theory*, which is derived from the Greek words meaning contemplation, spectator, and view, the communication and social justice approach calls for scholars to engage in communication activism to change unjust systems.

The fourth premise is that choosing to stand against injustice and analyzing and intervening into unjust systems emerges because of communication scholars' identification (or solidarity) with others, not because of charity. Whereas charity relies on the kindness of people to help others in need and thereby perpetuates that need, identification is grounded in the belief, for instance, that no one truly is free if someone else is oppressed.

Adopting this sensibility, and its commitments, the communication approach to social justice frames injustices that occur as discourses from which particular people are excluded. Thus, for instance, if the discourse is money, those without it experience social injustice; if the discourse is having a voice in who governs, those who do not have that say (e.g., those not allowed to vote) are being treated in a socially unjust way. Once communication scholars identify a discourse of injustice, they seek to understand and critique the systems that produce and reproduce it and then intervene to try to change those systems to attain justice.

In conducting scholarship to understand, critique, and intervene to change unjust systems, any theory (e.g., critical, interpretive, and mainstream social scientific) is potentially useful; communication and social justice scholars, however, primarily are interested in their research resulting in practical theories that contribute useful knowledge to those affected by injustice and to practitioners and researchers working to achieve social justice. Practical theories seek to accomplish the elusive goal of praxis (to make things other than the way they are)—in this case, by changing unjust systems and thereby making human life better.

Research conducted from this perspective typically involves empirically grounded case studies (in written and visual documentary forms) that show how communication researchers have worked with those who are under-resourced and marginalized to achieve social justice. Communication researchers have shown, for instance, how they have intervened to promote public dialogue, debate, and discussion within communities experiencing racism, sexism, ageism, classism, and other isms. They have conducted communication campaigns to increase the enrollment of African Americans (and other minority groups) in higher education, to reduce the digital divide among groups and organizations in lower income communities, and to prevent the execution of innocent people on death row. They have formed organizations to assist marginalized groups to employ news as a political resource (e.g., to protect women's reproductive workplace rights) and to provide shelter and job training to those who are poor and homeless. They have worked as full-time employees for organizations seeking to obtain fairer coverage of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people in news and entertainment media, and they have consulted with organizations to provide increased help to sexual assault victims and to improve health care services for Navajo families and for women who partner with women. They have conducted workshops for groups of defense attorneys about engaging in courtroom conversations with jurors to prevent their clients from receiving the death penalty, and they have taught communication skills (such as public speaking, argumentation, and journalism) in lower income urban high schools and in men's and women's prisons. Internationally, communication researchers have facilitated local theatre performances in a Hmong refugee camp in Thailand to promote better health practices and in India to protest against the use of dowry; assisted with peace-building efforts between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, and between Greek and Turkish Cypriots; and they have worked to prevent human trafficking in South Asia. In these and other research studies, scholars carefully document their communication activism, including the nature and significance of the injustice, and the systems that support it; the individuals, groups, organizations, and/or communities

involved in the research; the interventions they conducted to secure needed change, the theories and methods that informed their work, the results of their efforts, and in many cases, lessons they learned about engaging in communication and social justice scholarship.

Although scholars conducting communication and social justice research employ a variety of research methods, including experimental, survey, textual analysis (e.g., rhetorical criticism, content analysis, and performance studies), and naturalistic inquiry (e.g., ethnography, critical ethnography, and autoethnography), they tend to engage in longitudinal, collaborative research (e.g., participatory action research) to ensure that the research is done not only about, but also with, for, and in the interests of those who experience injustice. Some research, such as that conducted with people who have survived incest (and their treatment by the legal system), even shows that such research may help people who have experienced injustice to feel empowered. Communication and social justice researchers also explicitly situate themselves in their research reports by explaining stances they take (e.g., political positions) and choices they make (e.g., ethical decisions), and they tend to privilege participants' voices in those reports to hear first-hand accounts by those affected by injustice and whether and how the research conducted with them affected them.

Finally, the communication and social justice approach contends that the promotion of social justice needs to infuse educational institutions and teaching practices, which traditionally have supported and reinforced the dominant culture (and its systems of injustice) and have aligned with and advanced the interests of corporate powers (e.g., by preparing worker-students for jobs in the financial sector). Scholars have advocated for including readings and discussions about social justice in standard courses (e.g., introductory communication courses), offering classes and programs of study (e.g., concentrations) on communication and social justice, employing service-learning assignments and providing internship opportunities that involve students working with groups and organizations promoting social justice, and orienting cocurricular activities sponsored by communication departments (e.g., debate programs, communication centers, newspapers, television stations, and theatre productions) to social justice issues.

Moreover, educators are encouraged to challenge problematic structures of classrooms (e.g., use of grades), educational systems (e.g., privileging standardized test scores), and educational policies (e.g., No Child Left Behind legislation) that create and sustain injustice.

The communication and social justice approach is a significant form of scholarship that cuts across the communication discipline using a wide range of theories, methods, interventions, and pedagogical practices to promote social justice for individuals, groups, organizations, and communities experiencing injustice. Although critics of this approach may argue that scholars should not engage in ideological activism, the communication and social justice perspective believes that communication scholars should be engaged citizens who use their resources to pursue social justice.

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See also Critical Communication Pedagogy; Critical Ethnography; Critical Organizational Communication; Critical Rhetoric, Critical Theory; Ideological Rhetoric; Practical Theory; Privilege

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SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

See Entertainment-Education; Learning and Communication

SOCIAL PENETRATION THEORY

We all are bound to have some kind of relationship with someone. People become strangers, acquaintances, or friends depending on their needs and situations. Why do some relationships progress quickly, whereas others move very slowly to reach a level of intimacy? These questions motivated Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor to propose their social penetration theory (SPT) in the early 1970s. Since then it has been adapted by many theorists in communication studies and has played a prominent role in the understanding of developing relationships. SPT has gone through a fair amount of theoretical development over the years. Originally, it highlighted the development, maintenance, and deterioration of social relationships in a linear fashion, from less intimacy to greater intimacy, to disengagement. Later, the theory was revised to reflect a more cyclical process that depicted penetration as a back-and-forth process in which the tension between public and private always needed to be managed. This entry reviews the basic stages of relationship development and the elaborations on and critiques of the theory.

The theory identifies a series of stages through which relationships develop:

- *Orientation stage*. In this stage, people start with short, simple, and usually inconsequential talk.
- *Exploratory-affective stage*. Individuals now start to reveal themselves, expressing personal

attitudes about public topics such as government and education. This is the stage of casual friendship, and many relationships do not go beyond this stage.

- *Affective stage*. At this stage, people start to talk about private and personal matters. Criticism and arguments may also arise. There may be intimate touching and hugging at this stage.
- *Stable stage*. The relationship now reaches a level where personal things are shared, and one can predict the emotional reactions of the other person.
- *Depenetration*. When the relationship starts to break down and costs exceed benefits, there is a withdrawal of disclosure that leads to termination of the relationship.

Altman and Taylor felt that explaining disclosure in terms of traits within a relationship was unrealistic and that it was necessary to consider self-disclosure in the context of specific relationships and settings. SPT links self-disclosure to relational interaction by relying on self-disclosure as a primary mechanism for creating varying degrees of intimacy within relationships. They argued that self-disclosure is particularly important at the initial stages of a relationship as partners search for similarities and compatibilities. At this stage of a relationship, participants need to match breadth and depth of self-disclosure to a sense of mutual trustworthiness necessary for the relationship to progress into more intimate stages. There is a general norm of reciprocity in self-disclosure processes—that is, when one person reveals something about himself or herself, the other person will tend to reply with similar information.

Altman and Taylor compared people to a multi-layered onion. They believe each opinion, belief, prejudice, and feeling is layered around and within the individual. As people get to know each other, the layers get open to reveal the core of the person. These layers have both breadth and depth. Breadth is the variety of topics that have been incorporated into individuals' lives. Depth is the amount of information available on each topic. On the outermost shell are highly visible levels of information such as dress and speech. Inside are increasingly private details about the lives, feelings, and thoughts of the participants. As the relationship develops, the partners share more aspects of the self, providing

breadth as well as depth, through an exchange of information, feelings, and activities. Thus, relationships are sustained when they are relatively rewarding and discontinued when they are relatively costly.

According to the theory, individuals evaluate relationships in a relatively rational manner akin to an economic analysis. Taylor and Altman argue that reward-cost assessment is the motivational basis for relationship growth through the various stages of development. This analysis involves an assessment of the rewards derived from moving to a more intimate stage versus the costs that are perceived for doing so, based on past relationships and possible future relationships. A relationship with many rewards and few costs would have a higher chance of moving toward intimacy; one with few rewards and many costs would have low outcomes in this regard.

SPT states that humans, even without thinking about it, weigh each relationship and interaction with another human on a reward cost scale. If the interaction is satisfactory, then that person or relationship is looked upon favorably. But if an interaction is unsatisfactory, then the relationship will be evaluated for its costs compared to its rewards or benefits.

Critical Evaluation

In spite of the general support for this theory and its relevance to many real-life situations, there have been some critiques of the theory since its inception. Some of these critiques have been on philosophical grounds and have taken several directions. For example, some scholars question the value of an economic model in the realm of relational development because such models make relational development and choice a purely relational decision. Relationships cannot be explained always by economic principles or cost-benefit considerations. Indeed, in a more recent, more complex version of the theory, penetration is viewed as a dialectic, or back-and-forth movement, that is driven by the tension between views of what should be shared versus what should be kept private.

Furthermore, there are questions related to the ideological basis of the theory. SPT was developed in a period when openness and sincerity in relationships were highly valued. The ideology of total openness and the related value for self-disclosure

and relational intimacy have been questioned in the years since the theory's development. There are many times when we should value nonintimate relationships and downplay the importance of self-disclosure in interaction.

Another potential limitation comes from the theory's scientific grounding. The theory makes the statement that if self-disclosure is high, then the relationship will develop. This if-then statement makes this a scientific theory. But human behavior is complex and may not be able to be completely understood in a strictly scientific frame. Another criticism relates to when self-disclosure occurs: The highest reciprocity of self-disclosure may occur during the middle range of penetration rather than during the exploratory stages of relationships. Furthermore, as relationships deteriorate, self-disclosure often increases.

Finally, the original theory did not account for gender differences in vulnerability, but later research concludes that males are less open than females. Gender, race, culture, and ethnic background could greatly influence findings and may contribute to the breadth and depth of relationship; such variables have not yet been taken into account with SPT.

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See also Interpersonal Communication Theories; Relational Development; Self-Disclosure; Social Exchange Theory; Social Judgment Theory

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SOCIAL SUPPORT

Social support encompasses a family of related concepts developed to explain why involvement in personal relationships is good for health and well-being. The term came into use in the mid-1970s to explain the wide-ranging empirical evidence that social relationships protect our health. A burst of research followed linking social support to diverse outcomes, including increased life span, better physical and mental health, recovery from illness, greater quality of life and well-being, and improved morale, productivity, and performance at school and work.

Research on social support occurs across the health and social science disciplines and includes study of (a) social integration and support networks, (b) perceived available support, and (c) enacted and received support. Communication is germane to each of these areas. We communicate to create and maintain social networks, and the social structures that emerge shape our interaction. Our perception of support available to us is colored by perceptual schema for the social world. Enacting and receiving support for stress often involves communicating, and features of those conversations affect how we respond. Social support is not always positive. How we communicate support can differentiate helpful from unhelpful support, and communication strategies enable us to manage dilemmas of social support.

Social Support Networks

Social integration in a variety of types of social ties is linked to improved mental and physical health. Several theoretical explanations for this effect have been proposed. Participation in social roles can enhance self-concept and give meaning and purpose to life. Social interactions can be a source of stimulation and positive affect. Relationships also regulate our behavior. In contrast, networks full of conflicting roles, hostile interactions, or inducements to unhealthful behaviors can be harmful. In the late 1980s, Teri Albrecht and Mara Adelman brought social support to the attention of communication scholars with their proposal that uncertainty reducing communication was a key pathway through which support networks facilitated personal control.

A social network perspective is distinctive in examining how structural features of the linkages among people shape the communication of support. For example, networks of different size, density (a measure of interconnectedness among links), and heterogeneity afford different kinds of resources and opportunities. Similarly, the study of social capital explores how services, resources, and trust measured at the community level benefit members.

Perceived Available Social Support

Perceived available support refers to a belief that one is cared for, valued, and part of a network of mutual aid. Many scholars regard perceived available support as a cognitive schema. Viewing the social world as supportive buffers individuals from the otherwise negative effects of stressful life events. Believing others care for us can lead us to appraise life circumstances as less stressful. When we do experience stress, the perception that others are there for us leads us to seek help and to positively evaluate others' responses, thus facilitating adaptive coping.

Perceived available support may also reflect an assessment of relationships as trusting, intimate, accepting, and responsive. The presence of these relational qualities may satisfy fundamental human needs and create an environment conducive to coping when stresses arise. Alternatively, the absence of such relationships may create relational disappointment, conflict, and distress.

Enacted or Received Social Support

Enacted or received support refers to what people say and do in an attempt to help another person cope with stress. Whether an attempt at support is in fact helpful depends upon various factors, including the source of support, the type of support, how it is communicated, and how well it responds to a problem. Effective enacted support is perceived as supportive in its intention, is adapted to the needs of the recipient, is sensitive to emotions, and saves face for the recipient. It is common to differentiate emotional support (communicating caring and helping the other manage feelings) from problem-solving support (providing information, aid, or resources).

Emotional support is perceived as more effective when it explicitly acknowledges, elaborates,

and legitimates the feelings of a distressed other, especially when he or she is faced with an uncontrollable problem. Brant Burleson and his colleagues have proposed a hierarchy of comforting messages derived from constructivist theory. Low-level messages blame the other or attempt to cheer them up by denying feelings. Middle-level messages indirectly acknowledge feelings, but tend to talk about the situation instead. Only high-level messages explicitly deal with emotions so that someone who is upset can reappraise a situation and work through an adaptive emotional response to it.

Problem-solving support is especially useful for controllable problems. However, well-meaning information, advice, or assistance can sometimes be interpreted as critical or controlling. Daena Goldsmith has utilized politeness theory to understand how advice can threaten face and how the form, content, and sequence of advice in a conversation may influence whether it is perceived as helpful or unwanted. Erina MacGeorge has explored what features of advice contribute to its quality and how this affects advice recipients' coping and satisfaction.

Gail Jefferson's conversation analytic research has examined how an entire troubles talk conversation is structured. When one person brings up a problem, this signals a transition to a different kind of talk. The person whose trouble is under discussion often tries to show resilience, and his or her conversational partner typically tries to respond with sensitivity; both parties work together to transition to other topics smoothly.

Conclusion

Social support continues to attract significant scholarly attention across disciplines. Current work seeks to test theoretical explanations for how and why some particular feature of social support has effects. Sophisticated quantitative designs yield evidence for causal relationships between social support and various physiological, psychological, and social processes that account for effects on the physical health and psychological well-being of individuals, as well as benefits for social groups such as families, organizations, and communities. Qualitative, descriptive studies document the meaning of support and variation in how support works in various contexts and populations. Interventions

to improve social support abound (e.g., support groups), and evidence for their efficacy is accumulating. Communication theories have proven useful in understanding how individuals structure and interpret supportive communication, why some attempts at support are more successful than others, and how support resources and information flow through social channels.

Daena J. Goldsmith

See also Constructivism; Conversation Analysis; Emotion and Communication; Empathy; Facework Theories; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Network Theory; Politeness Theory

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SPECTATORSHIP

People watch media and view and read other kinds of texts. Spectatorship includes the processes of watching and listening, identification with characters and images, the various values with which viewing is invested, and how these ideas continue even after the spectator has stopped viewing. Theories of spectatorship examine the ways such processes act upon and even produce individuals' identities by creating normative, or prescribed, positions. These procedures indicate such things as a person's gender, race, class, bodily configuration, erotic and consumer desires, and power. Theories of spectatorship have developed as part

of film analysis and are now deployed in such disciplines as art history, communication, film and media studies, and literary criticism. This entry looks first to spectatorship in film studies and then examines some of the important theoretical traditions that have addressed this subject.

Spectatorship in Film Studies

Theories of film spectatorship are related to philosophical inquiries about human subjects and literary criticism perspectives on how texts produce ideal readers. In film theories, the spectator is not a real person, but is generally understood to be an artificial construct that is produced and animated by the apparatus (e.g., screen, projector) and by cultural beliefs. This cinematic structure suggests who spectators are, what they see, and what they desire. For instance, the gyrating female bodies in a music video indicate that the ideal spectator is a heterosexual man. These constructed spectatorial positions do not describe the experiences of specific individuals, but all viewers are addressed and shaped by media forms.

Most film theorists differentiate between the subject, which is the idealized position assigned to viewer, and the actual viewer, or the person who watches a film. However, the differences in these two have never been fully resolved. Mary Ann Doane distinguishes between the subject and the individual and relates the cinematic subject to psychoanalytic investigations of the spectator. Judith Mayne notes that the term spectator indicates some level of distrust in fully separating the subject from people.

Although students may challenge this idea of spectatorship because their unique experiences differ from these models, these theories of spectatorship argue that individual readings do not change the dominant messages of texts and that media forms are culturally significant and continue to influence viewers long after they disengage from a particular representation.

In the 1970s, film theorists, and especially feminist psychoanalytic film theorists, argued that Hollywood cinema represented the desires and beliefs of modern Western industrial countries. These theorists showed how viewing influences and enables individuals, especially White heterosexual men, to participate in mainstream desires and beliefs. For instance, the straight man's presumed right to

possess women visually and sexually is validated when the Bond Girl in James Bond films is introduced with an erotic musical soundtrack; her movements and clothing make her the focus of Bond, the camera, and the viewer, and she acquiesces to their seduction. Feminist psychoanalytic film theorists also indicate that it is not a coincidence that film and psychoanalysis—the study of the unconscious—developed at the same time. According to this view, the development of psychoanalysis within capitalist consumer society makes it particularly productive as a way of analyzing film. A site for this kind of investigation is often the classical cinema, which includes Hollywood films after the employment of sound in the late 1920s and before the demise of the studio system in the 1950s. Spectatorship offers models for understanding these institutions and their associated patterns of viewing.

Film theorists have used psychoanalytic texts, including the writings of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, to explain the states spectators enter when watching films. The work of Lacan has been particularly productive because it describes how the spectatorial gaze, considered later in this entry, structures and even produces identity positions. For example, the framed views and camera work in Bond films, which also represent the ways the viewer sees, articulate an active male viewer and suggest that he should desire women.

Although these approaches can be problematic and reproduce the underlying myths of Western industrial countries, psychoanalytic models also provide ways to understand and reveal the invisible ideology of cinema and society, including cultural constructions of femininity and masculinity. These myths, taken by the public as natural and real, also tend to provide the spectator with a sense of mastery and stability. In classical Hollywood films, the male protagonist, and the viewer who can identify with him, usually ends up gaining control over the world and getting the woman. Mayne, Robert Stam, Robert Burgoyne, Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, and Kaja Silverman are among the scholars who outline and critique psychoanalytic models of film theory.

A number of theoretical traditions have contributed to current understandings of spectatorship. These include apparatus theory, feminist psychoanalytic film theory, and the gaze. Each of these is important because it has developed a critical concept of spectatorship.

Apparatus Theory

Apparatus theorists indicate how the predominant structures of the cinema work and what kinds of spectatorship the camera, screen, theatre, text, and mental mechanisms of the individual produce. They argue that spectators are particularly receptive to film messages because the apparatus produces a dream state. This results in viewers feeling like they produced the text and its meanings, even though they are constructed as spectators by these structures. Apparatus theorists like Jean-Louis Baudry and Christian Metz describe a centered spectator who is within and in front of the screen. In other words, in traditional narrative films, the camera, projector, theater structure, and what is portrayed on the screen establish the spectator as the center and originator of meaning. According to Baudry, the monocular camera view specifies the particular place that the subject must occupy. However, as Metz notes, identification, in fact, is split between the projector and screen. In both cases, the spectator becomes integrated with the apparatus and identifies with the camera and its physical and ideological point of view.

Apparatus theory conceptualizes the subject's physical situation within the theater and the ways this contributes to the individual's larger social position. Metz shows how the viewer, like a voyeur, maintains a space between self and object by avoiding being too near or far from the screen. Noël Burch also indicates that it is necessary to see the whole visual field in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the film's vision or worldview. According to apparatus-based theories, male cinema viewers achieve an ideal spectatorial position because of their physical distance and intellectual detachment from the screen. In contrast, female spectators are considered to be bound to their bodily processes, tied to a version of their image within the screen, and thus unable to completely comprehend the text.

Feminist Psychoanalytic Film Theory

Feminist psychoanalytic film theorists, including Teresa de Lauretis, describe apparatus theory's phallic foundation and its failure to consider other relationships that women have with film. Feminists also note that while apparatus theory and psychoanalysis explain the structures of film, this does

not mean that these positions should be supported or perpetuated. In critiquing social positions, feminist scholars consider how the gaze, which can be defined as a form of power-laden staring, renders and enforces gendered spectatorial positions. These feminist theories of the gaze explain how sexual difference is produced and normalized and how particular individuals are empowered and oppressed. Laura Mulvey offered a groundbreaking analysis in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" of the deeply gendered processes of looking and being looked at. Mulvey indicates that the subject of the gaze is male, a position empowered and supported by the camera's viewpoint, while its object is female, who exists in order to be viewed. These arrangements articulate an active male and passive female as the norm. More recently, Mulvey has reconsidered early feminist film theories that described the gaze as a totalizing and purely patriarchal structure. Doane's theory of a female gaze employs masquerade as a way of flaunting and performing femininity, thus holding it at a distance, and provides an alternative model that can empower female spectators.

Reconsiderations of Spectatorship

Other scholars have critiqued the kinds of relationships enabled by visual forms. John Berger argues that advertisements, paintings, and other static visual images produce particular ways of seeing. He suggests that spectatorship is inappropriately based on a binary opposition between men who move and do things and women who recline and are seen by others. Griselda Pollock and other feminist art historians provide more detailed analysis of gendered forms of looking; they apply psychoanalytic film theory to static visual images and consider the relationship between constructed spectators and historical viewers. In her work, Pollock illustrates how traditional renderings of space, which associate the public and business with men and the private and home with women, establish gendered spheres and ways of devaluing women's positions and women's labor.

Apparatus theory can be complicit with its object of analysis and produce limited conceptions of women. Feminist psychoanalytic film theory challenges this absence of viable positions for women and as Doane argues, indicates that the

female spectator articulated completely by her sex does not exist, except as a consequence of the ways in which she is addressed in discourse.

Feminist theorists have many other concerns as well: Psychoanalytic models of spectatorship do not consider physical people, these models simplify and misunderstand psychoanalysis, they ignore the historical specificity of viewers and film production, they rely solely on the camera obscura (a black box camera) as the model of vision, they do not consider how some genres more equitably address women, they leave no possible positions for women's spectatorial resistance, and they fail to consider issues of class, ethnicity, race, sexuality, and other forms of difference. Apparatus and feminist psychoanalytic film theory have limitations, but they also offer the most comprehensive critical approaches to film and significant methods to consider other kinds of texts. Scholars like E. Ann Kaplan argue that psychoanalytic theory can be employed critically without accepting that its narratives of sexual difference are real and necessary.

Television scholars describe another set of viewing experiences and media identifications. They argue that television viewing, particularly the kinds of engagements that women can participate in while working from their homes, is closer to the screen and less focused on each minute of the text. As a result, there are more possibilities for identifying with the production and a more sporadic attention to narratives. Therefore, the spectatorial rendering of sexual difference is less likely.

Split screens, multiple narratives, digital delivery, and small theaters also produce different physical conditions than those described in apparatus and feminist psychoanalytic film theory. However, these viewing conditions may address and produce individuals in ever more sophisticated ways. For instance, Michele White suggests that Internet spectatorship has a more consequential influence on identification than film and other media. She argues that individuals spend significant amounts of time engaging with computers; computers and networks also appear in film, television, and print advertising; dream or trance-like experiences are often part of the engagement; the connection with characters and other representations can be intense; and there is an idea that the spectator is part of the setting, people are alive, and bodies are accessible through the Internet.

Currently, the term spectator is seldom employed in Internet settings and Internet studies literature. Anne Friedberg argues that individuals who use computers are not spectators or viewers because they directly interact with screens and manipulate things. Espen Aarseth employs the term user as a way of indicating individuals' dependency and active participation in Internet settings. Fan and hypertext theorists, including Henry Jenkins and George P. Landow, argue that the Internet empowers individuals and makes viewers into producers. Looking is still a significant aspect of Internet and computer use. Yet Internet viewing is sometimes referred to as lurking, which indicates that when individuals are looking, reading, and thinking, they benefit from shared ideas without contributing. Nevertheless, Internet and other viewers are not completely unmoving and passive receivers of texts and their ideologies. In her work on cinema spectatorship, Mayne indicates a way of engaging these varied theories. She encourages readings that complicate such dualistic thinking as critical and complacent spectatorship and that address how we look at, engage, resist, and are produced by media forms.

Michele White

See also Fans, Fandom, and Fan Studies; Film Theories; Gender and Media; Identification; Ideology; New Media Theory

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SPEECH ACCOMMODATION THEORY

See Accommodation Theory

SPEECH ACT THEORY

Speech act theory, most commonly associated with the work of John Searle, explains how messages express speakers' intentions. Traditionally, meaning was viewed as the referents of words and grammar, but speech act theory widens the concept to include the expressed intentions behind utterances. This line of work provides the basis for a sufficiently complex, sophisticated, and realistic view of communication, action, and meaning. This entry outlines a brief history of the theory, summarizes its chief concepts and ideas, and provides examples of its application in the field of communication.

Speech act theory hails most directly from ordinary language philosophy, particularly the thinking of Ludwig Wittgenstein as expressed in his 1953 two-volume work *Philosophical Investigations*. Wittgenstein believed that meaning in language derives from the way in which it is actually used in

concrete situations. Clearly embedded in the pragmatic tradition, this idea captures the importance of how people use language to accomplish certain objectives within the situations in which they act. Wittgenstein wrote that people follow rules in order to accomplish a particular goal, making communication a set of language games. People know how to give an order, ask a question, or describe an observation based on the rules for accomplishing these things. Thus, utterances do more than reflect a designated meaning; they are forms of action designed to get things done. Following from this idea, J. L. Austin, Searle's mentor, stated in his classic 1962 text *How to Do Things With Words*, that making an utterance is a speech act, or an action performed through speech.

Austin referred to an utterance as a locutionary act, which is the act of making speech sounds. Speaking as the rule-based production of sounds is a kind of performance. However, such locutions rarely stand by themselves. They also serve to express an intention beyond the mere utterance of speech. Thus, for example, in making a statement, people would be asserting a claim, making a promise, asking for something, or accomplishing any number of other intentions. These Austin called illocutionary acts, or utterances that perform an intention. Such acts come with illocutionary force because they elicit an understanding in others of what one means to accomplish. People recognize a promise because of the illocutionary force of the statement. When the performance is designed to elicit a certain kind of response from others, it is a perlocutionary act, as would be the case, for example, with a statement designed to persuade. A well-performed request will be recognized as such because of the shared rules for making requests. If the listener understands what kind of response is required, the statement has perlocutionary force as well as illocutionary force.

In his 1969 book *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Searle distinguished between the propositional content of an utterance and its illocutionary force. The former is what a statement claims ("I am hungry"), and the latter is the intention expressed (e.g., a request for food). A proposition expresses something one believes to be true or wishes to have others believe is true, but the proposition is delivered with a purpose that, because of the illocutionary force of the utterance,

others will recognize (the statement of hunger is a request for food). Although there is no limit to the number of intentions one might express, Searle classified these into certain common types, including assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Assertives are statements of advocacy of a truth. The intention is to put forward a proposition pure and simple (it is going to rain today). Assertives include, for example, stating, affirming, concluding, and believing. Directives are statements that aim to get listeners to do something, including commands, requests, invitations, and the like. Commissives such as promises, pledges, and guarantees commit the speaker to some future act. Expressives include acts such as thanking, apologizing, and welcoming intended to express the speaker's internal state. Finally, declaratives make something true just by uttering them. The verbal statement itself constitutes a completed act. Examples include appointing, firing, and resigning. When a minister says, "I pronounce you husband and wife," the couple becomes married. Austin refers to such acts as performatives.

According to traditional analytic philosophy, a proposition is judged in terms of validity; it is adequate if it conforms to certain standards for truth claims, including evidence and logic. In contrast, speech acts are judged in terms of felicity. A speech act is judged adequate not on the basis of its truth value, but instead on whether it conforms to certain rules. If one says, "I am hungry," others do not question whether this is so, but instead try to figure out why the person said it. The act might be a request for food, or it might be an offer to make dinner. A well-performed speech act has felicity because it is properly understood as the performance of a particular intention. Indeed, one of the most common sources of misunderstanding is a failure to get the speaker's intention.

Speech acts are understood because they conform to certain rules. Two classes of rules govern how speech acts should be performed and understood—constitutive and regulative. The first, constitutive rules, identify what an act should look like. People know a promise when they hear one because they can tell by the rules what this kind of statement should count as. A promise differs from a command because its constitutive rules differ. Searle uses promises as a case in point. To be a well-formed promise, the statement must meet five

rules: (1) It must assert that the person will do a certain act in the future; (2) it must be an act that the listener would like for that person to do; (3) the action must be something the person would not do anyway in the normal course of events; (4) the person must truly intend to do it; and (5) both the person and the listener must take the statement as an obligation. These are the constitutive rules for the speech act known as a promise.

In general, all illocutionary acts must meet certain general conditions to be understood. They must conform to a propositional content rule, meaning that they should refer to some appropriate object or action. Thus, a promise must clearly identify a specific future action. Second, the speech act must meet a preparatory rule; in other words, it must address certain preconditions in which the act would be appropriate. In the case of a promise, for example, the listener must prefer that the promise be kept rather than not be kept. Third, speech acts must incorporate some sort of sincerity rule. It must be perceived as sincere. Finally, the essential rule states that an act must be understood by both speaker and listener in the same way.

Speech acts are sometimes delivered directly, in which case all of the constitutive rules are directly met. Often, however, communicators make a speech act indirectly, assuming that the elements of the act are apparent from the context or are implied rather than explicit. Indirect speech acts are possible because the speaker and listener share background information. H. Paul Grice in his well-known work on conversations notes that the rules for a speech act are often intentionally violated, not to deceive, but to add richness and variability to discourse. Violations also enable speakers to make potentially intrusive statements politely, and they grant power to the listener to become an active and engaged participant by interpreting the larger context. When people deliver a speech act indirectly or violate rules in some other way, they are relying on conversational implicatures, or inferences that listeners could be expected to make. If one says, "I am hungry," he or she relies on the listener's reasonable ability to infer his or her intention of making a request for food.

Speech acts are not only governed by constitutive rules, but require regulative rules as well. Regulative rules provide the steps or processes necessary to perform the act. They also tell listeners

how to respond. A speech act is not fulfilled until its illocutionary and perlocutionary intents are understood and the listener responds accordingly. A promise must be accepted as a promise, or it is not one. A request must be either granted or denied, or it does not serve as a request. Constitutive rules tell us what the speech act is intended to convey, and regulative rules tell us how to respond in order to complete the act. Searle refers to such requirements as conditions of satisfaction in his 1983 book *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*. The act must have certain directions of fit between what is said and actual conditions. Acts that include statements of truth must have word-to-world fit, as they accurately depict some aspect of the world. When one says, “I am hungry,” as a proposition, he or she actually is hungry. Acts may also require world-to-word fit. When one says, “I am hungry,” as a request, the listener takes this as a request and grants or denies it. Many acts may require both forms of fit.

Speech act theory has had a major impact on communication theory and research. Although its effects can be seen in a variety of areas, two examples stand out. The first is the theory of coordinated management of meaning, originally proposed by W. Barnett Pearce and Vernon Cronen. This theory focuses on the ways in which communicators rely on constitutive and regulative rules to coordinate their actions by constructing meaning at several levels. The flow of interaction proceeds on the basis of how the participants understand one another’s speech acts and the regulative rules that guide their responses to these.

The second example is conversation analysis, which includes several forms. Speech act theory is basic to most conversation analysis within the discourse analysis tradition. As ethnomethodology, this work proceeds by careful examination of the back-and-forth collaborative accomplishments of actual conversations such as turn taking, politeness, requests, and arguments. Grice’s four maxims of conversation—much like Searle’s types of constitutive rules or satisfaction conditions—provide a frame for doing this work. According to Grice, people engaged in conversation must cooperate, and they do so by following the quantity maxim (provide just the right amount of information), the quality maxim (be truthful), the relevancy maxim (make comments pertinent), and the manner maxim

(be clear and organized). Conversation analysts look not only at how communicators actually achieve cooperation in these ways, but also how violations are handled, particularly through implicature.

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See also Conversation Analysis; Coordinated Management of Meaning; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Ethnomethodology; Language and Communication; Pragmatics; Social Interaction Theories

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SPEECH CODES THEORY

Speech codes theory (SCT) expands on the ethnography of speaking (EOC) proposed by Dell Hymes by offering a communication-based analytic framework from which to understand cultural communication. Building on the idea that culture and communication are inextricably linked, SCT is designed to describe, explain, and predict cultural communication within the context of speech communities—that is, the theory is concerned with understanding how, in particular societies, community members perform, value, and evaluate their own and others’ communication in their everyday lives. To orient how to conduct themselves and how to judge that conduct, community members use sets of social rules about how they should and should not communicate in particular contexts. Although these sets of rules are handed down from generation to generation, they are dynamic and can be tested, challenged, and modified.

Nature of Speech Codes Theory

SCT centers the role of communication as a means for discovering distinctive sets of precepts or rules for a given group or community about how life should be lived, how humans should interact with each other, and what penalties should be imposed when those rules are broken. The theory goes beyond simple description of speech codes, however; it seeks to answer questions about the existence of codes, their substance, the ways in which they can be discovered, and their communicative force or effect upon members of a community. By carefully and methodically attending to the things society members say, SCT helps respond to questions about personhood, sociality, morality, time, activity, place, nature, emotion, and spirituality, among other dimensions of living and being. More concretely, SCT helps provide answers to questions such as Who am I individually and with reference to a people? How should we be? How should we use time? How does place affect who and how we are? What is the role of nature in our lives? What do and should we feel about what is going on in our community? How does spirituality influence us?

Explicitly privileging the understanding of communication from the perspectives of those generating, enacting, and evaluating their own communication, SCT relies on fieldwork practices such as direct observation and interview that facilitate access to local viewpoints. From the ethnographic data these practices make available, theories about cultural communication can be developed.

Origins

SCT fundamentally is informed by the works of linguistic anthropologist Hymes and sociologist Basil Bernstein. SCT draws from Hymes's emphasis on the study of particular people's ways of communication and what meanings those ways of communication hold for them. Hymes's approach targets the identification and description of the particular units of discourse within which people jointly create the meanings that shape their everyday lives. It was Hymes's call for context-specific ethnographies of communication that prompted the many ethnographies that were used to develop the original version of SCT. In addition, SCT draws

on Bernstein's concept of communication codes and the idea that people communicate according to principles or rules that govern what to say and how to say it in particular social contexts. Combining Hymes's idea of the means and meanings of communication and Bernstein's concept of codes, Gerry Philipsen formulated a definition of speech codes.

As defined by Philipsen, speech codes are historically transmitted, socially constructed systems of symbols and meanings, premises and rules that pertain to communicative conduct. Codes, in other words, are systems or patterns of language use that are rich with sociocultural meanings for their users. Because the components of codes are inextricably woven into communication itself, the components (e.g., terms and phrases) comprise a structure of beliefs and values by which community members enact social life. Codes, then, comprise the observable or manifest social infrastructure guiding a people's communication practices and behaviors as well as the ideologies informing those behaviors.

The Six Propositions of Speech Codes Theory

Six propositions provide the core of SCT, as presented by Philipsen:

Proposition 1

Wherever there is a distinctive culture, there is to be found a distinctive speech code. This proposition means that in any given society, people construct an array of codes of conduct, including communicative conduct; across societies, these codes or systems of symbols, meanings, premises, and rules are distinctive. For example, the code of honor enacted by blue-collar workers in Chicago will be quite different from the code of dignity enacted by white-collar workers in the same city. The first group will value granting worth to individuals based on their conforming to communal values and the second to individuals based on their intrinsic uniqueness and achievement. Further, each of these values will be apparent in their communication: Users of the code of honor are more likely to use terms about neighborhood or ethnic affiliations than users of the code of dignity who are more likely to invoke terms alluding to self.

Proposition 2

In any given speech community, multiple speech codes are deployed. In any given place and time, more than one speech code is operating. Although members of a given community may emphasize one code over another in a particular context, each code is interdependent with the others in operation and cannot be understood apart from those other codes. There are usually tensions and contradictions operating among those codes in a culture. For example, college students might use one speech code on Friday morning in a classroom as a means for getting good grades; they would use a very different and often contradictory code at a bar that evening where their social goals would be different.

Proposition 3

A speech code implicates a culturally distinctive psychology, sociology, and rhetoric. This proposition pertains to the content of speech codes, which deals with a people's distinctive and deeply felt (a) orientations about human nature (psychology), (b) systems of social relations (sociology), and (c) the particulars for strategic conduct (rhetoric). Speech codes, in other words, provide a community with knowledge about how to communicate and act that goes beyond simplistic and superficial rules. Speech codes offer community members ways to define themselves and others—a psychology—and their relationships to and with others (sociology), as well as ways to manage the symbolic systems available for influencing each another—the province of rhetoric. For example, when one hears that communication is necessary for a relationship, as one often hears in contemporary U.S. talk shows, one can also hear an implied code of personhood (psychology), interpersonal relations (sociology), and strategic conduct (rhetoric). One can hear that an individual person is a unique and important part of the unit called relationship and that communication can serve to influence the bringing together (or not) of the units or members in a relationship.

Proposition 4

The significance of speaking is contingent upon the speech codes used by interlocutors (communicators) to constitute the meanings of communicative acts. What communication means is contingent

on the codes used by community members. Because meaning fundamentally relies on context, the codes that people use across societies are different and mean different things. What communication actions count as depends on the particular speech code the interpreter uses to produce the action and the meaning assigned to the action by the code producers. For example, a pointed-lip gesture would likely have different meanings among the San Blas Cuna than it would among Chicago blue-collar workers. The paying of a compliment to some white-collar workers would likely be experienced as pleasant, while the same compliment would be experienced as stressful by some Chinese.

Proposition 5

The terms, rules, and premises of a speech code are inextricably woven into speaking itself. The coding principles or systems of rules that orient community members' communication are built into their communication itself. There are myriad places in everyday life that the rules and premises for communication are enacted. Attentive listeners can identify those rules by listening for the words people say (and do not say) as well as to listeners' reactions to those words. Community members might enact rules and premises about communication in their everyday rituals (e.g., greetings and leave takings), in the words they use to point to one another (e.g., uses of nicknames, titles, or formal and informal pronouns), in the language they use to talk about their conversation (e.g., talk, discuss, argue, ask), and in social dramas (e.g., how the public spoke about President George Bush's presence in Iraq). Or community members might enact rules of communicative conduct by using particular terms that are meaningful to them. For example, among native members of an Israeli Jewish community, one might hear someone say, "I tell you dugri." The expression dugri alerts the listener of the nature of the forthcoming communication. In this case, dugri draws on the local society's rule of communicative conduct that permits members to speak bluntly and frankly.

Proposition 6

The artful use of a shared speech code is a sufficient condition for predicting, explaining, and

controlling the form of discourse about the intelligibility, prudence, and morality of communication conduct. This proposition pertains to how speech codes can be and are used to label, interpret, explain, evaluate, justify, and shape communicative actions. It also points to the dynamic nature of codes. Thus, this proposition is fundamentally concerned with metacommunication, or talk about talk, and its predictability. What is meant here by predictability is not that the sharing of a code would equip a person to foretell absolutely what someone will say in a given situation. Predictability deals not with what conversants will say, but with how they will speak about or evaluate each others' communication, and by extension, with the speakers themselves. This proposition also deals with the idea that one can control communication, at least in part, by being knowledgeable about others' speech code. For example, for some construction workers in Veracruz, Mexico, the community premises and rules for acceptable behavior call for the use of *usted* (formal you) over *tú* (informal you) in formal professional settings to explicitly acknowledge the importance of workplace hierarchy. Failure to make the expected shifts in pronoun codes can and does result in the workers being judged as *mal educados* (ill-mannered) or *igualados* (insolent, ill bred, rude). Additionally, shared knowledge about pronominal codes enables workers to effect favorable public valuations from those watching them and to be cast as *respetuosos* (respectful) and *profesionales* (professionals). Although uses of *usted* are still heard in the construction workers' conversation, there is a marked increase in uses of *tú*. For example, reciprocal uses of *tú* between contemporary male and female coworkers are more common than they were in generations past, thus pointing to the dynamic nature of codes.

Power in Speech Codes Theory

Because matters pertaining to power inhabit much of contemporary discourse in the social sciences, important to note is that SCT has been criticized for not responding to the presence and outcomes of power in social interaction. Indeed, SCT does not advocate prejudging the incidence of particular social meanings (e.g., power and status) prior to examination of the situated interaction in question. To do so would undermine the culture-rich

description and analysis SCT seeks to achieve. Moreover, SCT requires that researchers and other observers remain open to the discovery of cultural particulars made relevant by the speech community members themselves. This stance does not suggest that power is not heard. It does suggest that power is accounted for when its hearing is made inspectable by speech community members themselves.

Conclusion

SCT emphasizes context-specific examinations of human communication from the perspective of the communicants themselves. This approach makes possible a variety of refined understandings and explanations about the linkages between culture and communication. Because SCT holds that every time people speak they reveal culture or codes of communication, by attentively watching and listening to a people's everyday interaction, outside observers can abstract important core elements of others' beliefs and value systems.

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See also Cultural Performance Theory; Culture and Communication; Ethnography of Communication

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SPEECH THEORY OF HUMAN COMMUNICATION

See Communication and Language Acquisition and Development

SPIRAL MODELS OF MEDIA EFFECTS

Spiral theories synthesize theories about the choice of media and interpersonal channels and theories regarding communication effects. In so doing, spiral theories propose longitudinal processes that reinforce existing patterns of identity, belief, and behavior for various individuals and subpopulations. Spiral theories also address the ways in which behavior patterns are maintained in the face of competing social pressures and influences. A premise of spiral theories, notably the reinforcing spirals model, is that media are a mediating variable between determinants of media use and their outcomes and that outcomes of media use influence subsequent media use.

Spiral theories may also be considered a more contemporary reinterpretation of Joseph Klapper's classic reinforcement hypothesis: that media have a greater influence on reinforcing rather than changing audience beliefs and behaviors. Klapper dismissed the likelihood of socially significant effects resulting from media use. From the spirals perspective,

however, such reinforcement effects are dynamic, contingent, and can have substantial impact on social conflict and cohesion as well as on individual and group attitudes and behaviors. Such effects are fundamentally important in individual experience, public policy, and social process.

History

Findings regarding the effects of media on belief reinforcement and selective exposure date back at least to classic work in the 1950s on political campaigns by Bernard Berelson, Paul Lazarsfeld, and colleagues, upon which Klapper built his argument. Since this time, scholars such as Vincent Price, William Eveland, and their colleagues have argued that media exposure may lead to additional information seeking, even selective choice of media content, which can reinforce political media effects. Jane Brown asserted the same relationship in regard to sexual content on young people.

The most important predecessor of contemporary spiral models, however, is Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's spiral of silence theory. This theory, in brief, argues that many individuals—even a majority—may hold political and social views inconsistent with what is considered generally normatively acceptable and portrayed as such in the mass media. As a result, this theory proposes, these individuals hesitate to express their views publicly and never learn that their views are in fact widespread, resulting in the dominance of certain public opinions despite widespread private disagreement.

Spiral of silence proposes an unusual special case: When it is not possible to find media content consistent with one's views, the ability to develop a shared social identity with the potential for impact on the larger society is inhibited. However, in the era of cable television, specialty magazine publication, and most importantly, the Internet, the requirements for a uniform media environment may rarely be met. Processes suppressing individual expression like the one proposed in the spiral of silence, then, may most likely be found at present in authoritarian societies with highly restricted access to alternative information sources. However, the important technical contributions of spiral of silence theory to subsequent theorizing—notably, a focus on longitudinal process, the interplay of mediated and interpersonal communication, the

social impacts of psychological processes, and recurring influences that tend to strengthen or weaken effects—should be acknowledged, whatever one’s assessment of the specific hypotheses of the theory. Moreover, the theory underscores the central importance of access (or lack thereof) to media content that reflects one’s beliefs and values in the construction and maintenance of ideology and social identity and in facilitating interpersonal communication.

The Reinforcing Spirals Model

Spiral models, then, generally focus on how people tend to select media channels and content; such content is likely to reinforce those interests, values, and beliefs and influence subsequent communication channel and content choice; over time, this effect should reinforce patterns of behavior, social identities, and other factors. From this perspective, media should be viewed as an intervening variable between demographic and psychosocial determinants of media use and associated outcomes of media use; outcomes of media use should be expected in turn to influence subsequent media use.

For example, someone who is a religious fundamentalist is likely to prefer media outlets and channels as well as interpersonal associations that support his or her beliefs. The content of the chosen messages will in turn reinforce those beliefs and support the tendency to continue to seek out media content consistent with those beliefs. The same is likely to be true of political conservatives or liberals and all other groups as well. This can also be true with respect to more purely individual interests and behavior. For example, a youth who tends to have aggressive tendencies is more likely to seek out violent media content, which is likely in turn to reinforce those aggressive tendencies, or persons supportive of environmental protection is likely to have that support reinforced by media exposure.

The reinforcing spirals model relies on a systems theory perspective in which patterns of reinforcement may be considered positive feedback loops. A positive feedback loop, which builds increasingly strong responses, could result in people developing relatively extreme points of view or behavior over time. However, this is not what typically happens because social norms provide a moderating influence. This model argues, similar to cultivation

theory, that normative social values would tend to homogenize values and behavior and (unlike cultivation theory) that these reinforcing spiral processes provide a means to sustain distinct patterns of beliefs and behaviors despite such homogenizing influence, more often than they would lead to extreme belief or behavior outcomes.

For example, in democratic societies, people who are strongly conservative or liberal, despite the inconsistency of their views with the mainstream, would face considerable pressures for moderation. A reinforcing spiral process would help them maintain their perspectives despite such pressures. Similarly, adolescents are under considerable pressure from family, school, and other authorities to behave in prosocial ways. Violent or sexual media content may serve to support continued aggressive or sexual interests and behaviors in the context of such external pressures, especially for less socially integrated youth who may be particularly at risk with respect to those behaviors and therefore less influenced by such external influences.

The reinforcing spirals model suggests that psychological mechanisms, such as increased salience and accessibility of relevant social identity, are a result of selective media exposure. Such a model also emphasizes the importance, based on systems theory, of the degree to which an individual’s or a social group’s information system is open or closed and the degree to which the information system in the larger society is open or closed. These theories suggest that closure combined with reinforcing spiral effects tends to lead to political, religious, and social extremism and the potential for intergroup hostility.

These concepts are summarized in a series of propositions, adapted from Michael Slater’s 2007 *Communication Theory* article, “Reinforcing Spirals: The Mutual Influence of Media Selectivity and Media Effects and Their Impact on Individual Behavior and Social Identity”:

- The role of media usually can be modeled as endogenous, mediating or partially mediating the effect of other individual difference variables on the outcomes of interest.
- Cognitive or behavioral outcomes of media use also influence media use, particularly when the cognitions or behaviors are related to personal or social identity.

- Reciprocal relationships between media use and effects in its simplest case implies a three-step cross-lagged process in which media use affects and is affected by beliefs, attitudes, and behavior across three time lags, or periods.
- In a perfectly closed system (free from the effects of competing social, psychological, or environmental influences), the spirals of media selectivity and effects should work to maximize use of a given type of media to the maximum permitted by available time and access and to maximize levels of the cognitions or behaviors impacted to those permitted by available capacity. However, social subsystems in which media effect processes take place vary in the extent to which they are open and closed along various dimensions; none are fully closed, and reinforcing spirals of media selectivity and effects are limited by environmental or other constraints.
- In general, those individuals who identify with a given set of religious, ideological, or lifestyle beliefs and values (i.e., a shared group or communal identity) will have certain preferred media outlets and will selectively attend to content that reflects and shares the values of that social identity group.
- Use of media content consistent with a given social identity will result in greater (a) salience or accessibility of that social identity and (b) influence of values and attitudes associated with that identity in assessments and decisions, at least briefly, after such media exposure.
- Identification with a given social group is in part maintained by the dynamic mutual reinforcement patterns of media selection and influence as well as by associated patterns of choice in interpersonal association and communication.
- The more closed the communication system within a social identity group, the more likely people will strongly identify with the group and view out-group members with hostility (and perhaps even as legitimate targets of violence).
- The effect of closure in social identity group communication patterns on isolation and intergroup hostility will be exacerbated to the extent the national system also tends to be a closed one.

Challenges in Studying Spiral Models

Spiral models are gaining increasing attention in part because of the increasing range of statistical methods for analyzing longitudinal data. Although it is possible to examine some elements of spiral models in laboratory or research across sections of society, longitudinal designs done with identified panels of groups or individuals are typically most appropriate. However, such panel designs pose a variety of challenges. First, it is not always clear at first over what time lags effects can meaningfully be studied. If the lags are believed to be relatively brief, the researcher is forced either to analyze concurrent effects at a given time point or use laboratory settings to assess effects. Nor is it necessarily the case that the lags from exposure to selectivity are the same as the lags between media exposure to effects. Some research has found evidence suggesting that selectivity effects are relatively concurrent, while the effects of media exposure may be detectable 3 to 6 months later. Statistical models that may be used for such analyses include cross-lagged panel structural equation models, multilevel longitudinal models, and parallel-process latent growth models.

Implications for Other Theories

Spiral models provide a useful lens through which to look at other theories of mediated communication. For example, such models emphasize the importance of media outlets serving specific social identity groups. Such outlets may be a hothouse from which new social issues emerge into general media and into public awareness via agenda-setting processes. Spiral models also inform framing theories by implying such group-specific media or programs provide interpretive frames by which members of social identity groups process stories from other, more general-interest media. Such group-specific media may also evolve frames for viewing issues that are subsequently picked up by politicians and more general media.

Michael D. Slater

See also Cultivation Theory; Media Effects Theories; Spiral of Silence; System Theory; Uses, Gratifications, and Dependency

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SPIRAL OF SILENCE

Spiral of silence theory argues that public opinion is a powerful force in contemporary society and explains the role of the mass media in contributing to—and even magnifying—the effects of that force. Since the publication of the initial version of spiral of silence in a 1974 journal article by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, a leading German communication scholar and public-opinion researcher, the theory and its associated methodological approach have had important implications, both in the United States and internationally, for interpersonal, group, and mediated communication, as well as for sociology, social psychology, political science, and even marketing. At the same time, debates about a number of claims presented in the

original formulation of the theory and questions about the personal and political history of its founder have made spiral of silence a particularly controversial communication concept.

Spiral of silence theory argues that individuals feel pressure to conceal their opinions when they sense that those views are in the minority or out of the mainstream. At the same time, individuals will more freely express their opinions when they sense that they represent a majority standpoint. Because the mass media repeatedly signal to members of society which views are acceptable and which are not, a spiral effect is produced: Majority views are made to seem even more dominant than they might really be—thanks to their perpetual media coverage and its implicit or explicit endorsement—while minority views are made to seem even less popular or more distant from the mainstream than might actually be the case, due to the media's tendencies to marginalize or even ignore them entirely. As a result, mass media audiences will be increasingly encouraged to either speak their minds if their views match those presented by the media as those of the majority or to keep silent if their views are those the media downplay, marginalize, or criticize. As certain views are given more voice in society and others less, the media pick up on this polarization and magnify it. And so the spiral continues.

The core components of spiral of silence, as originally laid out by Noelle-Neumann in a series of journal articles published in Germany and the United States during the 1970s and expanded in her 1984 book, *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion—Our Social Skin*, include the following: fear of isolation, public opinion and the quasi-statistical organ that measures such opinion, media roles and characteristics, and the resulting spiral itself.

Fear of Isolation

Drawing on psychological research on conformity, behavior, and social norms, spiral of silence theory is based on the claim that individuals feel tremendous pressure to conform. We are afraid of being isolated from society and also of being ostracized or criticized for failing to go along with the majority relative to specific issues under debate. Being banished from a group—or in extreme cases, being exiled or put in solitary confinement—is

among our deepest fears. As a result, we will go to great lengths to prevent such social isolation from occurring.

Public Opinion and the Quasi-Statistical Organ

Spiral of silence theory holds that public opinion is more than a mere reflection of a society's agreed-upon values, goals, and norms. Rather, public opinion is a force that actually shapes individuals' attitudes and behaviors, enforces norms, and keeps people in line.

One of the most striking claims of spiral of silence theory is that people have an impressive ability to sense or discern public opinion—about, for example, which candidate is going to win an election or how people feel about a given issue—even without conducting their own surveys or consulting the results of opinion polls. Noelle-Neumann somewhat facetiously suggested that we humans possess a quasi-statistical organ, an ability akin to a sixth sense that allows us to simply know or intuit which way the political winds are blowing, even before the results of actual polls are published. We use this so-called organ both to anticipate future trends as well as to determine whether our own views are in or out of alignment with the majority—and if we sense that those views are out of the mainstream, we keep them to ourselves. Our perceptions, then, shape our behaviors, particularly our communication behaviors.

Media Roles and Characteristics

The mass media contribute to—and exaggerate—the perceptions of our quasi-statistical organ, particularly in contemporary industrialized society. Thus, even as we make our own readings of societal views, our personal perceptions contribute only partially to our sense of public opinion. Rather, the mass media, dominant forces in our private lives and our shared culture, contribute even more significantly to our perceptions of attitudes toward public opinion. This happens because the media are virtually everywhere, because they express or endorse only a very limited range of opinions and viewpoints, and because they constantly repeat their narrowly defined content; as a result, they tend to magnify the differences between

the various segments of a society. (It should be noted that these claims may have had more validity at the time of their publication—during an age of truly mass media—than they might now, when media such as the Internet and cable television offer so many narrowly targeted channels that each reach a relatively small audience.)

The Resulting Spiral

The core of spiral of silence theory concerns the continuous interplay among various spheres of influence: individual opinion, public opinion, and media messages. The media do not (necessarily) invent their own standpoints on issues; rather, they reflect—and then amplify—tendencies already present in a society. Viewers watching television and engaging with other media are exposed to messages that make clear which opinions are preferred and which are not. Indeed, much news coverage, particularly during political election campaign seasons, explicitly focuses on the results of public opinion polls. Audience members then incorporate these media-generated (and media-enhanced) understandings of what is and is not considered mainstream. As a result, individuals holding views that they sense—or that they have been told by the media—are acceptable to the majority feel even freer to express them publicly, while individuals holding views that they believe (and which the media tell them) are unacceptable are even more likely to self-censor out of fear of isolating themselves from society.

As a result of these individual communication patterns, the media deepen the process to an even greater degree, giving ever greater prominence to the majority views while reducing minority views to insignificance or invisibility, and so on, and so on. The spiral keeps spiraling until minority views ultimately disappear from both media and individual expression, and the majority views become the only ones deemed acceptable. Ultimately, then, public opinion (and its amplification by the media) serves not only to reflect, but also to shape society's attitudes and actions. The increasingly muted—and ultimately nonexistent—public (and mainstream media) outcry in the United States against the buildup to the Iraq War in late 2002 and early 2003 provides a prominent recent example of this phenomenon.

Challenges and Controversies

Although virtually all communication theories inspire other scholars to challenge their originators' claims, spiral of silence theory has been dogged by a particularly heated set of controversies. A number of Noelle-Neumann's original contentions have been disconfirmed by empirical testing; more recent studies show, for example, that individual demographic factors such as education level, socioeconomic class, sex, and age will have an impact on a person's willingness to speak out against a (perceived) majority viewpoint, meaning that Noelle-Neumann's assumption that all individuals self-censor to the same degree does not hold up. Other critics have pointed out that some people will never be silenced, regardless of demographics. In response to these claims, Noelle-Neumann revised her original argument and now acknowledges the existence of hard-core nonconformists and members of the artistic or intellectual avant-garde—that is, those individuals who consistently voice minority opinions and thus counter the original predictions of spiral of silence theory.

Other scholars have drawn attention to Noelle-Neumann's personal history and its influence on the formation of her theory. Although Noelle-Neumann is perhaps best known today as a prominent communication theorist and the founder of the Institut für Demoskopie, one of Germany's most influential public-opinion research organizations, her early years were considerably less distinguished. As a young woman living in Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, Noelle-Neumann observed extreme examples of self-censorship in practice in everyday life; most German citizens opposed to mainstream or majority Nazi practices and philosophies, for example, were certainly motivated to keep silent, although the consequences for speaking out were far more dire than mere social isolation. Equally if not more important, as a journalist and propagandist for the Nazi Party, Noelle-Neumann regularly published articles that championed the interests of the stronger members of society over weaker members, suggesting that not all individuals deserved an equal say in the conversations conducted by their culture.

Still, despite the controversies surrounding spiral of silence and its developer, the theory's primary contentions can be seen to play out in our

own era of 24-hour news, with its paradoxically limited range of viewpoints and coverage, and the echo chamber that results when opinion polls, media reporting, and election decisions repeat and amplify each other's content.

David Weiss

See also Agenda-Setting Theory; Media Effects Theories; Media Equation Theory; Propaganda Theory; Public Opinion Theories

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STAKEHOLDER THEORY

Stakeholder theory has its roots in business and organization studies and is an umbrella term describing attempts to identify, explain, and prescribe an organization's relationship and responsibility to other actors. In the conventional model of the corporation, managers are seen as primarily beholden to the interests of their stockholders, or those with an economic share in the corporation. Stakeholder theories depart from the conventional, primarily profit-oriented business approach by adopting a broader conception of who should be seen as having a legitimate stake in an organization's functioning. In contrast to stockholders, which refers only to those with a financial interest in an organization, the term stakeholders can

include any human or nonhuman actor who influences and is influenced by an organization. The stakeholder perspective has developed in response to growing concerns about the social and environmental impacts of corporations.

History

A classic business perspective holds that the corporation is the private property of its shareholders and thus conceives of the corporation in fiduciary duty to its investors. Within this perspective, a corporation's accountability is limited to its stockholders and to a lesser extent, to its employees, suppliers, and customers. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, influential Chicago School economist Milton Friedman exemplified this position, arguing that a corporation's only social responsibility included obtaining the greatest possible profit for its shareholders. In 1984, Edward Freeman published his book, *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, which laid the groundwork for a contrasting, stakeholder perspective of the social responsibility of corporations. Stating that a corporation and its managers had an interest in attending to actors beyond their stockholders, Freeman proposed a model of stakeholder management that included tactics for identifying and responding to multiple stakeholders. Over the next decade, Freeman's book sparked much debate and extension. In their 1995 article, Thomas Donaldson and Lee Preston catalogued nearly 100 articles and a dozen books appearing on the subject. They identified three uses of stakeholder theory: (1) descriptive—when theorists use stakeholder theory to explain the characteristics and behaviors of actually existing corporations; (2) instrumental—when theorists use stakeholder theory to understand how to accomplish desired (often managerial) outcomes, such as increasing profitability and growth or warding against lawsuits; and (3) normative uses—when theorists use the theory in a prescriptive manner according to a set of ethical or philosophical principles, such as to argue for greater corporate social responsibility. Donaldson and Preston concluded that the justification for stakeholder theory lies in its normative value, or in its ability to provide a more ethically just vision of the corporation.

Since the 1990s, the use of stakeholder theory has become increasingly tied to debates about corporate social responsibility, natural resources management, public health, and sustainable development. Stakeholder theory has also expanded beyond its business origins to inform the work of policymaking, nongovernmental organizations, and community-based organizations and activists. In addition, the use of the term stakeholder to describe groups with an interest in a particular outcome has become increasingly commonplace.

Identifying and Prioritizing Stakeholders

One of the most controversial issues related to stakeholder theory includes stakeholder identification, or defining who counts as a legitimate stakeholder (including who is able to make that determination). Although definitions vary across academic disciplines and particular contexts, stakeholders can range from individuals, such as an employee, to groups, such as customers or community members. Stakeholders can also include systems, such as a public health system, or nonhuman agents and systems, such as a regional watershed or forest.

A second and related controversy relates to stakeholder salience. How do organizations and policy makers, among others, prioritize the needs of multiple and diverse stakeholders, many of whom have conflicting interests and desires? Scholars and practitioners have presented a number of different methodologies used to identify and prioritize stakeholders. Some of these serve instrumental purposes for the organization and its managers. For example, Ronald Mitchell, Bradley Agle, and Donna Wood proposed that stakeholders should be identified according to (a) their power to influence the organization, (b) the legitimacy of their claim on the organization, and (c) the urgency of their claim. Other methods of stakeholder analysis are used in institutional and policy-reform processes and privilege the perspective of community stakeholders rather than managers or the corporation. For example, a nonprofit organization may draw upon stakeholder analysis to determine how the activities of a particular industry or a change in a particular economic policy may impact local community members.

Stakeholder Theory and Communication Theory

In general, communication scholars draw upon stakeholder theory to understand how organizations communicate with and are held accountable to their multiple stakeholders. Stakeholder theory takes different forms across areas of communication theory. For example, within organizational communication, stakeholder theory appears in studies of corporate scandal and in debates over the ethical and social responsibilities of organizations. Crises communication theorists draw upon stakeholder theory to provide practical recommendations for pre-and postcrises communication. Stakeholder theory and analysis also inform the work of environmental, health, and development communication scholars. Across each of these areas, communication scholars draw upon a range of critical, ethnographic, and archival methods to study the processes of communication, dialogue, and exchange between organizations and their stakeholders.

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See also Corporate Campaign Theories; Ethics Theories; Organizational Communication Theories; Public Sphere

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STANDPOINT THEORY

See Feminist Standpoint Theory

STIGMA COMMUNICATION

Stigma arguably has its creation, maintenance, and effects tied to communication. The word's root meaning to prick or tattoo references nonverbal communication used in ancient Greece to mark criminals' and slaves' foreheads so they could be tracked and treated within the community's standards of devaluation and discrimination. This entry will review communication in the formation, maintenance, and management of stigmas.

Definitions and Background

Although one may find communication acts related to stigma throughout human history, Erving Goffman's 1963 book of the same name provided a solid foundation for stigma communication research. He argued that stigmas generate an intense form of devaluation such that a member of a stigmatized group is considered no longer human. As a result of dehumanization, communities exercise a number of discrimination choices that ultimately limit stigmatized people's quality of life and possibly their lives.

Steven Neuberg and colleagues argue that the variations one sees in stigmas throughout history and the world may be explained by one principle: Stigmas are generated toward those whose attributes or choices limit a social group's ability to function. This is considered a sociofunctional perspective.

An illustration of stigma communication may be found in investigating messages about hermaphrodites in Europe's Renaissance. During this period, many laws delineated rights and obligations for men relative to those afforded to women. A person who represented either or neither sex would confound the effective functioning of a group grounded in gender divisions. During this period, authors catalogued, labeled, and represented hermaphrodites in public displays as monsters. St. Augustine noted that monsters show the

signs of divine judgment and punishment. The monster, therefore, chose to do something terribly wrong to deserve this punishment. This divine verdict, he argued, placed the monster and his or her associated community in jeopardy of enduring further divine judgment, and communities should take steps to eliminate such threats.

A person's sexual organs are not typically displayed in public. Thus, it is possible to conceal one's sexual organs in attempts to pass within society. A person may decide to conceal any anomalous features to avoid community action, such as legal proceedings to decide his or her sex. Proceedings label someone publicly and generate enforceable conditions. If someone was legally declared a male, he or she could marry, inherit, make contracts, and have burial rites according to a male status. Afterwards, this person was expected to lead life as a male: in dress, behavior, and actions. If the judgment was violated, by living as the other gender, he or she would be killed.

Stigmas, then, are social constructions that must be communicated to a community so that everyone may react appropriately, such as limiting the threatening people's access to resources and to future interactions (i.e., untouchables). Community members would need to learn how to recognize people included in the social threat, what threat they pose, and how to react to them.

Stigma Message Features

Stigma communication includes four types of content to allow such group-categorization, -recognition, -stereotyping, and -action tendencies to occur. To work most effectively, this content includes marks, labels, responsibility, and peril, and evokes three different emotions: disgust, anger, and fear.

Marks are the behaviors or attributes one can use to recognize someone within a stigmatized group. A mark can be something inherent (e.g., eye color, left-hand dominance, or skin color) or affixed to a person (e.g., a tattoo or the letter *A* in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*). The less someone can conceal the mark, the more easily and consistently community members can recognize members of a stigmatized group. For example, the requirement that Jews in Nazi Germany wear a yellow Star of David allowed for quick and easy recognition.

It helps if the mark evokes disgust. People quickly orient to and remember disgusting things. For example, in colonial New England, people judged as committing sexually immoral practices had their faces branded with hot irons. These scars, then, served as visible, attention-getting non-verbal marks. Disgust is also useful because of the actions people tend to take in order to resolve it. After feeling disgusted, people resolve this uncomfortable feeling by rejecting the disgusting target and by attempting to remove it.

A label is the name created to distinguish the stigmatized as a separate social entity. The label often includes the threat within it (e.g., sexual offenders). The label brings attention to the group's stigma and keeps the threat salient. It also stresses them as different from us and helps to differentiate the marked away from the normals. These activities help to encourage stereotype development and stereotype-consistent interpretations of the labeled people's behavior.

Responsibility is information included in messages to imply blame. In other words, it is used to argue that those within a stigmatized group made a choice that puts the community at risk. For example, in the late 20th century, U.S. smokers have been blamed for making a deviant, personal health choice that threatens public health through second-hand smoke. The language of blame helps to evoke anger. Anger is thought to generate aggressive acts to destroy or remove the obstacle and regain access to a desired outcome. For example, people may command a smoker to move out of their airspace or to put the cigarette out.

Peril is information that links the marked, labeled, responsible individuals to a physical or social danger threatening the community's way of life. It helps to remind citizens to avoid the stigmatized. It also spurs the unstigmatized to collective efforts to eliminate the stigmatized's ability to threaten them. Highlighting this danger evokes fear, and fear is thought to encourage actions to escape from the threat.

Together, messages that include information about marks, labels, responsibility, and peril allow for listeners (a) to access relevant social mores and attitudes, (b) to access and develop stereotypes, and (c) to feel disgust, anger, and fear. These cognitive and emotional reactions impact listeners by encouraging the development or maintenance of

stigma beliefs, stereotypes, and attitudes. It inspires actions such as tracking, isolating, and removing the marked people from community interactions. These features also encourage people to share these stigma messages throughout the community's social network.

Stigma Message Effects

Goffman argued that interactions between stigmatized and unstigmatized people are inherently stressful because they must manage the intense emotions, thoughts, and actions that are tied into stigmas. This stress can be seen on a biological level in cortisol production and cardiovascular activity for both groups as they attempt to communicate with each other.

Effects on the Marked and Labeled

Bruce Link and colleagues have argued that those labeled as members of a stigmatized group attempt to cope with the stress of impending devaluation, social rejection, and discrimination through three different communication activities: withdrawal, secrecy, and education. Withdrawal is action taken to selectively expose oneself to only those people who accept the conditions associated with the stigma label. Secrecy is action taken to conceal the marks and labeling conditions that could trigger categorization into a stigmatized group. Education, in contrast, is actively and intentionally disclosing one's marked and labeled status and providing information about the conditions associated with them. This is done to persuade others to change their stereotypes, to generate acceptance, and to ward off social rejection.

For example, a positive HIV-diagnosis often places people into a stigmatized group. Aware of this potential, a person newly diagnosed with HIV may select (a) to withdraw from interacting with anyone except for those who would accept this diagnosis, (b) to attempt to conceal the positive status, or (c) to share it with others. Ryan White, a young man diagnosed with HIV in the United States during the mid-1980s, serves as a poignant example of the education strategy. He shared his diagnosis and subsequent experiences with stigma and discrimination on the national news. Unfortunately, anticipating stigmatization has many consequences including lower self-esteem.

Effects on the Unmarked and Unlabeled

Unmarked, unlabeled people may find messages about stigmas tantalizing to share. People like to share messages that generate similar responses across an audience, instead of those that generate reactions from one or two people. Disgusting, angering, and fear-evoking content generate reactions out of an entire audience excellently. Further, people like to share disgusting stories in comparison to other emotion-focused ones, especially if the disgusting part of the story required voluntary action. For example, someone drank from a soda with a dead rat in it. These message features are similar to those that make good rumors. Unfortunately, rumors can be selected and retained in a social environment, even if the information is not true.

When group members share these emotions toward another group, it spurs social bonding by producing in-group solidarity and differentiation from discounted people. In attempts to protect the group and encourage this bonding, unmarked, unlabeled people disperse stigma messages throughout their social network. In fact, people who take salient, important, emotional, and bonding information to the community, such as stigma messages, may find themselves with greater social capital. After hearing the stigma message, people fueled by their own emotional responses and a sense of social responsibility engage in stigmatization by recognizing, marking, labeling, excluding, rejecting, and avoiding members of the stigmatized group.

Marked Supporters

There is some disagreement about how unmarked, unlabeled people who are socially attached to marked, labeled ones react to stigma messages. Goffman wrote that communities may treat both labeled persons and their supporters as though they are all members of the stigmatized group. For example, people serving prison time as well as their visiting family may both experience stigmatization. In other words, communities would extend the associated others the same stigma, which Goffman called a courtesy stigma. To manage their own anticipated or experienced stigma, associated others, he argues, engage in the communication coping strategies: withdrawal, secrecy, and education. In contrast, Bruce Link and colleagues argue that unlabeled people would not engage in these coping

strategies, because the social categorization is not personally relevant.

Sandra Petronio in communication privacy management theory argues that if people disclose their stigmatizing conditions to another person (e.g., through the education coping strategy), then the listener becomes a co-owner of this information. Co-ownership comes with responsibilities of learning and upholding privacy rules around it. Rachel Smith and colleagues discovered that listeners have desires to keep stigmatizing conditions secret, suggesting that co-owners not only engage in the communication coping strategies themselves, but also may encourage the stigmatized person to practice a given coping strategy. This area remains controversial and undetermined.

Conclusion

This entry describes the theory underpinning our understanding of how stigmas can be created, maintained, and reinforced in communication. This work is often done to understand how to create effective communication strategies to destroy stigmas and how to share information about community concerns without generating stigmas. Understanding stigma and finding alternative message strategies has practical import in areas such as health communication. At the start of the millennium, world health agencies argue that stigma is the leading impediment to health promotion, treatment, and support, but stigma is the least understood barrier of all. This entry presents a preliminary discussion of these communication issues.

Rachel A. Smith

See also Attribution Theory; Cognitive Theories; Communibiology; Emotion and Communication; Privacy Management Theory; Social Construction of Reality

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STORIES AND STORYTELLING

Stories are narratives people tell about experiences, events, personal or collective memories, or aspects of individual biographies. They may be shared orally, through the written word, or through other modes of communication. Storytelling is the practice of sharing narratives with self, others, or with researchers. From a theoretical perspective, storytelling is often explained as something that individuals use to create meaning in their own lives. From this perspective stories and storytelling are communication tools used to organize and interpret collective and individual phenomena as well as to make sense of personal and shared experiences and to experience dialogue.

Scholars gather stories as empirical data to meet a large variety of research needs. Data collection may involve gathering original stories told only to the researcher, stories that are widely known and commonly shared orally across generations within a community, stories that are published in different media, or even bits of communication that were never intended to be stories in the traditional sense but that still display a narrative-like structure. For example, visual elements of a building might be seen to be bits of information that together create the story that the building tells.

This entry explores the nature and key elements of stories and storytelling in dialogue and in communication theory and the ways in which stories can be used as a tool for investigating various processes whereby meaning is produced, identity expressed, and reality constructed. The entry also

explains how narrative methodologies can be used to create a more democratic research process.

Storytelling is a form of performance in which we use our imagination and intellect to understand others and ourselves. As Roland Barthes asserted, narratives are numberless. Thus storytelling can be viewed as means for ordering potentially disconnected experiences into mutually interrelated, meaningful episodes of a larger plot, be that a biography or a common history. To tell a story, therefore, is to perform a meaningful individual and social act. In other words, individuals construct realities such as their identity by telling and retelling narratives about themselves (inevitably in relation to others) and thereby making sense of their experiences.

Scholars interested in stories and storytelling contend that stories about self and others are locally conditioned, which means individuals' accounts are influenced by predominant forms of communication, or discourse, related to the experiences they are trying to work out. These other related discourses shape the individual's lived experience of self. From the moment stories are selected for telling, to the way in which they are introduced, shared, and commented upon, individual narratives are placed within larger frames of moral propriety, decorum, and common popular knowledge that stipulate notions of right and wrong, true and false, and aesthetically valuable and valueless. Consider, for example, the typical accounts heard on daytime talk shows. Guests tell stories about their lives that connect them to common understandings of what it means to be good or bad and honest or dishonest, and they tell stories that reflect what is expected in talk shows about values and mores.

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz refers to communicators' own understanding of their stories as experience-near, while researchers may be able to explain these understandings to broader social themes and discourses that are experience-distant. For Geertz, local discourses guide how they tell their stories in a way that gives meaning to their experience. Sociologists James Holstein and Jaber Gubrium suggest that even though available discourses may, to a great extent, structure the content of what people will narrate, it is very important to try and understand how people will interpret and negotiate those discourses and how they will tell stories.

Storytellers make their life experiences understandable by explaining choices and actions in relation to goals and outcomes, thereby expressing their identities within a personally meaningful plot. Thus the self is dialogic because people negotiate their sense of self and identity through composing, organizing, and performing stories in a coherent account. This process of making meaning is part of the social construction of reality.

Narrative researchers sometimes share their own stories in order to achieve an egalitarian ethic in inviting the stories of others. By sharing part of themselves in the storytelling process, researchers can achieve a more deeply democratic playing field between interviewer and interviewee. This kind of interview style is known as interactive dialogic interview. Such interviews aim less to gain information about the other person and more to experience the dialogical process itself. The ability to share stories and make interpersonal connections between interviewer and interviewee allows for experiences to resonate at a human level; ultimately, the hope is that those who read the research will themselves become part of the dialogic exchange, empathizing more deeply with and drawing a more profound humanistic meaning from the research. The dialogical process of story sharing in an interview setting also allows for the hierarchical boundaries typical of question-and-answer exchange to be broken down.

In communication studies, dialogue theory takes its roots from the work of Martin Buber, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Hans-Georg Gadamer. These key figures see dialogue as an essential ethical moment that enables effective and egalitarian communication. Taken from this perspective, communication scholars in the postmodern tradition see storytelling as a way to promote and encourage dialogue. Storytelling allows scholars to understand the realities faced by participants and promotes a collaborative ethical approach to gathering data.

April Vannini

See also Dialogue Theories; Identity Theories; Narrative and Narratology; Relational Dialectics; Social Construction of Reality

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STRUCTURALISM

See Poststructuralism

STRUCTURATION THEORY

Structuration theory (ST) is identified focally with Anthony Giddens, a British social theorist who was, incidentally, an advisor to Prime Minister Tony Blair and to the financier George Soros. It is a highly influential theory in communication as well as in the social sciences generally. ST was motivated by the long-standing problem of agency and structure in social theory, especially sociology. The dominant sociological contrast of individual versus society led to a basic clash about which determines which—do individuals in interaction construct social meaning and social order or does an evolved or pre-given structure determine and constrain the behavior of its human members? This problem generated another, related conundrum: How can we relate the study of macrosocial entities—societies, the media—to the study of individual relationships and interactive episodes? Most theorists did not take one extreme position or the other, but their integrations were biased and usually conceptually flawed. In communication, the same clash emerged as one between rhetorical scholars emphasizing individual and collective will, skill, and meaning as opposed to social-scientific scholars emphasizing causal-empirical theories about message behavior, response, and outcomes out of the control of individuals and groups. ST is an insightful metatheory with unusual integrative potential that aimed to resolve this dispute.

Although the term structuration was used earlier by such scholars as Georges Gurwitsch and Roland Barthes, Giddens really developed the idea as we understand it today. Giddens' intent was to overcome the division in social theory between social constructionists and structural determinists; his synthesis was clear and fecund. Giddens' efforts in the early 1990s addressed the phenomenon of modernity and then moved to a political stance, which he called the third way, a perspective that went avowedly beyond conservatism and leftism.

Basic Concepts

ST is grounded in a distinction among system, structure, and practice. System is a set of normal interchange patterns connecting people, behaviors, messages, relationships, and things, including both human and nonhuman elements. Structure is distinguished from system by being tacit and empowering: It is the domain of rules and resources upon which agents draw in order to act. Rules are principles or routines that can guide or ground actions; resources are anything people can use or adapt to in the course of action. Drawing on social structure, Giddens suggests people are engaged in practice and can engage in specific practices—organized systems of conduct that are meaningful to them.

This distinction leads to the central insight of ST: Structural rules-resources are both produced (used to interact in more or less meaningful and effective ways) and reproduced (maintained or transformed as resources) in the course of all social interaction episodes. This idea of production and reproduction as two sides of the same coin is called by Giddens the duality of structuration. It supplants both the view that macroforces (such as cultures or discourses) can directly explain or ground interaction, and the view of social constructionism that interaction on its own creates order and meaning. ST allows for constraints by language, society, and material reality while recognizing that their effects are conducted through practice and that these enable action and transformation as well.

The idea of duality allows Giddens to argue for the distinctiveness of human agency while simultaneously decentering it. In other words, humans do have will and choice, but these alone do not determine outcomes. Humans are uniquely able to act using tacit knowledge and to answer for their

conduct. They are able to interpret interaction, and they can reflect on it, as depicted in Giddens's stratification model of agency. They thus participate in reproduction through meaningful practice so that episodes of practice become focal analytic units. Duality is thus the first step toward breaking down the opposition between emphasis on institutional macrostructures and on interactional micro-episodes by showing how each of these entails the other.

ST takes further steps to connect the micro- and macrolevels first by describing a continuity of analysis from interaction episodes (e.g., a gossip session) to ways episodes and encounters shade off into other episodes and encounters. Continuity continues as these analyses move to higher-level time-space trajectories as people travel among varied socially constructed locales and regions, and the analysis can then move to even larger domains connected by system integration.

Second, ST analyzes structural patterns at a variety of depths, from structural principles (e.g., of capitalist economies) involving stable properties of social institutions, to sets that detail how different structures translate and mediate each other (e.g., economic salary and educational attainment). A social system's structural principles are nearly always in contradiction with one another, operating in terms of one another and yet contravening one another. For example, control and delegation in an organization are tied to one another, but can also work against one another. Such structural contradictions induce change in social systems, partly by spinning off derivative, less deep-seated contradictions. Thus, a primary contradiction between control and delegation in an education system can generate secondary contradictions such as that between fidelity in following a policymaker's decisions and purposes and resistance to those policies, in voice as well as organized opposition.

Giddens posited three institutional dimensions—signification, domination, and legitimation—which correspond to three dimensions of interaction: communication, power, and sanction. Interestingly, he argues that each of these dimensions is used in actual human interaction, which in turn reproduces these. Signification structures serve as interpretive schemes in communication, domination structures appear as facilities (allocated material resources as well as authoritative or command requirements) in enabling-constraining interactional power, and

legitimation structures are drawn on as norms. Communication researchers have used these dimensions to analyze varieties of interaction types as well as more complex phenomena such as ideologies.

Theory of Modernity

Giddens noted the fundamental differences in deep structural principles that emerged across epochs. In particular, Giddens developed an influential conception of modernity, with implications for both institutional and interactional levels of communication. Opposed to evolutionary and deterministic theories, this branch of ST eschews explanations of modernity in favor of its consequences. Giddens does, nonetheless, identify four developmental roots or institutional dimensions of modernity: capitalism, industrialism, military power, and surveillance-information storage. The latter two dimensions let him argue against economically based theories such as Marxism, while developing distinctive views of the state and organizations. Organized control centers are power containers that dominate less central parts of the system, but they are also loci of institutional reflexivity, or places where the system responds to and guides information produced within and by the system itself. Such reflexivity is one of the main dynamic elements characterizing modernity.

Modern institutions become increasingly able to gather and process information and reflexively steer developments based on that collected information. But reflexivity is unavoidably part of the system being steered, and its consequences lead to new humanly generated risks: Information gathering powers lead to new intrusions of marketers into private life, military powers purported to increase security simultaneously strengthen capacities for warfare, and so on. Giddens characterizes modern life as a rapidly moving, uncontrollable juggernaut careening into the future, with multiple impacts on individuals and interaction.

One barely anticipated consequence of the institutional dimensions of modernity is globalization, of which Giddens was one of the first and most influential theorists. He argued that global phenomena range far beyond economic interdependence and state political-military relations. His idea of the local-global dialectic depends strongly on the two other main dynamic elements of modernity: the separation of time and space, and disembedding

mechanisms. The first notes how rapid transportation and communication mean that traditional local limits of everyday life are replaced by far-reaching, rapidly morphing relationships. The second element, disembedding mechanisms, includes especially abstract systems of symbolic tokens (money, but also imported vocabularies and images) and expert systems of technical and professional persons, networks, and knowledge that separate wholes into parts.

Together, these elements mutate social life. As space shrinks, the old roots of interpersonal relations in long acquaintance and stable familial roles become insecure, and intimacy becomes manifested in more egalitarian pure relationships, best modeled by lesbian couples. Sexuality, unrooted from traditional gender roles, becomes plastic, and interpersonal trust, without other bases, is grounded in mutual disclosure, in freely chosen commitment that riskily promises persistence, or in addictive dependency. Identity, shorn of stable roles, is a self-controlled and socially negotiated reflexive project, based in a self-narrative of development through uncertain passages toward authentic self-actualization. In addition, traditional communal bonds and experiences are equally mutated. Familiar professionals such as doctors and bankers are no longer at hand, replaced by experts who serve as access points to abstract systems of medical care or financial services. Trust in these experts must be based on educational credentials and organizational position, with recourse in the courts dependent on still another abstract system. Crucial life experiences of childbirth, illness, and death, but equally work, entertainment, and transportation become sequestered, often in inaccessible and delimited professional domains where almost everyone is a novice seeking rapid assimilation to avoid unknown risks.

Communication becomes, crucially, development of trust and insight whether in intimate or abstract domains. Coupled with the growing estrangement brought by abstract systems is a growing reflexive popular movement toward control of institutions and of the conditions of life. Giddens argues that social movements evince a movement from emancipatory politics seeking rights and freedom from constraints toward a life politics seeking democratic openness and participation in the determination of the conditions of

and nature of a worthy life amid unforeseeable developments in all experiential spheres.

ST integrates insights from all of the broad social science perspectives, but also claims to surpass them. It avoids the determinism of functionalism and positivistic social science by explicating a role for agency and reflexivity. It is probably closest to interpretive philosophy and social science, but emphasizes the duality of structuration, structural (including material) resources, time-space, and unintended consequences as contexts or constraints on agency and social construction. Against Marxism and critical theory, it emphasizes that power must work in concert with meaning and norms. In addition, Giddens's critical exploration of modernity gives state powers of war-pacification and surveillance-institutional knowledgeability more weight compared to common critical themes regarding economy and culture-identity. Against poststructuralism and postmodernism, Giddens most strongly emphasizes the needlessness of excess skepticism and the importance of knowledge and reflexivity as fulcra for conceptualizing modern institutions and discourse.

Applications and Extensions

In his prime, Giddens was the most influential of English-language social theorists; his direct influence remains strong in some fields such as communication and business, while in sociology and geography a variety of scholars have channeled structurational insights in new directions.

First, ST has served as a model of a broader category of practice theories. Such theories regard all of human behavior and life as a texture of embodied, socially enabled practices that cannot be reduced to mental structures, cultural discourses, or social interaction. A practice is a chunk, or related range of knowledgeable and skilled behaviors, based in shared routines that connect agents to a background of skills and knowledge, to one another, and to useful and various constraining factors. Individuals are described as carriers of practices. Groups engaged in shared practices become basic units of social analysis. Studies of practice have often centered on knowledge workers and skilled professionals. Such studies include conversation analysis, activity theory, and social studies of science. The bodily, routine-based, and

tacitly skilled foundations of practice are often emphasized, although Giddens argues that practice is reflexively monitored so as to move toward goals, stay within normative boundaries, and ultimately be organized into a larger pattern of institutional reflexivity. Practice theory has come to stand in opposition to various reductive positions, including cognitive psychology, behavioral social science, macrosocial deterministic theories, and social constructionism. It substantially overlaps, but differs from, the practical theory developed by Ernest Bormann and Robert Craig in not aiming for applied critique of practices.

Second, the ST emphasis on time-space, on reflexivity, and on disembedding has helped to stimulate a movement toward much more flexible and reticulated notions of social systems. System complexity and adaptability can be understood in new ways by focusing on the interpretive, context-influencing powers within the system. The world system has been reconceived as a network of exchanges, conversations, and activities that are tangled by various projects, interruptions, and unexpected consequences. These insights have led to new developments in theory construction that employ such ideas as generative mechanisms, process trajectories, differentiation, and loosely bundled resources-constraints. Theorists are often driven toward Giddens's style of finding prototypical developments that can help clarify the otherwise abstract expressionist canvas of reality.

Communication is a focal process in ST both inside and outside the communication discipline. Communication theorists have used ST both as a canvas and as a brush to portray new ideas in new frames, in group and organizational studies, but also in analyses of the mass media, argumentation, and interpersonal relations. One common conceptual resource is the duality of structuration: Scholars have shown how specific stances, themes, arguments, elaborated strategies, or genres are produced in routine as well as adapted forms and how these are dually reproduced, as continuous or transformed communicative resources and recognizable patterns. A second common conceptual resource for communication theory is the expanded social hermeneutic that interprets historic events or documents embedded in institutional schemata along with the everyday events that reflect, transform, and generalize these. A third resource is the

use of the three-dimensional distinction of signification, domination, and legitimation to make sense of multiple and interwoven speech events and their broader discourses in order to better understand communicators' actions.

Although these three theoretical resources have been powerful, scholars across disciplines have had to overcome tendencies to (a) apply structurational metatheoretic concepts directly to cases, without noticing that an intermediate level of substantive theory is usually vital; (b) study interaction simply within types of bounded locales, expecting a limited pattern of reactions to structural resources; (c) theorize interaction at just one level, uncovering interaction dynamics without reflecting on the associated institutional dynamics; or (d) reify Giddens' elements of interpretive schemes, facilities, and norms into distinct ontological types, then finding with surprise that they interrelate.

Critiques

A standard array of critiques has emerged against ST. Giddens is charged with facile eclecticism, with abstract theorizing irrelevant to research, and with overemphasis on both agency and structure. Further, ST is said to neglect culture and the mass media.

One argument against traditional ST is that its core concepts, especially its emphasis on individual agency as the locus of structuration, do not adequately account for differing amounts of power. Some people or groups produce greater structural change and have higher control over their fates than other groups do. This phenomenon threatens the ST position (actually, never explicitly stated as such by Giddens) that social change is mainly the slow, accumulated process of unintended results of individual acts. The major critics taking this position—critical realists—argue that ST represents a central conflation between action context and active structural change, between action and structure. Thus, ST obscures the explanatory forces affecting both action and social structure.

The critical realists are joined by theorists emphasizing the effects of leaders or macro-actors and scholars arguing that complex systems or discourses swamp or oversimplify human agency. Defenders of ST reply that Giddens does not exclude major, planned social change (though he

might argue that it rarely happens for deep structural principles), and that concepts such as institutional reflexivity obviously include it. As noted above, Giddens seeks balance by decentering agency and foregrounding social practice. But the need for a more differentiated model of societal systems has been recognized in many applications of ST, as well as in lines of research mainly deviating from standard ST. Some object as well to Giddens's perspective on the grounds that it lacks a critical edge.

Several other lines of critique have been expressed. First, ST accepts agency unreflectively and ignores the grounding of the constitution of agency-subjectivity in social structures. Second, emphasis on agency implies that fundamental transformation is a matter of easy agentive choice. Third, the merger of rules and resources on which agents draw underplays the stability of material objects and their unequal distribution. Defenders depict the model of agency as a strength and deny any inattention to difficulty of fundamental change or of materiality.

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See also Critical Theory; Group and Organizational Structuration Theory; Power and Power Relations; Practical Theory; Social Interaction Theories

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STYLE, COMMUNICATOR

Communicator style refers to an individual's use of verbal and nonverbal communicative behaviors that signals the extent to which a message should be interpreted seriously or lightly, taken literally or figuratively, viewed as entertaining or enlightening, or considered to be confirming or disconfirming. Heavily influenced by theoretical work completed in the fields of interpersonal communication and psychology, Robert Norton proposed that communicator style focuses on the relational component of a message by centering on how an individual communicates any given message rather than what an individual communicates in the message.

Considered to be a pervasive form of self-presentation, communicator style is comprised of 10 dependent attributes and one independent attribute that are manifested through verbal and nonverbal communicative behaviors. Selecting from among these 11 attributes, individuals intentionally develop an observable communicator style that guides their behavior within and across communication contexts. This communicator style, which represents a cluster of several predominant attributes, becomes associated with an individual and provides a form through which message content not only is interpreted, but also establishes boundaries for how message content should not be interpreted. As such, it is impossible for individuals to not possess a unique and personable yet habitual style of communicating that creates expectations for how they will communicate in any given context as well as expectations for how other individuals will respond characteristically to a message sent by these individuals.

The 10 dependent attributes are dominant, dramatic, contentious, animated, impression leaving, relaxed, attentive, open, friendly, and precise; the one independent attribute is communicator image. Although each attribute is readily identifiable by a set of verbal and nonverbal behaviors, it is important to consider that the same behaviors (e.g., speaking loudly and excitedly, gesturing wildly) can exemplify more than one attribute (e.g., both dominant and animated). Dominant communicators take charge of a situation by talking louder, longer, and more frequently than others. Dramatic communicators use picturesque language and stylistic devices (e.g., exaggerations, voice, rhythm, stories)

to underscore content. Contentious individuals disagree with others and may get somewhat confrontational, hostile, quarrelsome, or belligerent. Animated communicators use eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, body movements, and posture to exaggerate content. Impression-leaving communicators have a memorable style that makes an impact on their relational partners. Relaxed communicators are poised, anxiety-free, and remain calm and at ease when engaged in interactions with others. Attentive communicators express an interest in listening to others. They offer feedback, encouragement, and empathy. Open communicators are extroverted, unreserved, and straightforward. They do not have problems directly communicating their feelings, beliefs, thoughts, or emotions. Friendly people recognize others in a positive way and generally are considered to be kind and caring. Precise communicators try to be strictly accurate, using well-defined arguments and specific proof or evidence to clarify their positions. Communicator image refers to the assessment individuals make of their own communicative ability in comparison to the communicative abilities of others.

Even though these attributes can be used successfully across a variety of communication contexts, the attributes can be combined in any manner, suggesting that some combinations or clusters of attributes are more desirable or are more effective than other combinations or clusters in a particular communication context, with particular people, or across time. Moreover, different communicator styles are associated with different relational goals, which suggest that some communicator styles will be more successful than other styles in any particular context. One context in which this is evident and which has received a great deal of attention from communication researchers is the college classroom. For example, researchers have found that college students prefer instructors who communicate in a relational manner (i.e., the open, attentive, friendly, and relaxed attributes) over instructors who communicate in an authoritative manner (i.e., the dominant, contentious, and precise attributes); better instructors are rated as being more dramatic, relaxed, open, impression leaving, and friendly than worse instructors; and students report greater amounts of affective, behavioral, and cognitive learning when their instructors are friendly, relaxed, and impression leaving.

Other contexts that have received considerable attention include the organizational and the health care communication contexts. Within the organizational context, one avenue researchers have taken is the exploration of the role that an employee's affirming style (i.e., a combination of the attentive, friendly, and relaxed attributes) plays in superior-subordinate communication. Not only do subordinates prefer that their superiors use an affirming communicator style, but also they are more likely to report higher levels of satisfaction and commitment when their superiors are perceived to use the affirming communicator style. Superiors' use of an affirming communicator style also influences how subordinates respond to superiors' use of influence and compliance-gaining tactics. Within the health care context, researchers have found that the communicator style utilized by physicians and nurses affects the extent to which patients comply with their orders and are satisfied with their interaction and quality of care. Although these findings represent just a few of the vast number of investigations conducted to date on the effects of communicator style across communication contexts, these findings reiterate the point that the effectiveness of an individual's communicator style may be dependent on the particular communication context.

Another area of research has centered on establishing a link between communicator style and both personality and communicative traits. Among the personality traits studied are extraversion, psychoticism, and neuroticism; some communicative traits include listening styles, verbal aggressiveness, interaction involvement, communication competence, communication apprehension, and receiver apprehension. More recent research has taken a communibiological approach to communicator style, indicating that communicator style, specifically the open, relaxed, and friendly attributes, is related to an individual's brain structure and differences in hemispheric (i.e., left brain, right brain) development, modularity, and dominance.

Other variations of communicator style include social style and sociocommunicative style. Unlike communicator style that is assessed through individuals' self-reports of their own communicative behavior, social style and sociocommunicative style are assessed through other reports of an individual's use of specific communicative behaviors. Social style usually is based on consensus judgments of

multiple observers of an individual's perceived levels of assertive, responsive, and versatile communicative behaviors whereas sociocommunicative style is based on judgments of assertive and responsive communicative behaviors.

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See also Communibiology; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Trait Theory

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SUBLIMINAL COMMUNICATION

Subliminal communication concerns messages presented at very low signal levels, below the level of a preestablished threshold, or limen. This entry defines subliminal and considers measurement issues in its possible effects.

Defining Subliminal

The term subliminal originates in psychophysics where a limen is the threshold of a physiological or psychological response, the point at which stimuli in a given channel can be perceived. It separates conditions producing an effect from conditions that do not produce an effect. Subliminal refers to stimuli presented at an intensity below the limen.

Individual Limens

Limens can be measured in several ways. One is to find the level of intensity at which an individual no longer reports perceiving a stimulus. This might involve gradually lowering the intensity of a light. Each individual is measured separately. This method

creates a different limen for each individual and is seldom used to determine actual limens.

Group Limens

In order to avoid the problems of individual measurement a stimulus may be presented repeatedly to, say, 100 individuals. As the intensity is reduced some in this group will not report perceiving it, while others will have sufficient visual acuity to detect it. The limen is commonly defined as the 50% level within the group measured, the level of intensity where half of the individuals viewing the stimulus no longer report seeing it. Participants in this group usually are not employed in later experiments that use the liminal information obtained from them. Limens can be defined in other ways, such as the 0% level, the point below which no one reports seeing the stimulus. In public discussions of subliminal communication, this 0% level is often mistakenly assumed to be the limen. There is nothing mysterious about the ability to perceive something that half of the tested population can detect.

Theory of Subliminal Techniques

Peripheral receptors detect stimuli prior to their recognition by the central cortex. The receptors can react to low-level presentations, sometimes without conscious recognition. Some authors presume that effects produced by messages presented below the limen are greater than for messages presented at consciously detectable levels of intensity. Also assumed is that evidence of an effect is not required for detectable level presentations produced by the same stimuli since normal-level presentations are presumed to be lacking in substantial effect when compared with subliminal presentations. The need to show a measurable effect for subliminal presentations is often ignored as well since its power is assumed to be obvious without demonstration.

Interest in Subliminal Messages

The concept of subliminal communication and its possible uses was first mentioned at the turn of the 20th century, but was not discussed in records of the massive propaganda campaigns of the United States and Germany in the World Wars. Articles concerning subliminal stimuli appeared in psychology journals in the 1930s. The issue came to public

awareness in the early 1950s when news reports claimed that a movie theater owner in New Jersey had increased sales of popcorn and Coca-Cola by flashing very brief messages on the screen during a movie. Motivational researcher James Vicary subsequently claimed he was behind this research, which he called subliminal projection, later admitting that he had not conducted any subliminal research.

Some advertising agencies began studying the effects of the technique in the mid 1950s, as did the U.S. Army's Human Factors Research Division and the Federal Communication Commission. No currently existing evidence suggesting any demonstrable effect resulted from any of these attempts. In the late 1950s one Chicago station offered to run 500 radio spots that could not be heard for \$1,000. Despite a lack of data supporting effectiveness, the technique was vilified in the press in the 1950s, attacked in the U.S. Congress, and banned among its members by the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters. As recently as 2007, European Union advertising regulations were proposed outlawing subliminal techniques.

The evidence on subliminal effects is not entirely one sided. Small but significant influences of subliminal stimuli on social cognition have been found, as well as evidence of a small subliminal influence on motor cortex activity.

Redefining Subliminal: Embeds and Primes

In his 1973 book *Subliminal Seduction*, Wilson Key used subliminal to refer to difficult to detect subimages presumably embedded within a primary image, audio, or visual. Key claimed that essentially every ad was a Rorschach test wherein sexual and other evil subimages could be found wherever one looked, but only if one knew how to look, without showing that such images had any effect. People were encouraged to believe that third parties were affected by embeds, but not the author or persons who read his books. No limens were established or employed by Key, and nothing subliminal was involved in Key's unsupported speculations.

Primes are rapid flashes of words or images used in an attempt to capture attention and to create a readiness to respond. In the rare cases where limens are established for content primes, their effect is very small and appears related to consumer need.

Priming with drink names may slightly influence drink choice, but only when the person is thirsty.

Thomas M. Steinfatt

See also Advertising Theories; Cognitive Theories; Learning and Communication; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories

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SYMBOL

See Meaning Theories; Semiotics and Semiology

SYMBOLIC CONVERGENCE THEORY

Symbolic convergence theory is a general theory of communication created by Ernest Bormann that explains the process by which content themes that emerge in rhetoric function dramatically to connect audiences with messages. It explains how worldviews are created symbolically that catch up and involve often large groups of people. Symbolic

convergence theory is based on two major assumptions. The first is that communication creates reality, which means that symbolic forms are not imitations but as Ernst Cassirer calls them, organs of reality. Symbols have the capacity to give form and law to a chaotic and disorderly sensory world and thus create reality. The second assumption is not only that symbols create reality for individuals, but also that there can be overlap among individuals' meanings, creating a shared reality or shared subjective meanings.

Symbolic convergence theory is rooted in the work of social psychologist Robert Bales and his Harvard University colleagues, who identified the process of fantasizing or dramatizing in small groups, in which imaginative themes chain out verbally and nonverbally from person to person in a group. Bormann adapted Bales' observations about fantasizing in small groups to create a method of rhetorical analysis—fantasy-theme criticism—and the theory of symbolic convergence.

The basic construct in the theory is the fantasy theme. Fantasy is an imaginative interpretation of events in the past, an envisioning of events in the future, or a depiction of present events removed in time and space from the actual events. Fantasy themes tell a story about a group's experience that creates reality for those who participate in those themes.

Fantasy themes consist of three main types: character themes, setting themes, and action themes. Character themes depict who the characters are in a drama—heroes or villains, for example. Setting themes describe the milieu or scene in which the characters are situated—a particular time and place—and the action themes describe plot lines or what the characters are doing. Bormann, for example, described how Electric Tom became an unfortunate character theme during the presidential election of 1972. It referenced Thomas Eagleton, the first Democratic vice presidential nominee chosen by George McGovern, who was forced to withdraw from the ticket when it became known that he had had electric shock therapy to battle severe depression.

Another example of a fantasy theme comes from radio station WKOR of Starkville, Mississippi, which prides itself as being one of the South's finest sounding radio stations. It was one of the first top-40-formatted stations in the state. A devoted fan of WKOR can say, "Louis King's discovery," and

every person in the WKOR family will instantly understand the reference or the character theme—Louis King—and the action theme—his realization that Starkville could have a second radio station if it were on 980 KHz and daytime only.

Together, a particular combination of fantasy themes constitutes a rhetorical vision, the worldview or the interpretation of reality that results from the combination of the various themes. A rhetorical vision is the composite drama created by the setting, character, and action fantasy themes by which the group makes sense of its world. Once shared consciousness is created in the form of a rhetorical vision, it can be propagated, with more and more conversions made possible by communication that continues to chain out into a larger public, catching up more and more people who tap into the fantasy themes of the vision.

Some rhetorical visions become fantasy types—stock scenarios that encompass particular setting, character, and action themes that are familiar to participants in the vision. In such cases, the visions are so often talked about and are so familiar that full descriptions of fantasy themes are not needed to evoke the entire rhetorical vision: The statement of just one fantasy theme in the vision may be enough of a symbolic cue for the audience to call up the entire rhetorical vision. For many Republicans, for example, simply the naming of the character theme of Ronald Reagan calls up a complex rhetorical vision of a presidential administration characterized by black-and-white thinking, the rightness of America, government as the culprit, and a particular economic theory. Nothing else besides the name of Ronald Reagan is needed to trigger this rhetorical vision because of the familiarity of the vision to those who participate in it.

John F. Cragan and Donald C. Shields applied symbolic convergence theory and the fantasy-theme method of rhetorical analysis to a variety of communication contexts. They used the theory to analyze speeches, to analyze and create messages for political campaigns, and to conduct marketing research and to develop marketing campaigns. Their basic method in these various applications involved focus groups in which fantasy themes were offered to see which chained out in the groups and which did not.

Because symbolic convergence theory and fantasy-theme analysis contribute to an understanding of the ways in which particular worldviews are

constructed symbolically, they contribute to an understanding of why those who participate in those worldviews act as they do. This theory and method thus reinforce the importance of symbols for creating and maintaining shared identification and a shared vision of the world.

Don Rodney Vaughan

See also Group Communication Theories; Groupthink; Narrative and Narratology; Performance Theories; Rhetorical Theory; Social Construction of Reality; Stories and Storytelling; Symbolic Interactionism

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SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Symbolic interactionism, a theory most commonly associated with George Herbert Mead, has influenced generations of scholars in a number of fields in the humanities and social sciences. This theory has been especially well received in the field of communication, however, because it places communication at the forefront of the study of human social existence. Unlike theories that assume that communication is a simple exchange of messages within preexisting social frameworks or is a transmission

that occurs between two preexisting individuals, symbolic interactionism contends that selves and communities are created, reimagined, and recreated by and through communicative processes. As a result, symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective has had a profound impact on the communication field, especially (although not solely) on qualitative, interpretive scholars in interpersonal communication. This holistic approach to communication is best understood by examining three basic topics: symbolic interaction, the relation of meaning and mind, and the nature of selfhood.

Although the origins of symbolic interactionism can be traced back to German idealism (or to the pre-Socratics), the development of this perspective was spurred by the late 19th- and early 20th-century writings of American pragmatists (and early psychologists) Charles S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. Symbolic interactionism was born when their work was applied to the study of social life by American sociologists Charles H. Cooley, W. I. Thomas, and George Herbert Mead; however, it was Mead who is credited with systematizing this perspective. Although Mead died without having written a book on the subject, his students collected, edited, and published a series of volumes of his work—most notably *Mind, Self, and Society*—and in 1937, one of them, Herbert Blumer, named the theory described within them symbolic interactionism. A number of prominent figures in communication, including Erving Goffman and Kenneth Burke, have drawn explicitly on Mead's work and on the assumptions of symbolic interactionism in their own writings. Mead's work has provided the foundation for other, specific communication theories, including the coordinated management of meaning and constructivism; it has also provided the main theoretical framework for countless studies of the role of communication in the formation of individual identity and social reality. As a result, symbolic interactionism can be described as one of the most important theoretical perspectives in the history of the field of communication.

Symbolic Interaction

Symbolic interactionism is unique in its emphasis upon the primacy of human action and interaction and in its analysis of social life; it places symbolic interaction at the heart of all human social

existence. According to this view, symbolic interaction, rather than something that is considered secondary to social formations or individual consciousness, provides the foundation for each of these. Further, symbolic interactionism rejects the stimulus-response model of human behavior prominent in many psychological and sociological theories. Human interaction, according to symbolic interactionism, does not consist of two (or more) actors whose behavior is related in a series of simple causal chains, where each actor's conduct prompts an immediate and unthinking response from the other. For a symbolic-interactionist, interaction must instead be understood as a dynamic, evolving process of mutual coordination and role taking. Each actor's conduct cannot be separated from the response of the other, or from the pattern formed by their interaction as a whole.

Mead describes this process, at its simplest level, as the conversation of gestures; Mead notes that this simplest level is most characteristic of animal interaction, as in the case of two dogs fighting, rather than the typically more complex human action. At its simplest level, an initial movement in the presence of another person or animal constitutes a gesture—it is not a complete act in itself, but an initial indication of a future action. The other individual responds to this gesture with one of its own, indicating its future path of action; this second gesture leads the first actor to respond with another gesture, and so on. What is important in this account is that each individual draws upon the other's gesture (and the future action that it portends) in the construction of its own; moreover, the other's gesture may significantly alter, or even halt, an actor's entire line of action. For a symbolic-interactionist, then, even the most basic interaction is a process of ongoing mutual orientation rather than a series of stimuli and responses.

With humans, however, Mead identifies a second, higher level of interaction: the use of significant symbols. Although human beings often respond automatically, unthinkingly, to another's gesture (as when one flinches at a stranger's unexpected touch), human interaction is transformed by the ability to construct and interpret conduct using conventional symbol systems. Human interaction, then, typically involves the significant gesture to which the other actor responds in light of the interpretation that he or she gives to it by drawing on

his or her knowledge of conventional symbols and their associated (and multiple) meanings. An actor's significant gesture presents the other with the need to choose from a set of possible meanings—that is, determine which future action will likely follow from that gesture. Mead thereby characterizes human interaction as a process of indication (the meaningful gesture performed by an actor) and interpretation (the meaning attributed by another actor, the particular future action that he or she links to that gesture). It is on the basis of interpretation that the second actor constructs his or her own indication, which, again, must be interpreted by the first actor as the next moment in their ongoing coordination of activity.

According to Mead, a central characteristic of human interaction is that throughout this process of indication and interpretation, the actors are engaged in a continual process of role taking. An actor's indication necessarily foreshadows both the actor's own future conduct as well as the response anticipated from the other; the indication thereby suggests the actor's view of the enterprise, or larger social action, in which the two are engaged. An indication, then, requires that the actor take the role of his or her interlocutor in order to see the situation and the gesture from that other's perspective. Similarly, in order to interpret the indication, the other must take the perspective of the first actor in order to determine the full significance of the initial gesture. This necessary role taking distinguishes human interaction from the simpler conversation of gestures characteristic of animals—and also suggests the delicate processes of coordination that underlie the act of communication and the communal, symbolic production of social reality. For Mead, all of social life is built from these interactional materials—from the use of significant symbols to produce a shared response in both actors.

The Relation of Meaning and Mind

Since symbolic interactionism begins its account of the social world with interaction, it offers a distinctive account of the origin of meaning. In sharp contrast to theories that locate the origin of meaning in the human mind or in the essence of objects, symbolic interactionism asserts that meanings arise in and through the processes of social interaction described above. As a result, symbolic-interactionists

believe that the meaning of something cannot be determined outside of a particular instance of symbolic interaction. In a sense, then, symbolic interaction produces the objects toward which it is directed, the environment or world to which it responds.

One implication of this statement is that actors never exist in a meaningless environment, or confront an object devoid of meaning. This is because the meaning of an object is nothing more (or less) than an actor's anticipated future conduct toward, or in relation to, that object. A meaning is the behavioral relationship that an actor has with an object, an implicit statement of how that actor is prepared to handle it; an unfamiliar object, then, is simply one that the actor cannot easily draw into a pattern of activity (this is what we mean by a meaningless object, or one the actor is having a hard time interpreting). Moreover, Mead argues that this definition of meaning applies to things as well as persons, abstract concepts as well as concrete exemplars, and static entities as well as dynamic processes.

Another implication of this statement is that meanings are not strictly private, but are instead social products; since social interaction is the origin of meaning, meanings cannot be attributed to individual psychic processes. Individual actors have to be taught the appropriate and relevant sets of meanings useful for their navigation of the environment—which occurs both through the learning of a language and through specific interactions with other social actors (who pass on socially approved meanings for objects). Just as in the above discussion of social interaction, an actor learns what an object means by a process of role taking, assuming the perspective of another actor with regard to that object. This social process is at the heart of questions of meaning; social interaction is the means for the creation, negotiation, and recreation of the objects that constitute the social world.

The final conclusion to draw from this account of meaning is that, for symbolic interactionism, mind is also not a strictly individual, psychic phenomenon. Mind, instead, is an activity that is social in origin; it is better, then, to speak of *mind-ing* (verb) rather than mind (noun). When an actor's smooth, unreflective conduct is interrupted, whether through an obstacle or recalcitrant other, the actor is forced to pause and engage in interpretive action. The actor envisions alternate pathways of action and debates which will best bring about

the desired future. Not only is this process of minding a reflection of the actor's dependence upon others—since social interaction provided the actor the store of meanings that his or her minding draws upon—but also of the actor's socialization into a particular language since Mead describes this process as an internal conversation. This inner debate reflects also the symbolic-interactionist account of the nature of selfhood or identity.

The Nature of Selfhood

For symbolic interactionism, selves separate human beings from other creatures; although, like animals, humans engage in the embodied conversation of gestures, they are uniquely able to reflect upon their own activity. Human beings are therefore characterized by both consciousness and self-consciousness—the ability to make oneself into an object of reflection. For this reason, symbolic interactionists identify two forms of human selfhood: the self-as-process and the self-as-object. Although human beings are born with the former, the latter emerges only within and through social interaction and the socialization into a particular language.

In some respects, the self-as-object is no different than any other object in the actor's world. It can never be purely individual since its existence is dependent upon the application of significant symbols to the actor's own activity, which first occurs in interaction with significant others—those who first tell the actor who he or she is. In another sense, though, it is a unique object, since it requires the actor to divide him- or herself, to step outside of his or her own activity, and observe it as if from the outside; it is for this reason that Cooley referred to the self-as-object as the looking-glass self. Cooley's term emphasizes the process of role taking central to the constitution of the self-as-object. Mead examines the socializing processes that produce this uniquely human phenomenon and traces three steps in the development of the self: play, game, and the generalized other.

The most rudimentary form of self appears, quite literally, in childhood play; the child takes on a particular role and acts toward self as an object, using the perspective of a particular other person. This stage is succeeded by the more organized form of role taking represented by games, which require the child to take the perspective of multiple

others based on his or her own action in relation to them and to grasp the interrelation of role and activity in a particular, organized context. The final stage is reached when the child is able to take the perspective of multiple, though abstract, others on his or her own activity; at this point, the child is able to reflect upon how he or she is viewed by the anonymous they of society.

At this point, the child has, for all practical purposes, achieved a mature, adult self. The child has a robust self-as-object (or, for Mead, a *me*) to complement his or her self-as-process (Mead's *I*). It is in the relationship between these two facets of selfhood that the drama of social life unfolds. The *I* can be checked, even redirected, by the socially constituted *I*; the *I* reacts to, and is not determined by, the outlines suggested by the *me*. It is this tension—between indication and interpretation, conformity and spontaneity, individual performance and social expectation—that is negotiated in the communicative efforts of human beings as they constitute and reconstitute their shared social worlds.

Bryan Crable

See also Constitutive View of Communication; Constructivism; Coordinated Management of Meaning; Language and Communication; Meaning Theories; Pragmatics; Semiotics and Semiology; Social Construction of Reality; Social Interaction Theories

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SYMBOLIC-INTERPRETIVE PERSPECTIVE ON GROUPS

The symbolic-interpretive (S-I) perspective on groups provides a coherent explanation of symbol

use in groups. Although relatively new, this perspective emerges from a long line of interpretive scholarship on symbol usage and sense-making. This perspective, then, is grounded in and synthesizes and applies to groups scholarship based on ethnomethodology, hermeneutics, the naturalistic paradigm, phenomenology, social constructionism, symbolic interactionism, and related philosophies. This perspective also incorporates tenets of other group communication theories, such as the bona fide group perspective, dialectical perspective, rhetorical perspective, symbolic convergence theory, and structuration theory. As this entry shows, the S-I perspective explicates how group members use symbols (words, objects, or actions that stand for or represent something else) and the effects of symbol usage on group processes and outcomes, including how groups themselves are products of members' symbolic activities.

The S-I perspective starts with the premise that symbolic activity is the primary social process that creates a group. This symbolic-constitutive focus means that a group is a significant, socially constructed symbol emerging from interactants' communicative behavior rather than an objective entity existing prior to or apart from that interaction. This constitutive process involves interactants symbolically constructing boundaries that create a meaningful relationship among what are now perceived to be fellow group members and that separate the group from other groups.

Expanding on this constitutive view of communication in creating groupness, the S-I perspective explicates the nature, practices, and consequences of using symbols in groups. Specifically, the symbolic-management focus explores three symbolic activities in groups: symbolic predispositions, practices, and processes and products.

Symbolic predispositions are people's tendencies toward symbolic behavior in groups, including symbolic behavior to which they are predisposed (e.g., members' communication traits, such as argumentativeness, and their beliefs about group communicative practices, such as taking turns speaking) and ways they interpret themselves and others based on symbols they believe are meaningful (e.g., dress, ethnicity, gender, and race). For instance, research shows that people predisposed to high communication apprehension talk less in groups and are perceived as less credible compared to those with lower levels. Symbolic predispositions,

thus, are symbolic resources that people bring to groups and draw on in their interactions with other members.

Symbolic practices are the specific forms of verbal and nonverbal communication that group members use to interact. For instance, members often create a significant symbol for their group (e.g., Boston Celtics); employ metaphors to describe (conceptually and emotionally) it (e.g., family, even though members are not related by birth, marriage, or adoption, and do not live together and function as a single household); tell stories about the group that, among other things, socialize new members; and employ rituals (e.g., roll call) that become standard ways the group operates. As an example, research shows that group members often tell stories (“Remember when our group...”) and employ rituals (hold a wake) after the loss of a member, symbolic practices that not only help group members to remember that member but also to re-member as a group.

As members engage in symbolic practices, they create symbolic processes and products—both macrolevel group dynamics (e.g., establishing boundaries and developing a culture) and microlevel group outcomes (e.g., creating mission statements and making decisions). In line with structuration theory, which views group structures and practices as interdependent, and in contrast to system theory, where group processes (throughputs) are a distinct set of variables that lead to group products (outputs), symbolic processes and products are explicitly linked together in the S-I perspective to emphasize their recursive and reflexive relationship. For instance, research shows that group development is both a process and a product that results from and influences group symbolic activity (e.g., using *we* rather than *I* statements both creates a new development stage and leads to increased use of such statements).

Symbolic predispositions, practices, and processes and products overlap and influence one another. Members’ argumentative predispositions, for instance, may result in much disagreement being expressed, creating a group culture that promotes conflict and makes problem solving difficult—symbolic practices and processes and products that, in turn, reinforce members’ argumentative predispositions.

In-line with the bona fide group perspective, which views groups as having permeable boundaries

and being interdependent with their relevant contexts, group symbolic predispositions, practices, and processes and products are influenced by, and potentially influence, the multiple contexts in which groups are embedded. For instance, symbolic activity within an organizational team potentially is influenced by and influences other groups in which members simultaneously participate, the organization in which that team works, and interactions of that team and its members with other people in that and other organizations. Moreover, in line with the symbolic-constitutive focus of the S-I perspective, the relevance of any particular context is not a given; group members create and recreate relevance through their symbolic activity. For instance, although a top management team perhaps should consider the local community when making decisions, that external context becomes relevant only if members talk about the community when making a decision.

Because of the emphasis on the influence of saliently constructed contexts on the symbolic activity that occurs in groups, research that informs or is conducted from an S-I perspective privileges the study of bona fide groups in their natural context coping with real-life issues rather than artificially created groups (e.g., zero-history laboratory groups comprised of students solving hypothetical tasks assigned by researchers). Moreover, although quantitative methods are helpful for understanding effects of group symbolic activity, this research tends to employ qualitative methods (e.g., participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and textual analysis) to produce rich understandings and interpretations of group members’ symbol usage.

Lawrence R. Frey

See also Bona Fide Group Theory; Constitutive View of Communication; Group and Organizational Structuration Theory; Group Communication Theories; Sense-Making; Structuration Theory; Symbolic Convergence Theory; Symbolic Interactionism; System Theory

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SYSTEM THEORY

A system is an integrated set of interacting variables that together create a larger pattern or whole. A family is a good example. Families are only possible by virtue of interactions among members, which results in the family having its own unique character. System theory is a broad approach that applies this idea to any number of natural, social, and personal phenomena, including cognition, interpersonal relationships, social groups, organizations and institutions, biological organisms, and the natural environment. Providing a common way of thinking about complex phenomena, system theory has had a major impact on many fields, including communication. In fact, Robert Craig has identified system thinking as one of seven major traditions of communication theory.

System theory has its origins in 19th-century European thought dealing with process, change, and evolution, particularly the work of Geog Hegel, Charles Darwin, and Karl Marx. Although Western versions of system theory can be traced to these roots, Eastern thought has long espoused the interconnectedness of all things and in itself is consistent with much system thinking. Later, in the 20th-century, system theory began to gel formally with the advent of cybernetics and information theory in the 1940s.

Frustrated by the lack of a common vocabulary by which various fields could communicate, Biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy looked to system theory to provide a set of concepts that might unify the sciences. Referring to his approach as general system (GST), von Bertalanffy saw system principles as a way to bridge disciplines. He aimed to create a theory, not of specific phenomena, but general principles that apply to everything. The goal was to integrate knowledge into a universal set of ideas. Although the sciences never reached the level of integration hoped for by advocates of GST, system theory does provide a common

vocabulary and way of thinking that allows scientists and scholars from many fields to recognize similar relationships across the disciplines. This entry explains systems, explores cybernetics as one important aspect of systems, and identifies some examples of communication theories that take a systems point of view. GST did much to popularize system thinking in the latter half of the 20th century.

Explaining Systems

All systems have four aspects—objects, attributes, internal relationships, and an environment. The objects are the parts or elements of a system. The attributes are the characteristics of these objects as well as those of the system as a whole. Internal relationships consist of patterns of interaction among the objects, and the environment is the system of influences that act on or impact the system in some way. A family, for example, consists of individuals (objects) with various levels of knowledge, personalities, experience, and often shared DNA (attributes) who communicate with one another in patterned ways (internal relationships). In addition, the family exists within the larger environment of society. Systems can be distinguished by three qualities—wholeness and interdependence, hierarchy, and self-regulation and control.

Wholeness and Interdependence

The weight of a box of stones is the sum of the weights of all of the stones plus the weight of the box. This is not a system because there is no interaction among the stones that creates something more than the sum of weights. An environmental system, in contrast, is a complex combination of forces that are caused by interaction among many elements, creating a larger ecology. Thus, a system cannot be properly understood by looking at the parts alone. One must look instead at the overall interaction effect among the parts. A human system such as an organization achieves its unique character through the interaction patterns among persons and groups. This quality of systems makes the parts interdependent: They affect one another and create something together that no one part could construct alone.

Among the many types of interactions that can occur within a system, mutual causation offers a

good example. Here, two parts respond mutually to one another's behavior. Each elicits a response from the other. In a weather front, for example, low pressure interacts with a moist air mass in such a way that the moisture accumulates and the pressure drops, causing wind and rain. In a human relationship—a marriage, for example—two people can experience a pattern of withdrawing and nagging. One keeps trying to get the other to do more housework (nagging), but in response, the other withdraws. As one withdraws, the other nags, which just brings about more withdrawal. This pattern comes to define the relationship between these two individuals.

Hierarchy

Systems are always part of other systems; they are embedded in an environment of interacting forces. Thus hierarchy (systems-within-systems) is a necessary quality of a systems point of view. Another way of looking at hierarchy is that systems are arranged in levels of increasing complexity. Smaller systems are often referred to as subsystems and larger ones as suprasystems. Two coworkers constitute a small subsystem of a department, which is a subsystem of the organization, which is a subsystem of a larger environment of systems (the suprasystem). Thus, there is no necessary boundary to a system, and human observers set the boundary wherever it is useful for purposes of observation. Some communication researchers, for example, set the boundary of the system at the level of relationships, some at the level of groups, some at the level of organizations, and some at the level of community and culture. Any researcher who takes a system view, however, must acknowledge and look at the influences that pass back and forth between the system of interest—a small group, say—and its subsystems and suprasystems.

Self-Regulation and Control

Interaction patterns in a system provide forces that exert influence on the system as a whole. Because the system itself is defined by these forces, systems are said to possess self-regulation, meaning that they have mechanisms within them to control what the system does. Through networks and feedback loops, the system can head toward a particular goal—manufacturing cars, for example,

in the case of an organization, or meeting mutual needs in the case of a relationship—which means that it has both consistency and adaptability. The system is set up to ensure that goals get met, but it must also show adaptability and change, sometimes adding new goals in order to survive (such as shifting from large cars to small ones, depending upon the demands of the marketplace).

Systems not only reside in an environment of other systems, but they interact with forces within the environment. Indeed, some level of self-regulation is necessary to maintain order in a larger environment of forces that could propel the system out of control. The system must maintain certain kinds of interactions that allow it to use the environment in a productive way. Systems must be able to take inputs from the environment and release outputs to the environment. Further, the system must be able to process or transform inputs into outputs in an orderly way that enables it to achieve its goals, which thereby influences the larger system in a circular way. Living systems, sometimes called open systems, are kept alive by this input-process-output cycle. A closed system, in contrast, is unable to sustain itself because it is not able to take in needed resources to renew itself. In time, a closed system will disintegrate from its own uncontrolled internal energy. This really means that it will move toward disorder, or entropy, as predicted by the second law of thermodynamics.

What distinguishes an open from a closed system is the ability for the system to maintain homeostasis, or balance. To survive, a system must maintain a certain steady state. When the room temperature rises, the thermostat turns off the heater, and the room temperature drops. When the room temperature gets too low, the thermostat turns the heater on, and the heat rises. This process, made possible by interaction among the parts of the system along with inputs and outputs, is necessary to keep the room comfortable.

At the same time, the system must be adaptable and change over time in an orderly way. Self-regulation not only means balance, but also controlled change. A complex living system, such as an organism or organization will go through periods of moving from a steady state through a period of adaptation to a new state. The study of this self-regulation function is known as cybernetics, to which we now turn.

Cybernetics

Classical Cybernetics

Cybernetics, the study of self-regulation and control in systems, came to the fore in 1954 with the publication of Norbert Wiener's classic *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society*. Cybernetics is so important that it has become virtually synonymous with system theory. In fact, Robert Craig referred to system thinking as the cybernetic tradition in communication theory.

Because systems have self-regulation mechanisms, they can be thought of as purposeful. The thermostat-heater system has one goal, to keep the room comfortable. General Motors will make automobiles and ensures that this will happen. Cybernetics looks at how systems gauge their outputs and adjust internal processes either to stay on an even course or change as needed within the environment.

Purposeful behavior within a system always requires at least one feedback loop. In the very simple systems of a thermostat and heater, the loop connects a thermometer and a switch. More complex systems may require a number of loops within a network of interactions. Further, cybernetic mechanisms may be nonpredictive, just measuring output and adjusting input, or they may be predictive, in which input is gauged to an anticipated output. This would be the case, for example, when a quarterback gauges the direction and speed of the receiver and sets the football into a trajectory that will arrive just as the receiver reaches a particular spot.

Cybernetic systems must include a control process that enables the system to make necessary adjustments. A set of criteria or control guidelines govern how and when the system responds to certain stimuli. In general, responses are either positive, which means a continuation or even acceleration of a certain action, or negative, meaning that the system changes or decelerates an action. Positive feedback, then, stimulates continuation of a response, while negative feedback stimulates a shift or change in response. Positive feedback in human interaction might include smiling and nodding, which means that the speaker is on the right track and should continue along the same path; frowning and signs of disapproval may be a form of negative feedback suggesting that the speaker needs to adjust or change in some way.

Complex systems include both positive and negative feedback loops. Certain variables are negatively correlated, meaning that when one increases, the other decreases, and other variables are positively correlated, meaning that they increase or decrease together. If consumption and production are positively correlated in an economic system, they could rise together and result in an inflationary cycle. However, a negative correlation between cost and spending could compensate for this, resulting in a balanced or steady state. In fact, the economy is a very complex system with many feedback loops that sometimes balance and sometimes go out of balance, which can lead to growth, decline, inflation, deflation, recession, and so on.

Second-Order Cybernetics

Classical cybernetics, and system theory itself, depicts systems as things that can be observed from the outside. One could, for example, look at the feedback loops within a system and see how they influence the direction a system takes. However, once an observer looks at a system, he or she becomes part of that system because looking itself influences what is happening. This view, known as second-order cybernetics, takes system theory into a new and exciting direction.

Mostly associated with Heinz von Foerster and his colleagues, second-order cybernetics maintains that there is a cybernetic loop between observer and observed. The observer influences the system and the system influences the observer. Because everything is systemic, knowledge itself is always constructed in this cybernetic loop between the knower and the known. The categories and methods used to observe shape what is seen, and once viewed, the observed phenomenon shapes the categories and methods of observation. As a result, theorists and researchers are never separate and outside of the systems they purport to explain.

This strange-sounding idea has been accepted in physics for many decades, especially in the Copenhagen School. Physicists learned almost from the beginning of their observations of the quantum world that sending light into a field to observe particles acted directly on those particles, influencing the behavior of the particles. Many complex experiments have been invented to try to get around this

basic problem, but the final conclusion must be—though some can still not bring themselves to believe it—that the knower and the known are forever mutually entailed.

In communication, the impact of the researcher on the system is easier to see and to believe. Research by its very nature requires intervention in the form of interviews, experiments, and measurements of various types. Even if the subjects of the research are not aware that they are being observed—which is increasingly unlikely in the world of research review boards—the researcher still structures the observation by the categories used to classify what is seen. Theorists also must create categories of explanation, which in turn affect what people see when they look at the system.

System Theory in Communication

System theory has been fruitfully applied to several aspects of the communication field, and many communication theories reflect the tenets of system theory. Three levels of system theory illustrate such applications.

Relationships

Within the relational communication tradition, relationships are seen as small systems that are established, maintained, and changed over time by interaction. Anthropologist Gregory Bateson was probably most influential in explaining relationships this way. He and his followers pointed out that when two people are talking about a subject, they are not only addressing the subject, but are also commenting on the nature of their relationship. Every message has both content and relationship implications, so that the interaction is always more than a simple exchange of information. Instead, the interaction builds something bigger—a relational system. This relational system can embody any number of characteristics, but always these attributes are made in the interaction of the individuals in the relationship. For example, relationships almost always have a control dimension that reflects the patterns of control exhibited in the interaction. The control dimension may be one of dominance, submission, or some sort of balance.

This idea of the systemic nature of relationships was given particular impetus by the Palo Alto Group, a team of therapists led by Paul Watzlawick. In a landmark treatise titled *The Pragmatics of Human Communication*, Watzlawick and colleagues established a base for research on relationships that has now spanned several decades. Followers in this movement look not at individual traits and attributes as important but look instead at interacts, or actions and their responses, and interaction patterns to see how relationships get defined through cybernetic processes within them.

Communication Networks

Communication scholars have also been interested in larger systems in which groups link to other groups within organizations and communities. The basic idea is the same. Larger social structures like organizations and communities are comprised of and come into being because of interaction among individuals and groups. Karl Weick showed how the term organization is something of a misnomer because an organization is really an ongoing process of organizing that consists of people responding to one another's actions.

In time, people begin to cluster together into groups that have frequent communication. Linda Putnam and Cynthia Stohl refer to such groups as *bona fide* groups because they occur naturally as the result of communication. The boundaries of the group are permeable, meaning that what is defined as in the group versus out of the group is vague and always changing. Part of this permeability is the result of multiple-group membership. Because members are always part of other groups, communication passes back and forth among groups and brings them together in a larger system. This means that *bona fide* groups are always in interaction with their environments, being influenced by and influencing the larger system. Indeed, much research on group communication is based on the idea that the problems encountered by a group are created in the larger environment. The group takes inputs from the environment, processes these through discussion, and then creates solutions that impact the larger community and feed back to influence the group as well.

Thus a large organization or community is really a network consisting of groups linked through communication pathways. Peter Monge and his colleagues created models in which system structure can be depicted in this way, showing how the frequency of communication between individuals and among groups creates clusters that are more or less central to the overall organization. Groups also cluster according to shared information, beliefs, values, and behavior. Lawrence Kincaid has pointed out that through cybernetic mechanisms, groups that communicate more frequently converge into a common set of ideas, while those that communicate less frequently diverge and become quite different. Even cultural differences can be explained in this way.

Conclusion

Because communication always consists of a complex set of interactions, many communication theories have taken naturally to system theory. It is appealing because it can be used to understand narrow situations as well as very broad ones and provides a set of ideas for connecting these. Most scholars in communication today would agree that the power of system theory lies in its ability to highlight interrelationships and interaction over

individual traits and attributes. As a result, it has been helpful in exploring and depicting communication as a process rather than a thing.

Stephen W. Littlejohn

See also Bona Fide Group Theory; Convergence Theory; Cybernetics; Group Communication Theories; Organizational Communication Theories; Organizing, Process of; Palo Alto Group; Relational Communication Theory; Traditions of Communication Theory

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T

TAOIST COMMUNICATION THEORY

One of the two great philosophical traditions that originated in China, Taoism (also known as Daoism) is both the opposite of and complementary to the other indigenous philosophical tradition, orthodox Confucianism. Whereas Confucius (6th–5th century BC) and Mencius (4th–3rd century BC), one of the foremost Confucian thinkers, promoted moral cultivation and a hierarchical system of human relations as solutions to the social chaos of their times, the founders of Taoism, the mythical Laozi (dated as early as 6th century BC) and Zhuangzi (4th century BC), viewed such moral and social efforts as artificial constraints on the very nature of human beings and the Tao (Way) of the universe. The Tao was believed to be the force that operated to keep the world in harmony. Laozi and Zhuangzi advocated the idea of wuwei (effortless action), which has led to Taoism being associated with the themes of naturalness, spontaneity, relatedness, pluralism, anarchism, and laissez-faire government. The major works of Taoism, especially Laozi's *Daode Jing* and Zhuangzi's *Zhuangzi*, teach the functions and manifestations of the Tao.

This entry focuses on Taoist theory and methods of communicating the Tao. Discussion of Taoist communication theory brings to mind a familiar paradox of Taoism: The Way that can be told of is not the constant Way. The name that can be named is not the constant name. If the Taoist masters could convey the Tao to their audiences,

then they were not communicating the real Tao. In a similar fashion, we are not reviewing the real communication either. This predicament originates from the conception of the Tao as a fluid whole. When we try to distinguish the fluid whole from other things and fix this distinction with the term Tao, we draw away from the fluid whole rather than toward it.

Interestingly, the Taoist masters share with Plato a critical view of the rhetorical practices of their day, but on the basis of different ontological and epistemological concerns. In the *Republic*, Plato compares three levels of a bed, or any object: the perfect or ideal form of a bed, the actual bed, and the picture of the actual bed. The actual bed varies according to the knowledge and will of the carpenter who produces it. It is therefore short of perfection. According to Plato, only the clear thought of a philosopher and his or her proper discourse can transcend the actual world and reach the world of ideal forms. In *Zhuangzi*, there is also a carpenter who tells Duke Huan that he cannot put into words his ability to chisel wood. However, in contrast to the *Republic*, in *Zhuangzi* the story of the carpenter is told to show the limitations of language, rather than its transcendental force.

For the Taoist, then, rhetoric can be very misleading, especially if a rhetor employs beautiful expressions and plausible reasons in the expression of that which is actually subjective or biased. Such rhetoric leads further away from the incommunicable Tao. From the point of view of the Tao, things are neither noble nor mean. Chiseling wood, for instance, is not nobler than carving an ox, or

vice versa. Both require adaptation to a particular course of the Tao. The current practice of rhetoric, however, distinguishes things in terms of meanings and values that are themselves arbitrarily determined. A Confucian speaker, for example, first formulates the Tao as a set of ethical codes to be used for discrimination between that which is noble and that which is mean, or right and wrong. The speaker, then, according to the Taoist, packages his or her argument for moral division and discrimination with flowery and hollow expressions. Such a speaker is comparable to the painter in Plato's *Republic* who paints a bed made by a carpenter. According to Plato, the painting is itself two steps away from truth.

Although the Taoist maintains that the Tao cannot be talked about directly, indirect and implicit reference to the Tao can be made. It is in the dimension of indirect expression that Taoist theory and the Taoist practice of communication can be discussed. What will the Taoist do if he or she needs to use more words to talk about the Tao than a carpenter needs to talk about chiseling wood? The Taoist will use stories, metaphors, maxims, and other means of indirect expression. Laozi refers to the ineffable Tao as water, wind, and air, in addition to way. Although the carpenter cannot pass on his knack to his son verbally, Zhuangzi conveys the profundity and charm of the magical course of wood chiseling through his subtle and vivid storytelling, implying that the carpenter does indeed know the Tao of wood chiseling very well.

The Taoist also develops a mode of oxymoronic expression to deal with the fluid and ever-changing Tao. Taoist writings abound in expressions such as, "The way out into the light often looks dark," "The way that goes ahead often looks as if it goes back," and "The way that is least hilly often looks as if it goes up and down." These paradoxes are a deliberate reaction to the efforts of other philosophical schools to describe the Tao in definite terms. The Tao cannot be described definitely and directly. Each description of the Tao is bound to be one-sided and thus should be balanced by the other side. The purpose of paradoxical and oxymoronic expression is not simply to present contradictory observations, but to provide an equilibratory view of the Tao.

Most reflective of the unique Taoist approach to communication and persuasion is the inclination to

take a meek and humble position in communication and to use submission as a means to persuade. The basis of this rather unusual choice, again, has to be understood in light of the dialectical nature of the Tao. From the dialectical, developmental point of view, whatever is meek, humble, soft, inactive, subordinate, and nothing will become strong, mighty, hard, active, superior, and something, and in due course will become meek, humble, soft, inactive, subordinate, and nothing again. Viewed from this perspective, the Tao is always in favor of the meek, the humble, the soft, the inactive, the subordinate, and the nothing.

Taoist masters thus present an alternative to the world of contention and competition—that is, a speaker uses modest and restrained gestures, speaks in a nonassertive and nonargumentative style, and keeps silent as much as possible. This approach can affect the strong in various ways. The seeming incompetence of a speaker can provoke sympathy from an audience and even disarm the speaker's interlocutor, or opponent. However, a more positive and more complete understanding of this approach is required if it is not to be seen as the little person's survival strategy or the unethical art of camouflage. In Taoism, being meek and humble means emptying one's heart, softening one's will, and subordinating one's egoistic feelings to open oneself to the outside world; to do so implies that the speaker has laid aside the established standards of good and bad and is free of the grip of all socially recognized conventions and currents of thought. It also suggests that the speaker is willing to serve the well-being of one's listeners and to accommodate alternate viewpoints.

Taoism has much to offer the Western traditions of communication and rhetoric, which have taught us to be strong, assertive, and defensive in communication and argumentation. In fact, much of the explicit and implicit Taoist counsel is receiving increasing attention in the West. After all, it is difficult not to agree with the Taoist that the best communication and persuasion delivers a message in such a manner that it appears to be plain and self-evident and hence will be accepted without difficulty, whether or not we would like to call it, in Taoist terms, communication without communication or persuasion without persuasion.

Xiaosui Xiao

See also Asian Communication Theory; Confucian Communication Theory

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TECHNOLOGY OF COMMUNICATION

See Computer Mediated Communication; New Media Theory

THEORY

A theory is a unified, or coherent, body of propositions that provide a philosophically consistent picture of a subject. Indeed, our knowledge of communication is largely packaged into theories of various types. This entry explores the nature of theory and its key components—concepts and explanations. Variations on theory in the social sciences are also addressed.

Theories are human constructions designed to capture what theorists believe the order of the subject matter to be. Although natural scientists are clear about their quest for theories that reflect underlying structure, social scientists are divided on whether theories can reflect reality or whether theories actually constitute it. Although theory is sometimes contrasted with fact, a theory is more

commonly understood as a way of packaging facts or experience. In physics, the parent of all natural sciences, any codified explanation of physical phenomena is considered a theory, even when its truth seems beyond doubt.

At a given time in certain fields, a prevailing theory is taken as true. Examples are relativity theory in physics and evolutionary theory in biology. The predominant theory changes incrementally as corrections are made and more detail added. From time to time in such fields, the normal view is overturned by a scientific revolution that transforms what is believed to be true. In the social sciences, many schools of thought make this ideal of a single normal theory unlikely, as different scholarly communities adopt different visions of what is normal or what constitutes a revolution in theory.

Theories should be generalizable in some way. They must reduce complex experience into a manageable set of concepts and propositions. Parsimony—the use of the simplest explanatory logic—is widely accepted as a hallmark of good theory. Thus a theory is never intended to reflect the complexity of all experience, but to distill this into a system of knowledge claims explained by a small number of properties. Investigators frequently search for a unifying concept that connects things that appear quite different on the surface. In physics, this is called the search for the theory of everything, the ultimate underlying explanation. This is a quest that many believe to be futile in human social life. However, as a social theory begins to resemble natural science—as is the case in genetic, neurological, and chemical approaches—universal explanations become less elusive.

The most basic component of a theory is its concepts. A concept is a category or class of objects, events, situations, or processes designated by a term. A concept encompasses a group of things that share one or more attributes. Concepts are frequently organized into a taxonomy of types. Although a simple taxonomy, or organized list of concepts, may be considered a theory, most scholars would say that this is only a step toward a true theory, which must include some explanatory mechanism or set of propositions that explain how concepts are related to one another.

The second component, then, is explanations that tie observed phenomena together in some kind of system beyond mere description. In biology, for

example, living things are organized into a giant taxonomy of types, including many levels of subtypes (phylum, genus, species, etc.). Underlying this elaborate taxonomy, however, is a set of ideas that explains how species evolve and relate to one another genetically, and this forms the basis of similarities and differences in the living world. As another example, personality theories often identify types or traits, but should not stop at this point. They should instead provide some kind of explanatory connection between types and outcomes such as behavior or input variables such as heredity or learning.

In the natural sciences, explanations are usually causal. Events that occur previously in time are shown to determine states or events that occur later in time. Causality is a preferred explanation in many fields because it permits prediction, which is taken as the ultimate test for a theory's validity. When a causal connection is established through prediction beyond reasonable doubt, it assumes the status of a law. A covering law is an accepted causal connection across a wide spectrum of events. Theories that rely on covering laws and causal explanation are nomothetic, or general across all cases, rather than idiographic, or specific to particular ones.

Causal explanations abound in the social sciences, but in a sharp departure from the norms of natural science, many social theories rely on practical explanations in which individuals are shown to make choices to achieve goals. Using practical explanations, practical theories offer principles for making decisions about the effectiveness and appropriateness of various actions in social situations.

Most social science disciplines such as communication consist of numerous communities of scholars that have rather different philosophical approaches to the subject of theory. One example is the distinction among interpretive, critical, and positivist approaches found in several social-science fields. The type and function of theory within these schools of thought can vary significantly along several dimensions. For example, some scholars adhere to a strictly scientific, discovery-oriented epistemology, or way of knowing, while others are more constructionist in their beliefs about the role of theory. Many stake a claim on the representational ontology of theory—its assumptions about reality—while others see theory as a useful tool. For many,

a good theory is always value free, but for others it can never be and indeed, should be clear about espousing particular values.

Stephen W. Littlejohn

See also Metatheory; Philosophy of Communication; Traditions of Communication Theory

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THEORY OF REASONED ACTION

See Reasoned Action Theory

TIME

See Chronemics

TRADITIONS OF COMMUNICATION THEORY

Communication theory is a field of thought that is rich in diverse ideas, but lacks coherence. There is no universally agreed upon general theory of communication. There are, by some ways of counting,

hundreds of different communication theories. These theories not only focus on different aspects of communication (such as persuasion, media, or intercultural communication), but often they are based on incompatible metatheories—that is, conflicting assumptions about communication and even the very idea of theory. Because there is no consensus on a theory or a set of core theories, textbooks continue to define the field in various ways and cover different sets of theories. Advanced research is fragmented into different theoretical approaches with relatively little discussion about those differences.

It can be argued that the field of communication theory would be more productive if theorists working in different areas were more attentive to relevant ideas in other areas. For this purpose it is helpful to have an overview of the field that covers both the variety of approaches as well as points of debate or possible convergence among approaches. This entry provides such an overview. The following sections discuss how the field of communication theory originated, how theories of communication have developed in several distinct intellectual traditions that offer contrasting views of communication problems, and the current trends in the field.

Emergence of Communication Theory as a Field

Although some traditions of communication theory, such as rhetoric and semiotics, are much older, the term communication theory was not widely used until the 1940s, and initially it had little to do with those older theoretical traditions. The term first appeared in electrical engineering, where it referred to mathematical theories of signal coding, transmission, and processing that could be used, for example, to optimize the channel capacity of telephone lines. Despite their rather technical nature, these theories attracted widespread interest among social scientists and others who saw them as a possible basis for a new science of communication with important social applications. Two influential books that contributed to this trend were Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver's *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* and Norbert Wiener's *Cybernetics*. Words like information, noise, and feedback, which had precise technical meanings in

these theories, were borrowed by other fields and soon entered the common language, albeit with less precise meanings. The interest in these theories reflected a spreading belief, in the wake of World War II, that improvements in human communication were urgently needed to prevent war and address other social problems.

In line with that generally rising concern with communication problems, social scientific communication research was also growing rapidly in the 1940s and beginning to gain recognition as an interdisciplinary field. Research and theoretical writings on communication were scattered across numerous academic disciplines, including not only the engineering theories just mentioned, but also among others, philosophical theories of language and meaning, psychological theories of persuasion and verbal behavior, sociological theories of group and mass communication, and rhetorical theories of public discourse and speech communication. Scholars began referring to this collection of ideas from many disciplines as communication theory, and some argued that communication might eventually become a scientific discipline in its own right by building a new, integrated field of theory on this broad foundation.

As they gleaned relevant ideas from other disciplines, communication scholars began to see the history of those ideas as strands of their own field's history. Although the field had existed in name for only a few years, it could claim lines of ancestry going back thousands of years, for example, to ancient Greek theories of rhetoric and poetics. In retrospect, we can see that the idea of communication has emerged more or less independently in several traditions of thought that have contributed to different modern disciplines and still have yet to be integrated as a coherent whole—a field of communication theory—that is clearly more than the sum of its parts. When the traditions of communication theory are examined in this light, it becomes apparent that each tradition provides a useful perspective on communication problems and that the differences among the traditions raise questions for reflection and debate across the field. Communication theory may, therefore, achieve a kind of intellectual coherence, not by reaching universal consensus on one grand theory, but by promoting dialogue and debate across the diverse traditions of communication theory.

Seven Traditions of Communication Theory

Seven major traditions that have contributed to the present field of communication theory. Each is sketched briefly in the following paragraphs with regard to its history, how it characteristically defines communication and frames communication problems, and its salient differences from other traditions. Experts in these traditions may well regard these descriptions as simplistic or outdated, but it is important to see them in light of their intended purpose. These sketches are not intended to represent the complexity of current thinking in each tradition. Rather, they are intended to center each tradition in a perspective that is both highly traditional and clearly distinguishes it from other traditions. To illustrate how the traditions can be used to illuminate communication problems, family communication problems will be used as a running example.

Rhetoric

Rhetoric, the oldest tradition of communication theory, grew out of practices of oratory and debate in the democratic polis (city-state) in ancient Greece and was first theorized in writings of the sophists, Plato, and Aristotle. Classical Roman rhetoricians, especially Cicero, further elaborated the art of rhetoric in treatises that influenced rhetorical education for many centuries to come. Rhetorical theory has a complex history, and recent work has departed from the classical tradition in important ways, yet rhetorical theory's most distinctive contribution to the larger field of communication theory continues to be an idea at the heart of the classical tradition: the concept of rhetoric, or communication more generally, as a practical art of discourse. In this tradition, communication is a practice that requires skill and good judgment in deciding what to say in challenging situations, some people are better (more artful) communicators than others, and the art of communication can be cultivated by practice and criticism based on systematic principles. With regard to our example of problems in family communication, a rhetorical perspective highlights the ways in which artful communication is needed in family life, whether in parenting, negotiating family relationships, or managing conflicts.

For example, a child coming out as gay may face rhetorical challenges discussing this with some family members, and rhetorical arguments used in the current rhetoric about sexuality in society are likely to influence what is said in those family discussions.

Semiotics

A second tradition of communication theory is semiotics, the study of signs. Semiotic theory conceptualizes communication as a process that relies on systems of signs (including language and all kinds of nonverbal codes) to share meaning across the gaps between subjective viewpoints. Because we can never know directly what other people subjectively think or feel, all communication relies on the use of signs. For semiotic theory, communication problems are misunderstandings or unconscious differences in meaning that can be influenced by the nature of semiotic codes and particular ways of using signs. Modern semiotic theory began with the 17th century English philosopher John Locke, who wrote that communication requires attaching clear ideas to words. The late 19th century American pragmatist philosopher Charles S. Peirce and the early twentieth century Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure founded distinct schools of semiotic theory. Peirce analyzed the cognitive functions of signs and distinguished different types of signs (icon, index, and symbol). Saussure analyzed the systematic structure of language and other sign systems as social phenomena. More recently, post-structuralist semiotic theories have held that signs have unstable and contestable meanings. In contrast to rhetoric, semiotic theory is more concerned with problems of meaning than problems of what to say. For example, family communication about sexuality may be affected by generational differences in the meanings of signs that are commonly used to express gender and sexual identities. Negotiating identities in the family may depend on better understanding the different codes involved.

Phenomenology

A third tradition—the phenomenological—conceptualizes communication as the experience of self and other in dialogue. The problem of communication for phenomenology, as for semiotics,

arises in the gaps between subjective viewpoints: One cannot directly experience another consciousness, and the potential for intersubjective understanding is thereby limited. Whereas semiotics looks to the meanings of signs in approaching this problem, phenomenology looks to the authenticity of our ways of experiencing self and other. Barriers to communication can arise from self-unawareness, nonacceptance of difference, or strategic agendas that preclude openness to the other. German philosophers Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) were key figures in phenomenology. Martin Buber, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Emanuel Levinas, and Carl Rogers contributed different theories of dialogue and otherness, all sharing an emphasis on authentic self-expression and openness to difference. Applying this phenomenological perspective to problems in family communication highlights, for example, that modern people live busy lives, and family relationships can become so minimal or routine that members cease to experience each other as unique individuals. No one really pays attention to what Mom is thinking these days or how Melinda's sense of herself as Latina is changing as she struggles through high school. In contrast to rhetoric's focus on communicative strategies and semiotics' focus on signs and meanings, phenomenological theory emphasizes the need for people to turn toward one another, as Buber would put it, and experience self and other in genuine dialogue.

Cybernetics

Fourth, a cybernetic tradition of communication theory grew from those mid-20th century theories in electrical engineering mentioned earlier. A relatively new tradition, even though it originated the field of communication theory, cybernetics conceptualizes communication as information processing. All complex systems, including computers and other electronic devices, DNA molecules, plants and animals, the human brain and nervous system, social groups and organizations, and whole societies, process information, and in that sense communicate. Cybernetic theory downplays the differences between human communication and other kinds of information processing systems. Information storage, transmission, and feedback, network structures, and self-organizing processes occur in every

sufficiently complex system. Problems of communication can arise from glitches in information processing such as positive feedback loops that amplify noise. The anthropologist Gregory Bateson and a group of therapists known as the Palo Alto Group developed a cybernetic theory of relationships and family systems in the 1950s and 1960s. They analyzed relationships as patterns of interaction and feedback that tend to maintain themselves regardless of what the individuals involved might intend. For example, a couple can get stuck in a nag-withdrawal pattern or one of escalating conflicts. From a cybernetic point of view, family communication problems are not essentially problems of what to say (rhetoric), or the meaning of signs (semiotics), or lack of authenticity (phenomenology); instead, they are unwanted patterns of interaction that can be difficult to change except by disrupting the family system in some way.

Social Psychology

Social psychology, a fifth tradition of communication theory, conceptualizes communication as social interaction and influence. Communication always involves individuals with their personality traits, attitudes, emotions, and cognitive processes. These psychological factors affect the communication process, often with little awareness by communicators of the underlying causes at work. Influence occurs among individuals and on larger scales through mass media. The practical problem of communication from a sociopsychological perspective is how to use communication variables effectively, based on scientific research, to achieve preferred outcomes. Social scientific communication research has always been closely identified with social psychology, so it is not surprising that classic mid-20th century theories of group dynamics (Kurt Lewin), persuasion (Carl Hovland), and cognitive dissonance (Leon Festinger) were quickly absorbed into communication theory and were joined by many later theories either borrowing from psychology or originated by communication scholars. From a sociopsychological perspective, problems of family communication are indicated by outcomes such as low marital satisfaction or destructive family conflict that can be attributed in part to communication variables. For example, a couple might seek training to learn about the

causes of marital satisfaction and techniques they can use to improve their communication, thus increasing their satisfaction. Like the rhetorical tradition, sociopsychological theory is concerned with effective communication. However, rhetoric is a humanistic tradition that emphasizes moral, aesthetic, and rational judgments of what is said in particular situations, whereas social psychology is a scientific tradition that emphasizes understanding the causes that statistically determine communication outcomes.

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural communication theory, which derives from sociological and anthropological thought, is a sixth tradition. Charles H. Cooley and George H. Mead were early 20th century American sociologists who contributed importantly to this tradition. Sociocultural theory conceptualizes communication as a process of interaction that produces and reproduces shared meanings, rituals, and social structures. There is a tension in sociocultural theory between macro and micro approaches. Macro approaches begin with society as a whole and show how society functions through communication while at the same time, stable social structures and cultural patterns are also necessary for communication to be possible. Micro approaches begin with everyday social interaction and show how meanings and social relations are created, maintained, and altered in local, moment-to-moment communication. From either view, communication is involved with the coordination of activities among individuals and groups, and communication problems become evident in difficulties and breakdowns of coordination. Returning to the example of family communication, sociocultural communication theory frames problems in ways that relate families to larger social structures and cultural communities. How to talk to one's kids about the use of illegal drugs, family generational conflicts about preserving ethnic cultural traditions, or the need for family rituals to provide occasions for interaction are family communication problems that arise from forces in the larger society beyond those individual families. By the same token, each family must construct its own meanings and patterns of interaction within that larger social context.

Critical Theory

The seventh and last tradition of communication theory to be presented is that of critical theory, which defines communication as discursive reflection or discourse in which the implicit assumptions behind what is said—such as whether an assertion is really true or whether a particular way of speaking is appropriate—can be freely questioned and discussed as needed to achieve genuine mutual understanding. Communication that prevents this open questioning of assumptions is defective from a critical perspective, and critical theories argue that power structures in society prevent genuine communication by systematically excluding the voices of less powerful groups or otherwise thwarting discursive reflection. This interpretation of critical theory is due to Jürgen Habermas, a German social theorist who developed the key concept of systematically distorted communication and the contrasting concept of ideal speech situation, which describes a situation in which discursive reflection is possible. The tradition of critical theory can be traced to Karl Marx (1818–1883), who argued that dominant ideologies like capitalism reflect the interests of the ruling classes and bolster the economic status quo in society. The Frankfurt School critical theorists of the 1930s were not orthodox Marxists, but continued to critique the effects of capitalist ideology on culture and communication. Recent critical theory includes newer schools of thought such as critical cultural studies, feminism, and postcolonial theory that largely reject Marxism, but continues to pursue the goal of promoting emancipation and enlightenment by lifting ideological blinders that perpetuate social oppression. Applications of critical theory to family communication problems would emphasize the ways in which unquestioned assumptions about race, class, gender, and sexuality distort the communication process in families. Even the very idea of a family needs to be questioned from a critical standpoint, as debates over the legitimacy of homosexual marriages illustrate.

Current Trends

The traditions of communication theory are constantly evolving. Indeed, an advantage of thinking about theories in relation to intellectual traditions is that we can see more clearly what each new theory contributes and how it builds upon or rejects

elements of earlier theories. Moreover, intellectual traditions are not walled off from one another. Traditions influence each other over time and may splinter, merge, or combine in new ways. Current thinking on communication often integrates ideas from different traditions in a creative process that contributes to innovation in the field. Current theories draw from various traditions and often cannot be classified neatly in any one of them. Post-structuralist theory, for example, draws from both semiotics and phenomenology, is often regarded as a kind of rhetorical theory, and has significantly influenced recent sociocultural and critical theories.

The future of communication theory cannot be known with certainty, but new or previously unrecognized traditions of communication theory may now be emerging to prominence. One is a pragmatist tradition that defines communication as a pluralistic community oriented to the need for cooperation under conditions of diversity and interdependence. There are also indications of a feminist tradition that defines communication as an embodied connectedness to others that implicates gendered meanings and identities. Finally, there has recently been much discussion of non-Western communication theories—theories based on Asian, African, and other cultural traditions that challenge the Eurocentric bias of the current field and suggest entirely different ways of theorizing communication.

Robert T. Craig

See also Critical Theory; Cybernetics; Metatheory; Philosophy of Communication; Semiotics and Semiology; Rhetorical Theory; Theory

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TRAIT THEORY

Trait theory, having had an important impact on communication research, constitutes one of the main approaches to the study of human communication. Trait theory holds that people tend to exhibit certain communication styles and predicts that these traits make one communicate in a certain way. The characteristics of the trait approach arise from the very definition of a trait—a stable predisposition to exhibit certain behaviors. Human beings are conceived of primarily as bundles of predispositions that are relatively stable across time and across specified contexts.

The dispositional approach to personality tries to find those psychological characteristics that stay relatively constant for a person over time and across various situations. Roughly speaking, the trait approach to communication places the locus of action in the predispositions of individuals to initiate action or to react to behavior. Trait studies have looked at such tendencies as avoiding communication, persuasibility, self-esteem, dogmatism, Machiavellianism, cognitive complexity, and need for social approval.

In recent years, many personality theorists have reduced the range of variables to certain, more parsimonious super traits, derived from factor analysis. Resulting theories identify exact numbers of superfactors. Two superfactor theories are commonly adopted—Eysenck's three-factor model (consisting of extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism) and Digman's five-factor model

(neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness).

The trait approach contrasts with the situationist position. Is a person's behavior best accounted for by the situation or by the personality that guides behavior regardless of the situation? In the social sciences, a situationist believes that situations primarily determine behavior because situations are unique and present different demands on the individual. This position maintains that personality is overwhelmed by the situation. For instance, a person may not be as extroverted in one situation as in another because one situation is more task oriented and the participants simply do not have as much time or opportunity to act sociably.

The interactionist position emerges from the conflict between trait and situationist theorists. Interactionists maintain that behavior in a particular situation is a joint product of a person's traits and of variables in the situation. Traits and situations interact to influence behavior. According to this position, the trait and situationist perspectives are rather simplistic and do not reflect reality. In everyday life, different situations may affect people differently. Certain situations may allow expression of a person's personality traits. On the other hand, certain other situations may evoke a similar range of behavior from most people.

The person versus situation debate, however, has led to a more comprehensive approach to understanding how personality traits and situations may interact to produce a person's behavior. The trait approach is based on a laws perspective. The idea of traits—that behavior is cross-situationally consistent—is compatible with the assumptions of a laws approach and the communibiological perspective. Systems and human action researchers, on the other hand, have tended to be more situationist in terms of their study of communicative behavior. Thus, they have shown little interest in communication traits.

Examples of Communication Traits

This section briefly summarizes four communication traits that have received particular attention following Dominic A. Infante, Andrew Rancer, and Deanna Womack's categories—apprehension, presentation, adaptation, and aggression. Communication apprehension is probably the most famous

example of trait-based theory in the apprehension category due to the ambitious research program of James C. McCroskey and his associates. Communication apprehension is anxiety associated with oral communication. Trait-like communication apprehension (CA) refers to a relatively stable and enduring predisposition of an individual towards experiencing fear and/or anxiety across a wide range of communication contexts. Trait-like CA reflects a personality orientation and has been the major focus of study.

Developed from a model by Robert Norton, communicator presentation style is an example of the second category—presentation. Communicator presentation style is concerned with how messages are communicated. Communicator style accumulates over time so that a comprehensive, more global impression of a person's particular communicator style may be developed. Communicator style may be viewed as an overall impression, a communicator image, composed of at least 10 traits: impression leaving, contentious, open, dramatic, dominant, precise, relaxed, friendly, attentive, and animated.

The degree to which an individual possesses each of these traits contributes to the person's image. With 10 traits, there are numerous possible combinations, each of which creates a different overall impression. For instance, a person who is dominant, animated, and friendly is perceived as very different from another person who is also dominant and animated, but unfriendly. How a person's traits combine, therefore, is crucial to the overall image that is created.

The third type—adaptation traits—influence how we adapt to conversational partners. In rhetorical sensitivity theory, Roderick Hart claims that effective communication arises from sensitivity and care in adjusting what one says to the listener. Communication competence is another adaptation trait that has received a good deal of attention by communication researchers. Communication competence involves appropriateness and effectiveness and may eventually be found to involve other traits. Appropriateness means verbal and nonverbal communication that results in no loss of face for the parties involved. Effectiveness refers to the speaker achieving communicative goals. There is some controversy as to whether communication competence is a trait or whether it is contextual or situational. If communication competence is a trait, then it is

context free and is an attribute of the individual. Thus, if a person communicates competently in one context, that person would also tend to communicate in a competent manner in other contexts. A trait approach maintains that there is considerable consistency in communication competency across a variety of situations.

As an example of aggression traits—the fourth type—Infante’s model of aggressive communication maintains that symbolic aggression is energized by a set of four personality traits. The idea is that the aggressive dimension of our personalities is not composed of a single trait, but rather a complex combination of competing predispositions. Two of these traits, assertiveness and argumentativeness, are constructive, while the other two, hostility and verbal aggressiveness, are destructive. Assertiveness is a person’s overall tendency to be dominant and forceful in interpersonal situations. Argumentativeness is a person’s tendency to present and defend positions on controversial issues while attempting to refute the positions others take. As in the case of argumentativeness, which is a subset of assertiveness, verbal aggressiveness is a subset of hostility—that is, hostility is the more global trait of which verbal aggressiveness is a facet. As a subset of hostility, all verbal aggression is hostile. Verbal aggressiveness is defined as the trait of attacking the self-concepts of people instead of, or in addition to, their positions on issues. Although a physically aggressive person tries to inflict bodily pain, a verbally aggressive person attempts to create mental pain. A verbally aggressive person tries to hurt others by making them feel bad about themselves. In a sense, a verbal punch is thrown at a person’s self-concept.

A Communibiological Paradigm

Focusing on the biological basis of traits, James McCroskey and Michael Beatty introduced a communibiological approach to understanding communication traits. They propose that, similar to the role of biology in psychosocial processes, communication is influenced by inborn, neurobiological processes. Taking up a position of biological determinism, they see individuals’ behavior patterns as reflecting relatively stable differences in people’s neurobiological functioning. According to this view, genes largely determine the development of

personal characteristics such as intelligence and personality characteristics. Communibiological theory posits that traits are shorthand for underlying biological processes.

Although some may see it as controversial, the centerpiece of the communibiology approach is that individuals’ communicative traits are mainly expressions of neurobiological functioning. Accordingly, individual differences in communication can be represented by brain functioning.

So far, while some scholars agree that there may be a hereditary cause, studies on infants and twins have not revealed a CA gene.

However, it is argued that children are born with certain types of personality traits that affect how they will react to stimuli in the environment. Although heredity may have an impact on trait-like CA, most contemporary researchers propose that environment is the dominant factor. For instance, children may make attempts at communication, and if they are positively reinforced, they will feel encouraged to communicate more in a similar situation. However, if they are negatively reinforced, it is likely that those children communicate less, or try to avoid communication.

Trait approaches, when successful, do warn us that something about individuals may be the locus of causality for social action. Communication traits explain why people often communicate in a consistent manner, even though they are interacting in different situations with different people. Generally speaking, the trait approach can and has been used with some success to predict either the sender’s powers of impact or the receiver’s responsiveness to a message.

Although the trait approach has been used widely in predicting social behavior, it has certain inherent limitations. Most central of these is that the mechanisms that generate the prediction of traits are missing. Communication researchers, when faced with the complexity of the humans they have tried to describe, have been forced to abandon strictly trait approaches. Other approaches to human communication draw attention away from the individual as the locus of social action, refocusing it instead on social aggregates such as relationships, groups, organization, and society as the ultimate sources of explanations of interaction. Further, a number of trait theorists have incorporated contextual factors into their theories or as

part of the natural extension of trait theories. Whenever trait theorists have been pressed to explain why a trait works, they have been forced to look for the mechanisms behind that trait, mechanisms outside the realm of predispositions that almost always involve processes of interpretation and production of behavior or adaptation.

Unfortunately, there has been little research to resolve the trait versus contextual controversy. Neither traits nor contexts exhaust the possibilities concerning the range of constructs that communication researchers might employ as predictors of communication behavior. Some argue that perhaps we need to get beyond isolated perspectives—whether trait-based or process-oriented—to integrate relevant work devoted to understanding communication phenomena, regardless of traditional boundaries.

Min-Sun Kim

See also Argumentativeness, Assertiveness, and Verbal Aggressiveness Theory; Communibiology; Competence Theories; Constructivism; Rhetorical Sensitivity; Social and Communicative Anxiety; Style, Communicator

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TRANSACTIONAL VIEW

See Constitutive View of Communication

TRANSCULTURATION

Originally proposed in the 1940s by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, transculturation refers to the processes through which multiple cultures produce hybrid cultural elements that cannot be traced to a single originating culture. These elements include symbols, linguistic forms, genres, artifacts, and other forms of communication. A central issue is whether transculturation is a phenomenon specific to the current era of globalization or is applicable to other eras as well. Transculturation is of interest to scholars focused on the relationship between communication and culture, including those in cultural studies, global media studies, and intercultural communication.

To introduce the concept of transculturation, this entry will first discuss cultural appropriation and the different conditions in which it occurs. With this basis, transculturation and the related concepts of hybridity and indigenization will be defined. Next, two different views of transculturation will be summarized, closing with a discussion of how transculturation challenges common conceptualizations.

Conditions of Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation, defined broadly as the use of one culture's symbols, artifacts, genres, or rituals by members of another culture, is central to understanding transculturation. Cultural appropriation occurs under a variety of conditions, which can be categorized as cultural exchange, cultural exploitation, and cultural dominance. This section briefly reviews these three conditions of cultural appropriation, which form a foundation for the more complex forms of appropriation characterizing transculturation.

Cultural exchange refers to the reciprocal exchange of symbols, artifacts, rituals, or genres between cultures with roughly equal levels of power. Examples include the reciprocal borrowing of words and phrases, mutual influence on religious practices, and two-way flows of music and visual

arts. In its pure form cultural exchange involves a balance of this reciprocal flow, with the appropriations being voluntary. Identifying cases of cultural exchange is difficult insofar as an equality of power between cultures is rare. For example, although Japan may in some ways be an equal partner with the United States, this is probably not the case with appropriation. Although Japan's ownership of international media companies can influence Anglo-American culture, just as U.S. ownership of media companies with substantial presence in Japan can influence Japanese culture, the dominance of certain Western ideals, such as standards of female beauty perpetuated through transnational media, can have disproportionate effects on Japanese culture. This largely unidirectional cultural influence is reflected in the high rates of certain plastic surgeries in Japan, such as changes to the nose and eyes to appear more Western.

Cultural exploitation refers to the appropriation of elements of a subordinated culture by a dominant culture without substantive reciprocity, permission, or compensation. Cultural exploitation commonly involves the appropriation of elements of a subordinated culture by a dominant culture in which the subordinate culture is treated as a commodity. For example, Native American symbols and rituals are widely appropriated in North America and Western Europe; their meanings are altered to fit the needs of the dominant culture, while the cultural and economic interests of the originating cultures are often neglected. Reflecting an imbalance of power, intellectual property laws tend to facilitate claims of ownership of indigenous cultural elements by Western artists and corporations, and generally do not support indigenous claims to the ownership of traditional cultural forms.

Cultural dominance refers to the use of elements of a dominant culture by members of a subordinated culture in a context in which the dominant culture has been imposed on the subordinated one. For example, some people in the Netherlands state that they and their nation chose to adopt English as a de facto second language for practical economic purposes, but that choice has of course been shaped by the historical and contemporary dominance of Anglo countries. As a result, when professors from the United States teach in the Netherlands, they teach in English and can get by without learning Dutch. However, when Dutch professors teach in

the United States, they must operate exclusively in English. That is a clear reflection of a power imbalance. Cultural dominance, therefore, implies a relative lack of choice about whether to appropriate on the part of the receiving culture based on the sending culture's greater political, cultural, economic, and/or military power and is closely related to cultural imperialism.

However, this imbalance of power does not mean that members of subordinated cultures do not negotiate this imposition, manifesting at least limited forms of agency (choice making) in how they appropriate the imposed cultural elements. Subordinate groups may internalize the imposed culture (assimilation), mimic but not internalize it, or actively redirect the imposed elements toward their own ends. Cultural resistance is one method for subordinate cultures to deal with cultural dominance, involving the appropriation of elements of a dominant culture for survival, psychological compensation, or opposition. In a scene from the 2001 film *Smoke Signals*, for example, one Native American character, Victor, teaches his Native friend Thomas how to act like a real Indian—that is, how to conform to the dominant stereotype of the stoic Indian in order to be taken seriously by whites. This strategy of appropriating a Hollywood image of Native Americans serves as a means of surviving in the White world and plays into dominant stereotypes.

Although these three categories—exchange, exploitation, and dominance—identify different conditions under which appropriations occur, they share a common concept of cultures as separate and clearly bounded entities akin to nation states. Although cultural exchange is generally assumed to be a nonexistent ideal, it clearly assumes two independent entities between which reciprocal exchanges occur. Cultural exploitation focuses on the de facto theft of elements of subordinated cultures, which also assumes that cultures are distinct entities. In line with cultural exploitation, cultural domination highlights the asymmetries under which acts of appropriation occur. Some approaches to this set of conditions emphasize the power of the dominant to impose its culture on subordinated groups while others place more emphasis on resistive appropriations, but both share the assumption of one culture imposing and the other absorbing or resisting the imposed culture.

Transculturation

Transculturation involves cultural elements created through appropriations from and by multiple cultures such that any identification of a single originating culture would be invalid. Transculturation involves ongoing, circular appropriations of elements between multiple cultures, including elements that are themselves already transcultural. Transculturation is a process whereby cultural forms interact with other cultural forms and settings, produce new forms, and change the cultural milieu. Transculturation produces hybrids through the fusion of cultural forms, but such hybrids do not develop from pure cultural forms in the first place. Transculturation and hybridization occur by means of indigenization in which imposed or otherwise imported cultural elements take on local features, meanings, and functions. For example, cultural forms appropriated by the music industry from urban African American culture, such as rap and hip-hop—already structured in multiple cultural traditions and power relationships—are in turn appropriated and localized by Native American youth on rural reservations. Transculturation synthesizes new cultural genres while breaking down traditional categories.

Transculturation as a concept, therefore, encompasses the previous three categories. It includes the dynamics of cultural exchange, exploitation, and dominance, though most scholars who explore this subject reject the idea that it occurs on a level playing field necessary for true cultural exchange. Instead, cultural blending is more complex. Transculturation is also generally presumed to occur within a set of conditions created by globalization and the increasing dominance of transnational capitalism.

Two Views of Transculturation

Transculturation is not only distinct from cultural exchange in that multiple cultures and multiple acts of appropriation are involved; it also retains the implications of unequal power of cultural dominance and exploitation while acknowledging that appropriation on both global and local levels is radically different in the context of transnational capitalism. Hybridization and indigenization, as defined above, are central processes in an era often

described as postmodern (involving cultural fragmentation, multiplicity, and indeterminacy), post-colonial (in which previously colonized cultures work to recreate themselves from the remains of their precolonial and colonial cultures), and globalized (involving an unprecedented flow of people, discourses, and cultural forms around the world). Given that transculturation as a concept developed with the rise of globalization in the late 20th century, most scholars understand it as a phenomenon that came to prominence as a result of these trends.

However, the idea of transculturation calls into question the conceptualization of culture implicit in the exchange, exploitation, and dominance as described above, thereby expanding the application of transculturation to cultures and eras outside of the dynamics of globalization. Therefore, a key question concerning transculturation as a category of appropriation is whether it refers to a relatively new set of conditions in which appropriation occurs or to a new paradigm that challenges the validity and embedded assumptions of the previous categories. Whereas many of the conceptualizations of transculturation and related concepts (hybridity, indigenization) are grounded in the particular conditions of transnational capitalism, the critique of the concept of culture that informs the first three types of appropriation can be extended beyond the contemporary condition to previous eras. Transculturation, not merely cultural exchange, can therefore be understood as potentially applicable to all human cultures, not just those subject to the forces of globalization.

Implications

Transculturation conceptually challenges aspects of the preceding categories of cultural appropriation. Cultural exchange, exploitation, and domination presume the existence of distinct cultures. Nevertheless, unless culture is mapped directly onto nation, territory, or race—a questionable move given that a culture cannot be equated with a state, a fixed region, or a biological category—cultural boundaries are multiple, shifting, and overlapping. Transculturation implies that appropriations do not simply occur between cultures, but that such appropriative relations produce the cultures themselves.

Transculturation, therefore, calls not only for an updating of the understanding of contemporary cultural dynamics, but also for a fundamental reconceptualization of culture itself. Transculturation points to culture as a relational phenomenon that is itself constituted by acts of appropriation, not an entity that merely participates in appropriation. For example, a preexisting Anglo culture in colonial North America did not merely appropriate aspects of the Native cultures they encountered; by playing Indian during the Boston Tea Party, the colonists brought into being an Anglo-American culture and in so doing, altered the meaning of real Indians playing Indian. No culture exists independently of others, and if the history of a cultural practice is traced back far enough, its hybridity (impurity) will almost inevitably become evident. Transculturation highlights, in ways that cultural dominance and exploitation do not, the hybridity of cultural forms and the lack of purity and authenticity in the elements being appropriated.

Transculturation is not, however, a licensing of cultural exploitation and dominance. Transculturation questions some of the assumptions behind cultural dominance and exploitation, but it remains oriented toward the dynamics of disproportionate power. Transculturation identifies forces of cultural homogenization and highlights the influential role of economic, political, cultural, and other forms of power while also recognizing how cultural appropriation can be a basis for cultural uniqueness and dynamism. The concept is grounded in an implicit call for diversity in the face of homogenization, resistance in the face of dominance, but recognizes the fragmented and internally conflicted qualities of communication and culture in contexts of unequal power.

Richard A. Rogers

See also Cultural Studies; Culture and Communication; Hybridity; Postcolonial Theory; Postmodern Theory

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TRANSLATION THEORY

See Actor-Network Theory

TWO-STEP AND MULTI-STEP FLOW

The two-step flow of communication hypothesis states that personal influence exercised by other people normally plays a more critical role in everyday decision making than information obtained from mass media. This hypothesis is opposed to the one-step flow notion that media can have a direct, immediate, and powerful influence on what people think and do. The two-step flow hypothesis was initially formulated by Paul F. Lazarsfeld and his colleagues based on a 1940 survey of voters. People who changed their mind or made their decision late in the presidential campaign were more likely to say that they had been influenced by other people rather than by the mass media.

The two-step flow hypothesis was refined in a 1955 publication by Elihu Katz and Lazarsfeld based on a survey of 800 women in Decatur, Illinois. In addition to politics, the Decatur study looked at decision making in the areas of marketing, movies, and fashion. The Decatur research focused on locating and investigating people who exercised influence over decisions made by others. These people were defined as opinion leaders—persons who routinely influence others through networks of personal relationships. Opinion leaders were thought to be positioned as gatekeepers—they made greater use of media, they critically screened media content, and they passed along only the information and ideas that they thought were useful. Findings indicated that opinion leaders were found at every level of society. Their influence

appeared to mostly flow horizontally—that is, opinion leaders were more likely to routinely influence people who shared their status in society.

From its conception, the two-step flow hypothesis sparked considerable debate concerning the relative power of media to influence individuals. When first formulated, the power of media for both good and ill was widely presumed to be pervasive. Political propaganda disseminated by media was thought to be so effective in persuading average individuals to adopt totalitarian political beliefs and practices that the survival of democracy as a form of government was threatened. The two-step flow hypothesis implied that political propaganda delivered by mass media could not be successful unless opinion leaders were first converted. Thus, opinion leaders constituted an important limitation on the power of media. This meant that sudden, unexpected shifts toward totalitarianism were unlikely even during times of crisis. The hypothesis also had important implications for advertisers. It meant that advertising campaigns should be targeted toward opinion leaders at every level of society.

The two-step flow hypothesis can be seen as a part of a larger set of ideas that gained currency during the 1940s and 1950s. These ideas included the rediscovery of the influence of social groups as well as a growing recognition of the importance of local or grassroots leaders. These ideas were supported by empirical research and provided cautiously optimistic views of the social order in the United States at a time when the subversive power of Communist propaganda was widely feared.

The success of the two-step flow hypothesis may have been due as much to the theory's compatibility with popular social theories of the 1950s as to verification based on a consistent body of empirical findings. In fact, empirical research provided mixed support for the hypothesis even in the data reported by Katz and Lazarsfeld. Over the years, research on the hypothesis has been frustrated by the difficulty of conceptualizing and measuring opinion leadership using survey research methods. Inconsistent findings encouraged frequent reformulations of the hypothesis and led to the development of multi-step flow models.

John Summers points out that there was internal disagreement concerning the interpretation of the Decatur findings. The field director for the research, C. Wright Mills, was supposed to write a

book based on the findings but never did. He was known to have disagreed with Lazarsfeld about the findings. Ten years after the original research was conducted, Lazarsfeld teamed with Katz, then his PhD student, to write the book that presented the findings. Mills went on to write several devastating critiques of U.S. politics and society including *The Power Elite*, a book that warns that the power of local groups and leaders is being rapidly eroded by the rise of national elites in business and the military.

Within a few years after publication of *Personal Influence*, the two-step flow notion had been abandoned in favor of various multi-step flow conceptualizations. For example, John Robinson provides a compelling argument for an alternate model based on a 1968 election survey done by the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan. His model shows a two-step flow of influence among people who are more interested and involved in politics, but has a one-step flow for those who are less interested and rarely talk about politics. Multi-step flow models depict many influences acting on opinion leaders including other leaders and their own followers. In some models, influence occasionally flows from the bottom up. Other models indicate that for some topics or at certain times, influence flows directly from media to followers. The problem with multi-step flow notions was that they could be reshaped to fit virtually any findings and thus become difficult to disconfirm. The most important reformulation of the multi-step flow notions was Everett Rogers's diffusion theory. One reason for the enduring success of Rogers's theory may be that it is strictly limited to adoption of innovations.

Critics of the two-step flow hypothesis, including Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang, have argued that the theory directed attention away from research that might have demonstrated the power of media. Research might have provided a more critical assessment of media power in the 1960s and 1970s—an era when media industries generally and television specifically expanded rapidly, along with the amount of advertising transmitted and the amount of time people spent using media.

The two-step flow hypothesis played a central role in the development of empirical media research from the 1950s to the 1970s. This role was both constructive and detrimental. On the one hand, it

encouraged research that looked at the interconnection between interpersonal and mass communication. It allayed naïve fears about media power. But it may have discouraged research designed to assess the circumstances when media are influential. Only in recent years has the power of media been given more serious attention by empirical researchers.

Dennis K. Davis

See also Audience Theories; Diffusion of Innovations; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Media Effects Theories; Spiral Models of Media Effects

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U

UNCERTAINTY MANAGEMENT THEORIES

In 1975, Charles Berger and Richard Callabrese first published uncertainty reduction theory (URT), an approach that dramatically shaped scholars' understanding of the way people manage uncertainty. The theory generated several programs of research testing its predictions and considering ways to extend its application. In 1986, Michael Sunnafrank offered the first theoretical approach that challenged URT's central assumption that people were primarily driven by a motivation to reduce uncertainty. He argued instead that people's primary motivation was the maximization of reward. He labeled his theory predicted outcome value. Another 6 years elapsed until the next theoretical offering on uncertainty, but the communication discipline experienced a bona fide explosion in the number of theories on this issue after that.

No less than six theories on uncertainty management were introduced by communication scholars between 1992 and 2009. In chronological order, they are problematic integration theory (PIT), comprehensive model of information seeking (CMIS), uncertainty management theory (UMT), theory of managing uncertainty (TMU), relational turbulence model (RTM), and the theory of motivated information management (TMIM). This entry will briefly summarize the main aspects of each of these six approaches. In all cases, uncertainty is generally defined as a state in which individuals lack confidence in their ability to predict

the outcome of an event, an issue, an interaction, a relationship, or a particular behavior.

Problematic Integration Theory

One of the primary goals of PIT is to show the many meanings that individuals give to uncertainty, the many forms that uncertainty takes, and the complex ways in which individuals respond to it. At its core, PIT argues that individuals make predictions about what they expect to occur (the probabilistic orientation), then evaluate those expectations on a continuum of positivity-negativity (the evaluative orientation). Uncertainty comes into play as an important part of individuals' probabilistic orientations because people hold expectations with varying degrees of certainty.

These two orientations are combined to characterize how individuals experience events in their lives, thus the inclusion of integration in the theory's title. The idea of problematic integration reflects cases when the mix of expectations and evaluations is experienced by individuals as problematic. Examples include situations when people are relatively certain that a negative outcome will occur, or when people are relatively uncertain that a positive outcome will occur. Both these situations, and many others, can lead to problematic integrations in which people struggle with how to manage their level of uncertainty-certainty. Certainty about negative outcomes may promote a desire for more uncertainty, while uncertainty about positive outcomes may lead to uncertainty-decreasing efforts.

PIT considers communication as a source, medium, and resource for these uncertainty management decisions. It is a source because individuals fully shape both probabilistic and evaluative orientation through communication with others. It is a medium in that individuals decide how to proceed with these problematic integrations through discussion with others. Finally, it is a resource in that it is through communication that people cope with these integrations. In the end, the theory brings awareness to the many uncertainty management choices open to those facing problematic integrations.

Comprehensive Model of Information Seeking

CMIS is the only one of the six theories that is not primarily a framework focused on interpersonal communication context. Although the theory has been applied to varying contexts, it owes much of its foundations to media approaches. It is also the only one of the six theories that does not explicitly give a central role to uncertainty. It qualifies as an uncertainty management theory because it offers an account for why and when people seek information—the central way that individuals manage uncertainty.

The theory presents a three-component model of information-seeking decisions. The first component, labeled antecedents, explains why people seek information. The second component, information carrier characteristics, describes factors that impact what sources people choose for information. The third, and final, component is the individuals' choice of information-seeking actions.

The CMIS includes four antecedents to information-seeking decisions: demographics, experience, salience, and beliefs. The demographic factor reflects trends whereby individuals' demographic characteristics (e.g., age, sex) impact the likelihood of their seeking information. The experience factor captures the tendency for individuals' past history with an issue to impact how they proceed in subsequent situations with that same issue. The third factor, salience, involves the degree to which the issue at hand is personally relevant and important to the person. Finally, the fourth antecedent factor is beliefs, which refers to individuals' beliefs in their ability to impact their future (i.e., their

efficacy). The next component in the theory is the information carrier factors. In other words, characteristics of the potential information source are argued to impact information-seeking decisions. The theory distinguishes between information carrier characteristics (i.e., credibility and understandability of the source for the desired information) and information carrier utility (i.e., relevance of the source for the information needs). Together, these two components lead individuals to select an information seeking action. The CMIS argues that individuals are faced with a wide range of information seeking options, varying on the information channel at both the macro- (e.g., media, interpersonal, organizational) and microlevels (e.g., magazine, newspaper, television), on the degree of directness, and on several other dimensions.

Uncertainty Management Theory

UMT overlaps with two approaches—one in communication (PIT) and one in the health sciences (theory of uncertainty in illness). The theory elaborates on two aspects of uncertainty: (1) the many emotional responses that accompany uncertainty, and (2) the many strategies that people apply to managing uncertainty. In contrast to early frameworks that assumed that uncertainty inevitably causes anxiety and necessarily leads people to seek information, UMT brought to light cases in which uncertainty produces hope and detailed the range of options other than information seeking that individuals sometimes choose in response to uncertainty. Among these strategy options are selective information seeking, avoidance, reliance on social support from others, and acceptance of chronic uncertainty. UMT also contributed to the domain of uncertainty by showing situations in which individuals actively sought to increase uncertainty, a behavior not easily explainable in early approaches to uncertainty. UMT, though, was able to account for such actions by pointing to the hope that increased uncertainty can produce in some cases (e.g., if diagnosed with a terminal illness).

UMT and PIT are consistently cited as the two communication frameworks leading a push to shift research in uncertainty from an uncertainty reduction ideology (where scholars assume that individuals were always motivated to reduce uncertainty) to an uncertainty management ideology (where

scholars recognize that individuals sometimes prefer states of uncertainty or even seek to increase their levels of uncertainty). The shift is one that has taken hold across several disciplines.

Theory of Managing Uncertainty

TMU continues in the tradition of elaborating on individuals' experience of uncertainty by emphasizing the subjective nature of uncertainty. In this case, it reflects on the fact that people can sometimes be uncertain despite being objectively in a highly structured environment with very few, if any, unknowns. TMU is the only one of the six theories developed expressly to account for uncertainty management in a particular setting—organizations. Yet its assumptions are broadly pitched and the framework applies across a wide variety of contexts.

The theory argues that people go through six sequential components as part of the uncertainty management process. First, individuals have an experience of uncertainty that is triggered by some event. From there, they make cognitive attempts at uncertainty reduction. In other words, they do their best to eliminate the uncertainty without the need to search for information; this may include scouring their minds to find preexisting information or reevaluating their level of confidence in their predictive ability, among other internal strategies. If that fails, then individuals' motivation to reduce uncertainty, the third component in the theory, kicks in. Here, information-seeking efforts take center stage. Yet these efforts are sometimes stymied by competing motives, the fourth component. Motives such as impression management, social appropriateness, social cost, and competence, among others, sometimes override the motivation to seek information and end steps to seek information. If the decision to seek information moves forward, then the next stage is to select from a host of communication behaviors. TMU recognized a wide range of information-seeking strategies, varying from passive actions to direct information requests. The final component recognizes that this process typically has a dramatic impact on uncertainty. Those who go through the information-seeking process generally come out with a different degree of uncertainty than that with which they started.

Relational Turbulence Model

RTM tries to account for turbulence in close relationships. Relational turbulence is defined as times during relationships when partners experience a spike in negative emotions toward one another, with accompanying relational volatility and tumultuousness. It is the only one of the six theories that applies exclusively to processes in close relationships. The theory is premised on the idea that relationships have particular periods that are particularly volatile. One such period, according to RTM, is the time between casual and serious commitment to a partner. That relational stage makes people especially aware of the partner's behaviors and attitudes, their own feelings about the relationship, and the fit of the relationship, generally. This increased awareness is associated with the two foundations of relational turbulence: relational uncertainty and interference from partners.

Relational uncertainty involves uncertainty about one's own desires for the relationship, the partner's desires for the relationship, or the relationship's future. The theory predicts that relational uncertainty will plateau during the transition from casual involvement to serious commitment. That uncertainty makes people especially sensitive to relationship events, increased negative emotion, and decreases intimacy, among other negative outcomes. As such, it is a leading culprit for the experience of turbulence during that time. The second foundational factor in relational turbulence comes from individuals' desire to settle on a set of rules that defines their mutual dependence on one another. This process often highlights differences between the partners and makes individuals aware of the ways that their partners interfere with their goals, emotions, and daily activities. This awareness of their partner's interference serves as the second primary reason for turbulence during that transition from moderate to high levels of commitment. In addition to the expectation of turbulence during this stage of relational development, the theory has also been applied to explain relational turbulence during personal crises (e.g., the discovery of cancer).

Theory of Motivated Information Management

TMIM, the most recent of the six theories, applies broadly to interpersonal communication contexts.

The theory presents a three-phase process that accounts for individuals' decision to seek or avoid information about important issues. The process starts with an awareness that the level of uncertainty that the person has on an issue is different than the level of uncertainty she or he wants on that issue (uncertainty discrepancy). That discrepancy leads to a negative emotional response, a process which completes the first phase of the process (interpretation phase), and motivates people to decide whether they should seek information or not. During the evaluation phase individuals make two assessments: What are the costs and benefits of seeking information from a particular target (outcome expectancies) and do they feel that they have the ability to gather the information necessary to reduce the discrepancy (efficacy)? Efficacy assessments are made along three dimensions: communication (Do they have the communication skills to seek the information from the target?), coping (Do they believe they can cope with what they might find out?), and target efficacy (Is this target able and willing to provide the information?). Individuals who expect high costs to the information search and do not feel efficacious to gather it are most likely to avoid information seeking as a strategy to reduce the uncertainty discrepancy (decision phase).

The theory also advances a process that it envisions the information providers going through if/once they are asked for information. That process mirrors the evaluation and decision phases of the information seeker, but is adjusted to capture concerns that an information provider has when weighing how much information to provide and how best to do it.

Conclusion

As is evident from these brief summaries, each of these six theories shares similarities with one another and brings a unique perspective to the ways in which individuals manage uncertainty in their lives. Knowledge about the complexities of uncertainty has come a long way in the past 15 to 20 years.

Walid Afifi

See also Interpersonal Communication Theories; Motivated Information Management Theory; Problematic Integration Theory; Relational Uncertainty; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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UNCERTAINTY REDUCTION THEORY

Uncertainty reduction theory (URT), formulated by Charles Berger and his colleagues, strives to explain how people communicate when they are unsure about their environment. The theory, in its original form, limited its claims to the context of strangers meeting for the first time. Although URT borrowed some concepts from information theory and attribution theory, it is notable as one of the first theories of interpersonal communication to originate within the field instead of being borrowed from another scholarly discipline. This entry will describe the theory, review its major applications, and identify its strengths and weaknesses.

URT defines uncertainty as people's inability to predict or explain their own behavior or the behavior of others. The theory identifies two types of uncertainty that are prominent in social situations. Cognitive uncertainty arises when individuals are

unsure about their own beliefs or the beliefs of others. Behavioral uncertainty occurs when people are unsure about their own actions or the actions of others. In sum, uncertainty exists when individuals lack information about their surroundings.

According to the theory, people are especially motivated to reduce uncertainty under three conditions: incentives, deviation, and anticipation of future interaction. Individuals are particularly curious about a partner who may be a source of incentives such as social support, respect, and loyalty. Moreover, people are especially compelled to seek information when others deviate from predictable behavior and act in unexpected ways. Finally, individuals particularly desire to alleviate uncertainty when they expect to engage in future interaction with a person.

URT proposes a set of axioms about the correspondence between uncertainty and communication. An axiom specifies a causal relationship assumed to exist between two variables. The theory's original seven axioms are as follows:

Axiom 1: Uncertainty is negatively associated with verbal communication.

Axiom 2: Uncertainty is negatively associated with nonverbal affiliative expressiveness.

Axiom 3: Uncertainty is positively associated with information seeking behavior.

Axiom 4: Uncertainty is negatively associated with the intimacy level of communication content.

Axiom 5: Uncertainty is positively associated with the rate of reciprocity.

Axiom 6: Uncertainty is negatively associated with the degree of similarity between partners.

Axiom 7: Uncertainty is negatively associated with liking.

In addition to formulating axioms about the link between uncertainty and communication, URT deduces 21 theorems by pairing each axiom with every other axiom. A theorem predicts covariation between two variables. Examples of URT's theorems are as follows:

Theorem 1: Amount of verbal communication and nonverbal affiliative expressiveness are positively associated.

Theorem 8: Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and information seeking are negatively associated.

Theorem 16: Information seeking and reciprocity rate are positively associated.

Theorem 21: Similarity and liking are positively associated.

URT identifies three categories of strategies people use to seek information. Passive strategies involve watching the target person unobtrusively. Examples of passive strategies include observing how the target person reacts to others, how he or she compares to others, and how the target person behaves in informal settings. Active strategies require individuals to take action to obtain information without interacting with the target person directly. Behaviors that fall into this category include asking third parties for information and structuring a situation to see how the target person responds. Interactive strategies entail communicating directly with the target person. Examples of interactive strategies include asking questions, disclosing in the hopes that the target person will disclose as well, and relaxing the target person so he or she will feel comfortable sharing information.

Applications

A substantial body of research has tested URT's axioms within the domain of initial interaction. These investigations have produced evidence in favor of some axioms, but not others. For example, studies consistent with URT have documented an association between uncertainty and verbal communication (Axiom 1), the intimacy level of communication content (Axiom 4), similarity between partners (Axiom 6), and liking for partners (Axiom 7). On the other hand, results have provided limited support for the connection between uncertainty and information seeking (Axiom 3).

Other scholarship has extended URT beyond the context of acquaintance. Anxiety/uncertainty management theory, developed by William Gudykunst, expands URT's premises to cross-cultural communication. The theory of managing uncertainty, formulated by Michael Kramer, reconceptualizes URT in organizational settings. The relational turbulence model, proposed by Denise Solomon and Leanne Knobloch, addresses the role of uncertainty during times of transition within

close relationships. Together, these three theories underscore the wide-ranging influence of URT.

Critique

Like all theories, URT possesses both strengths and weaknesses. One strength is its heuristic value. URT's ability to generate new insights is apparent in the variety of theories that have their genesis in URT. Another strength lies in URT's clear, specific, and deductive structure. The theory's precision allows researchers to conduct definitive tests of URT's axioms and theorems. On the other hand, scholars have criticized URT for underestimating people's drive to maximize rewards and minimize costs. Individuals may be more motivated to forecast the potential outcomes of interaction than to reduce uncertainty per se. Another criticism is that individuals may seek to preserve or even foster uncertainty. People may prefer to protect their image or avoid bad news rather than dispel their doubts. Despite these criticisms, URT remains a prominent theory within the field of interpersonal communication.

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See also Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory; Interpersonal Communication Theories; Motivated Information Management Theory; Relational Uncertainty; Uncertainty Management Theories

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UNOBTRUSIVE CONTROL

See Organizational Control Theory

USES, GRATIFICATIONS, AND DEPENDENCY

Uses, gratifications, and dependency theories arise from a line of work that focuses on the interdependent relationships among the media system, the larger social system, and media audiences. Together, these theories predict that audiences rely on media to gratify specific needs and in the process develop certain dependencies on the media. The more an individual depends on a specific medium to fulfill needs, the more important that media will become to that person. This can, in turn, lead to different patterns of media exposure and use. Ultimately, this can lead to cognitive, affective, and behavior effects of media use.

This process of reliance on media can be examined from either a macro- or a microlevel approach. A microlevel approach looks specifically at the role of media in the lives of an individual, examining how people use and depend on media to meet specific goals or needs. From a microperspective, a person will become more dependent on the specific media that will satisfy a variety of needs over those that satisfy just a few needs. These increased dependencies, in turn, lead to an increased influence of the media in our lives. For example, a technologically savvy and media literate individual knows that he or she can find information from the newspaper, radio, the Internet, television, or a variety of other sources. However, someone who might not be technically savvy might see the only option as turning on the television and the evening news. Therefore, this person becomes heavily dependent on television for news and information gathering. Television, then, becomes more influential on this person than on our technologically savvy person.

A macrolevel approach to dependency involves examining the interdependence between audiences, the media system, and the larger social system.

According to the theory, the media system, social institutions, and the audiences exist in a state of mutual interdependence. Each has goals they must accomplish and resources to offer the other. For example, the media system relies on the larger social system for structure and legitimacy and on audiences so they can create advertising revenue. In turn, the media offer information dissemination for the larger social system and entertainment and information for the mass audience. This highlights the power and the effects the media can have on our daily lives. However, these effects occur not because the media are all-powerful, but because the media operate in give-and-take relationship with the larger social system and the media audiences. Given the increasing complexity of the world in the era of the global village, audiences need media to help them make sense and to understand the world around them. The media are only powerful because we use them to gratify a variety of needs. It is the uses people make of media that determine the strength of the media's influence.

Uses and Gratifications

Framed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in the 1970s, uses and gratifications theory turned attention away from media sources and message effects to audience uses of media content. Building on this original idea, Philip Palmgreen used the work of Karl Rosengren and others to explain more clearly what is going on in this process. He borrowed Martin Fishbein's expectancy-value theory of beliefs and attitudes as the basis for this expanded explanation, which he first published in 1984. The expectancy-value formula determines the gratifications that will be sought by a media user by summing his or her beliefs about what media can provide weighted by one's evaluations of those beliefs. If, for example, a user believes that car magazines have many great photos of cars (belief) and good photos are enjoyable (evaluation), that such magazines give useful information about best buys (belief) and knowing what cars to buy is pertinent (evaluation), and that these magazines provide ads for parts (belief) that one needs to restore cars (evaluation), that user will probably seek to gratify needs and goals related to cars by consuming these magazines.

Palmgreen, however, did identify other variables that enter into one's media consumption behavior. In its most complex form, the theory predicts that media-consumption gratifications are influenced by culture, social institutions, media opportunities, circumstances, personal traits, needs, beliefs, and values. In turn, one's beliefs about what media can provide are influenced by the gratifications one experiences by using those media.

Dependency Theory

By itself, uses and gratifications theory grants limited effects to the media, suggesting instead that individuals have much control over what they consume. However, in the process of using media, consumers may develop certain dependencies that allow media greater power than uses and gratifications theory originally imagined. Such dependencies lead to cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes. Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur originally recognized this in the 1970s, about the same time that uses and gratifications came to the forefront. Taking a broader, system view, Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur showed that audiences, media, and the larger social system work together. There are a number of things that can increase or decrease dependencies on a particular medium including the individual's needs and motives, social conditions outside of the individual's control, and life attributes. For example, individuals who have a high need to be oriented to what is happening tend to watch more television and expose themselves to more media. Therefore, there will be greater dependencies on television for these people than for those with a low need for orientation. Additionally, reliance on media is greater in times of social instability. This can create greater dependencies, especially for those who see television as their only outlet for news. And finally, the circumstances in an individual's life such as health, mobility, life satisfaction, income, loneliness, and education can lead to different patterns of media use and differences in dependencies.

Functional alternatives are also important in dependency theory. A functional alternative is a medium that can essentially act as an alternative for another form of media. For example, if an individual wants to find out what shows are playing at

the local movie theater he or she might look in the newspaper. Just as easily, however, he or she might look on the Internet or call the theater itself. Therefore, the Internet and the telephone become functional alternatives for the newspaper. The number of functional alternatives an individual has will decrease dependencies on any one particular medium. Individuals become more dependent on available media if their access to media alternatives is limited. An educated person with a computer and Internet access will have a variety of functional alternatives other than television for news gathering and entertainment. However, an illiterate person without Internet access might only have the use of a television to satisfy these needs. This will lead to greater dependencies on that medium for this person.

Media effects researchers have become interested in dependency theory because dependencies lead to different patterns of exposure. An individual who has exposed himself or herself to news from a variety of media is likely to be better informed, more knowledgeable, and have a better, more in-depth understanding of world events than someone who relies solely on television news for information gathering. Additionally, a person with

a high dependency on television for entertainment and escape will watch much more television than those with many other functional alternatives. Those with greater dependencies will display more of the harmful effects associated with increased exposure to television in general.

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See also Attitude Theory; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Media Effects Theories; Persuasion and Social Influence Theories

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V

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

When researchers design studies and interpret the results, two important concepts are validity and reliability. Simply stated, research validity is concerned with the question, “Are we measuring what we think we are measuring?” Research reliability is concerned with the question, “Are we measuring this consistently?” This entry will review both internal and external validity in quantitative research, threats to validity, common methods of measuring reliability, and the importance of validity and reliability in qualitative research. An example will demonstrate how validity and reliability function and why they are so important for research.

Lucy buys a new scale. She steps on it for the first time before breakfast, and the scale reads 132 pounds. She starts a diet. Five days later, she weighs herself again before breakfast. The scale reads 132 pounds. She continues to diet, and 5 days later she weighs herself again. The scale still reads 132 pounds. This scale is producing reliable, or consistent, results. One could draw the conclusion that Lucy’s diet did not work. However, are the results accurate or valid? First, one would have to know how and when she was weighing herself. The first day Lucy stepped on the scale it was warm outside, and she was wearing shorts, a t-shirt, and flip-flops. Five days later, when she weighed herself again, it is raining, and she was wearing jeans, a sweatshirt, and sneakers. Five days after that when she weighed herself the final time, she

changed pattern and weighed herself late in the evening, after eating dinner. She was also wearing jeans, sneakers, and a sweater. As anyone who has dieted can attest, though these results are reliable, they are not valid—what Lucy was really measuring was the changes in her clothing and the timing of her weighing-in sessions, not her real weight.

To draw conclusions about a phenomenon, researchers have to be certain that they are measuring the phenomenon correctly—they want to measure the actual weight and not the changes in clothing. This is the issue of validity. Additionally, it is important that researchers can replicate their results. If a researcher only gets a certain result one time, she or he cannot trust the results. Conversely, just because results are reliable does not mean they are valid—one can consistently measure the wrong concept. These issues are so important that researchers must guard against the threats to validity and work to enhance reliability. Researchers have also developed multiple ways to measure validity and reliability

Validity

Validity refers to how accurately a study measures what it is supposed to measure. There are two types of validity that researchers are concerned about: internal validity and external validity.

Internal Validity

Issues of internal validity revolve around how confident an experimental researcher can be that

changes in the independent variable caused the results in the dependent variable. If the changes the researcher measures can only be attributed to the manipulation of the independent variable, then the study is internally valid. Experimental researchers, however, must take care to monitor threats to the internal validity.

Threats to Internal Validity

When testing for causality in an experiment, researchers must not only be able to reliably measure all the variables and have a strong argument that changes in the independent variables cause the changes in the dependent variable, they must also be able to rule out alternative explanations for the changes. Monitoring the threats to internal validity helps the researcher to counter rival hypotheses. In 1963, Donald Campbell and Julian Stanley identified eight possible threats to the internal validity of an experiment.

- History is a threat when an event not controlled by the researcher affects the group being studied.
- Maturation threatens results when members of the group being studied experience natural (biological or psychological) changes over time.
- Repeated testing is a threat because members of the group being studied may demonstrate different results the second time they respond to a measure simply because they have seen the measure before.
- Instrumentation threat occurs when changes are made in how things are measured from one point to the next.
- Statistical regression is a threat that occurs when group members were selected to participate due to either very high or very low scores because when tested repeatedly, people's scores tend to move closer to average.
- Selection is a threat if the groups being studied are different at the pretest, which might cause them to respond differently to treatments.
- Experimental mortality is a threat when people participating in the study withdraw or drop out in nonrandom fashions.
- Interaction effects may jeopardize validity when two or more internal threats interact. For example, selection-maturation can interact to be a threat when some members of the group being studied mature and change at different rates than other members of the group.

External Validity

Issues of external validity are concerned with the generalizability of the results to different situations or groups of people. Threats to external validity occur when there are plausible explanations for why a researcher's findings might generalize to a different group or a different situation. For example, if the study that produced the results was so controlled and unrealistic that it has no resemblance to the real world, then the study lacks external validity. Here are seven common threats to external validity:

- Reaction to testing is a threat if the participants in the study, after being tested, become aware of the purpose of the study and modify their behaviors.
- Multiple-treatment interference is a threat and can hinder generalizability because if people remember what they were exposed to in earlier treatments, the results may only generalize to people exposed to the same treatments in the same order.
- Selection and treatment interaction may be a threat if the study participants are not similar to the larger population or if they were assigned to different treatments in a nonrandom manner.
- Treatment diffusion occurs when members of different treatment groups communicate with each other, which is a threat because the groups' behavior may change based on the information and not the treatment.
- Reaction to research arrangements is a common threat that includes participants changing their behaviors because they know someone is watching (the Hawthorne effect), participants who know they are not receiving the treatment work harder to compensate (the John Henry effect), and people behave unusually because it is a new situation.
- Experimenter effects occur when the person in charge of the research treats participants differently or participants react to the researcher and not the treatment.
- Specificity of variables is a threat if the variables are so artificially operationalized and defined that there is no situation similar outside of a laboratory.

Assessing Validity

Assessing the validity of one's data collection instruments is important because the more valid

the instruments, the more confident the researcher and reader will be that the results of the study accurately reflect differences in the group. Assessing validity helps to account for random or constant error. There are several ways a researcher can estimate if she or he is measuring what she or he thinks she or he is measuring. Two methods of assessing validity rely on logic and knowledge of the topic and three methods employ statistics to measure the validity of an instrument.

Logical Methods of Assessing Validity

The first two ways to assess the validity of a data collection instrument are for a researcher to ask, “Based on what I am trying to do and what experts know, does this instrument make logical sense?” There are two specific logical methods for assessing validity: face validity and content validity.

- Face validity is when the measure asks the questions the researcher is interested in. The basic question is, “Does this instrument, on the face of it, measure the things it should measure?”
- Content validity is when the researcher uses theory or prior research to develop an instrument and the criteria to assess the instrument. A researcher may ask experts in the field to review the instrument and to ensure that no important component was overlooked. The basic question is, “Does this include all the necessary content?”

Statistical Methods of Assessing Validity

Although establishing the logical basis of the instrument is important, stringent research standards often require additional analysis of the instruments.

- Construct validity assesses how well a new measure matches (converges) with instruments it should be similar to or differs (diverges) from instruments it should be different from.
- Criterion validity reflects how successfully the new instrument predicts what it should predict (predictive validity) or how well the new instrument distinguishes between known groups that, theoretically, it should be able to distinguish between (concurrent validity).

Reliability

Whereas validity is concerned with the accuracy of measurement, reliability is concerned with the consistency of the measure. Assuming that researchers are measuring the same phenomenon each time, the measures should produce the same results. There are three categories for measuring reliability, each of which looks at a different aspect of the instrument: tests of stability, tests of equivalence, and tests of internal consistency.

Measuring Reliability

Measuring the reliability of an instrument requires comparisons between items from the instrument, observer’s interpretations of the instrument, different versions of the instrument, or how people respond to the instrument at different times.

Tests of Stability

Testing an instrument’s stability requires that the same people respond to the same instrument at different points in time. Test-retest procedures are the most common tests of an instrument’s stability. If the instrument is reliable, and there have been no major changes in the group, the responses will be similar across time. In observational research, *repeated observation* of the same group, in the same situation, and recording behavior is a test of stability.

Tests of Equivalence

In some research projects, more than one instrument is used to measure the same concept or more than one observer is used to record behavior. When using more than one version of a questionnaire, researchers need to assess if the questionnaires are actually equivalent. Parallel form equivalency assesses if versions of an instrument that were constructed the same way and measure the same concepts are, in fact, equivalent. Intercoder or interobserver reliability is used to assess if different people, observing the same event, record similar impressions.

Tests of Internal Consistency

Survey instruments usually have more than one question measuring a given trait, behavior, or attitude. To assess if the individual items in an instrument or subscale each measure the same

general concept, a researcher should test for internal consistency. In the split-half method, the survey is arbitrarily divided in half, analyses are run on each half, and the two halves are compared (reliability coefficient). If the questions are consistent, the two halves will be very similar. A more rigorous test of internal consistency involves comparing all possible split-half combinations and averaging the reliability coefficients. Cronbach's alpha is one of the most common measures of internal consistency.

Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research

Although reliability and validity are research terms most often used to assess quantitative research, qualitative researchers are also concerned with these issues. Yvonne Lincoln and Egon Guba responded to concerns about the soundness of qualitative research and proposed similar criteria for assessing qualitative research. Instead of internal validity, external validity, and reliability, qualitative researchers concern themselves with credibility, transferability, and dependability. Researchers enhance credibility by ensuring that the group members or research participants find the results believable. Credibility can be accomplished by checking with members and encouraging participants to review interpretations. Though qualitative researchers are not generally concerned with the generalizability of their findings, the results from one investigation may be applicable to other situations. Transferability is enhanced through researchers providing thick, rich description, which allows a reader to assess if the interpretations transfer from one situation to another. Qualitative researchers are not concerned with replicating their work, but they are concerned with the dependability of the interpretations. Enhancing dependability requires that the researcher describe the changes in context and circumstances that occurred during the study and how she adjusted to the changes.

Virginia McDermott

See also Empiricism; Epistemology; Scientific Approach; Variable Analytic Tradition

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VALUES STUDIES: HISTORY AND CONCEPTS

Among the personal and social pursuits of humans, clarifying one's identity (Who am I?) and one's own or group's values (What is important to me individually? To us collectively?) have been among the central themes of intellectual, social, and communicative development. The questions of right action, civic morality, and meaningful relational standards certainly figured prominently in the recorded writings of the early philosophers. Values played a central role in the classical thought and rhetoric of many traditions, whether that of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, or Augustine around the Mediterranean; Confucius, Mencius, or Lao Tzu in China; the Brahman Vedas, the Upanishads, Lord Mahavira and the Jains, or Siddhartha Buddha in the Indian peninsula; or Zoroaster in Persia. Clarifying human behavior by elucidating the value of certain preferred character or moral traits is a common theme interwoven in the history of human development, a dialogue later continued by political and religious figures from Moses to Jesus to Muhammad to Mahatma Gandhi to Martin Luther King, Jr.

Values are not only espoused by great teachers, but also have often been one of the early starting points for the study of humans and society in many fields. Nearly every branch of the humanities or social science has produced seminal articles

discussing the concept of value or approaches to values study as it is applied in that area of research, from economics to environmental science, sociology to semantics, metaphysics to management, cognition to communication. What others believe and hold as important is considered to be a primary influence on their personal behavior and social functioning.

At the same time, each set of social mores-values develop in a specific geographic, economic, historical, political, ethnic and/or religious context, and those local conditions lead localized groupings of people to affirm degrees of divergent values. Though one might ask, “Who am I?” in sorting out one’s place within one’s respective social schema, questions of “What do I or we find most important?” often only arise when the citizens of one social group are confronted with the striking differences of another social unit. Paraphrasing Blaise Pascal in his *Pensées*—what truth is on one side of the Pyrenees is error on the other side. Early contact with others is often first mitigated by noting perceived areas of distinct otherness and assigning these to the realm of enduring stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination—judgments based often on value differentiations.

Early Studies to Identify Cultural Values

Thus an early step in the development of modern cultural anthropology, social psychology, communication studies, and related fields has been to identify the predominant value or value sets of particular peoples. This social-cultural mapping has taken various forms, much of it impressionistic and unsystematic in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, often in the form of foreign observers writing up anecdotal explanations of the differences between various cultures, with titles like a missionary’s *Chinese Characteristics*, a Belgian-Dutch scholar’s *The English: Are They Human?* and a Russian philologist’s *The National Mind: English, French, German*. A variety of synonymous terms such as ethics, spirit, traits, characteristics, social mind, and mores were used until the multivolume ethnographic work of William Isaac Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and American*, was published between 1918 and 1920.

One of the early attempts to systematize values research was by Gordon Allport, the renowned psychologist who studied prejudice and put forward the contact hypothesis. He and his associates devised a values test in 1931. However, the Allport-Vernon Study of Values was based on Eduard Spranger’s 1914 *Lebensformen*, which postulated that there were various types of men who could be identified by their dominant interests. Though it sought to analyze the values of and assign people to six basic areas (the theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political, and religious type of person), it suffered from the lack of clarity between preferences, attitudes, interests, beliefs, personality motives, choices, and behavioral intentions that are still conflated in many scales. But it has been widely used for differentiating different occupations or vocational interests and has documented some gender differences and values changes over the life span.

Much of the early academic work on culture was generated by students and colleagues inspired by Franz Boas at Columbia University who applied rigorous field work methods to do historical, anthropological, ethnographic area studies. Among these were classics such as *Coming of Age in Samoa* by Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict’s *Patterns of Culture* and *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, which profiled the Japanese.

These typified a generation of pre- and post-World War II studies of national character—extensions of personality psychology, represented by Geoffrey Gorer’s book on the American people and proposals of cultural dimensions by Alex Inkeles and Daniel Levinson. A dominant tradition of equating culture to nation was begun, and the main trend of cross-cultural communication and psychology studies generally treat geopolitical nations as units of measurement—the culture variable. Typical of these studies was the bicultural political analysis done by Seymour Martin Lipset in the 1960s, using values as a means of showing core cultural differences between Canada and the United States and eventually other nations.

A similar social behaviorist approach (George Herbert Mead’s pragmatics) led Charles Morris to devise his “13 Ways to Live” survey; the results were published as *Varieties of Human Value* in

1956. Though later revised by Paul Dempsey and William Dukes, these studies are mainly known for their early attempts at simplifying the variety of values into general categories.

Conceptualizing Cultural Patterns

Cultural determinism was a key component of early studies, suggesting that child-rearing practices and socialization processes wrote in a cultural code that guided appropriate cultural behavior. Sociologists affiliated with Talcott Parsons and proponents of structuralism put forward five contrasting pairs of cultural value patterns (later known as Parsons pattern variables) as part of their social action theory in 1951. This posited that each cultural group had to make choices between opposing pairs in their ordering of social behavior, such as deciding between the affective need for gratification versus neutral restraint, or a self- versus collectivity orientation.

Of this group, Clyde Kluckhohn wrote extensively toward clarifying the concepts of culture, values, and universal patterns. His ideas and definitions still guide research, primarily the notion that a value is an explicit or implicit conception of the desirable, that it can typify an individual or a group and that it guides the selection from available modes, means, and ends to action.

A review conducted by sociologist Inkeles and psychologist Levinson in 1954 found overlap of dimensions, subjective choices, inconsistent levels of analysis (individual, group or culture), and methodological weakness in studies conducted thus far. Arguing that national character best represented a modal standard (common national personality) and that a set of standard analytic issues were needed, they put forward three issues: (1) relation to authority, (2) conception of self (including masculinity and femininity), and (3) primary dilemmas and ways of dealing with them (including control of aggression as well as expression versus inhibition of affect). The manner by which each of these is handled in a cultural system was thought to have functional significance both for the individual personality and for the social system (suggesting a dual-level of analysis).

Others sought to show that cultural differences were not only national, but also ethnic, religious, or socioeconomical. C. Kluckhohn and Florence Rockwood (later to become his wife) also worked

under Boas at Columbia and in their field work sought to identify universals of culture based on her concept of general life situations—some of life’s universally experienced circumstances toward which different groups might have different values or belief orientations (“What is just, right, and true?”) manifest in different outward behaviors.

The study was conducted in five communities within a 40-mile radius of an area called Rimrock: Texan homesteaders, a Mormon settlement, a Mexican American village, a loosely bound Navaho band, and an integrated Zuni Pueblo tribe. Florence Kluckhohn joined a team of Harvard social scientists, which she later headed up as The Harvard Values Project, and produced the seminal *Variations of Value Orientations* in 1961. This book offered one of the first dimensional models of values with a range of alternatives, including orientations toward (a) human nature, (b) humans’ relation with their natural environment, (c) time, (d) activity, and (e) social relationships.

Etic and Emic Approaches

Kenneth Pike, applying the linguistic designations of phonetics and phonemics, suggested that there are also etic (universal comprehensive inventories) and emic (localized expressions) domains of culture. The social sciences, committed to the positivist, empirical paradigm, tend to aim toward the development of universal theories of culture, where the emic variations of one culture can be compared to etic measures derived from large multinational studies. But throughout its history, a split in the field is noted between the qualitative, critical discussion of values in their unique contexts (such as the early work of Melvin Kohn on parenting values across culture), in contrast to the more broadly comparative, often empirical attempts to establish a universal framework for values studies (such as more recent work by Çigdem Kagitçibasi, John Berry, and others on family value patterns).

Milton Rokeach is credited with bringing about workable conceptions and testable measures of values in his *The Nature of Human Values*. His work clarified distinctions between cultural norms, beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and values, as well as positing two types—terminal (ideal, end-state) values and instrumental (functional, daily decision) values—in the Rokeach Values Survey. He also contributed significantly to methodology with his

ranking, or values-list approach. He posited that as few as 18 terminal values are the key internal motivators that people use to formulate attitudes and opinions and that by measuring their relative ranking, one could predict a wide range of behavior from political preferences to religious beliefs. Rokeach's work had limitations due to its development in a specific American context, yet there have been many international applications, such as those working with Sik Hung Ng in 1982 that looked at values in nine countries. Norman Feather extended the work of Rokeach with his 1975 book, *Values in Education and Society*, which considered how values related to educational choice, adjustment, and school impact, to generations, cultures, special groups, and migrant assimilation. Feather's work has continued to seek to link values to the appraisal and outcome of actions in specific situations, applying motivation psychology to his expectancy-value theory.

Multination Studies of Cultural Values

Geert Hofstede is credited with the first complex statistical and large-scale multination analysis of human resource data from the Hermes corporation (IBM) in more than 40 countries and regions. From this he derived four dimensions (a 4-D model) of work-related values in 1980. Scholars around the world went to work testing and extending them to almost all areas of human culture. Michael Bond and the Chinese Cultural Connection formulated a distinctly emic questionnaire (the Chinese Value Survey) that confirmed three of Hofstede's dimensions and identified a new dimension called Confucian dynamism that Hofstede and Bond later renamed long/short-term orientation. Hofstede's second edition extensively documented the distinct features of this 5 dimensional values study model and increased the sample to 50 countries and three regions; his 1980 *Culture Consequences* has become one of the most cited works of all time in the Social Science Citation Index. Recently, he has added two more dimensions from the work of Michael Minkov that factor-analyzed the extensive data bank of the World Values Survey. Hofstede and his team also identified six dimensions for the analysis of specific organizational cultures; these are explained in *Cultures and Organizations: The Software of the Mind*.

Since the start of the 21st century, Robert House, Monsour Javidian, and their associates have led a

62-nation probe into leadership worldwide called the GLOBE project. Professing to extend Hofstede's work to nine organizational value dimensions, they sought to study these at "actual" and "ideal" levels across cultures. Though this is a rigorous, well-networked, multinational project, scholars have clashed as to whether the work actually extends Hofstede or measures something different—social norms and expectations—but it is increasingly used in management studies.

Ronald Inglehart, a political scientist, started gathering data for what became the World Values Survey (WVS) in 1970 and worked closely with the European Social Survey (ESS) to conduct repeated multination studies. His work particularly addresses the issue of how values shift as societies change. Based on multiple rounds of the WVS with time-series data now accounting for about 85% of the world population, Inglehart and his associates claim that economic development and cultural and political change happen together in coherent, somewhat predictable and foreseeable patterns, suggesting that some trajectories of socioeconomic change are more likely or preferred than others.

Their data analysis suggests, for example, that once a society starts industrializing, a related set of changes, from mass increases in mobility to diminishing differences in gender roles, is likely to appear. Inglehart's team further identified two main country-level value dimensions affecting development, one termed well-being versus survival and the other secular-rational versus traditional authority. These can be coaxially mapped to locate the past and present development trajectory of each country in the world for which data has been gathered. These significant and avowedly predictable shifts advance modernization theory, however controversial, to suggest a clear relationship between economic development and intergenerational changes in cultural values (specifically increased individual autonomy, gender equality, sexual freedom), democracy, and capitalism.

Toward an Integrated Theory of Values

Although Hofstede's work was based on post-hoc analysis, Shalom Schwartz is often credited with developing the most carefully constructed a priori study of values. Since putting his integrated theory of values forward in 1992, he and his associates have collected extensive and carefully controlled

data sets primarily from teachers, high school students, and workers in over 77 national cultures and regions (using both his more conceptual Schwartz Values Survey as well as a simplified Portrait Values Questionnaire for less educated or more implicit societies) to analyze values both at the individual and cultural level. Both sets of data are presented in circumplex models showing the relation of closely related value domains. Ten value types have been confirmed at the individual level (to which the nine types of consumer values in Lynn Kahle's list of values seem similar).

At the culture level, from 58 value items tested so far, 45 seem to have some level of shared meaning universally. These items cluster into seven domains that lie along three axial dimensions: embeddedness versus autonomy (intellectual and affective), hierarchy versus egalitarianism, and mastery versus harmony. They meet the basic requirements of human existence: (a) individual needs as biological organisms, (b) requisites of coordinated social interaction, and (c) survival and welfare needs of groups. Toward confirming a universal structure, Schwartz and his team have shown the correspondence to Hofstede dimensions, tested them with the ESS and Inglehart's WVS data, and shown their influence on a wide range of psychological situations (work, gender, political choices, religious orientation, and so on).

Future and Contexts

Though some argue against grand theories, the comparison of values, either at universal framework or socially situated contextual levels, continues to be a fertile and dynamic area of research. What has not been satisfactorily settled is the specific influence of values on certain behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, or opinions, and in many research designs, the conflation of these related core-culture dispositions or syndromes continues to be problematic, values either being attributed with too much or not differentiated carefully enough. The interaction of values with identity construals and social axioms is only starting to be researched. Work on specific value-application domains such as organizational behavior is promising, and other specific application areas need to be more clearly charted.

As this review has shown, the study of values seems to have historically come to the fore of

humanities, social science, and communication theorizing especially under certain conditions, namely (a) suspected pre- or early contact cultural distance; (b) intense cultural contact that accentuated perceived differentiation; (c) assumed imbalances of values, where one's group is considered superior or imposing, or the other's is considered weak or threatened; (d) ethnocentric projection or propagation of assumed good or successful values orientations; and (e) defense or concern over cultural erosion in periods of cultural transformation when cherished values or taboos are potentially breached. Any of these might motivate careful observers to seek to understand the salient reasons for why different social systems operate differently or have varied social emphases. Such motives keep reviving interest in values studies as an important focus in social analysis and theorizing and continue to guide this line of inquiry in our increasingly global, communicating, integrated yet still differentiated world.

Steve J. Kulich

See also Attitude Theory; Attribution Theory; Axiology; Contextual Theory of Interethnic Communication; Cultural Identity Theory; Cultural Types Theories; Values Theory: Sociocultural Dimensions and Frameworks

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VALUES THEORY: SOCIOCULTURAL DIMENSIONS AND FRAMEWORKS

As communication scholars grapple with how to analyze and correlate the central dimensions distinguishing various cultures, questions have been raised about how they, and especially values, can best be compared and contrasted. This is particularly important because values are a primary motivational construct that influences almost every aspect of human life, guiding us to consider what is desirable then energizing and directing behavior towards attaining those goals. But if two cultures seem to have diverse goals stemming from differing values, how do researchers go about measuring

those differences? Identifying the ways specific values or value clusters vary along dimensions has been an important goal for many social scientists.

The 19th-century approach considered a one-dimensional linear model in which tradition moved forward toward modernity. In laying the foundations for an approach to studying intercultural communication, Edward T. Hall posited that context and time were also contrasting dimensions. Harry Triandis, in similar proposals for the study of subjective culture, suggested that core cultural syndromes can be identified, such as orientations to individualism and collectivism. Thus began the quest of values theorists to explicate measurable and scientifically comparable dimensions and determine how these might be integrated into multidimensional frameworks.

Cultural anthropologist Hall proposed that cultures varied significantly across several domains. One was context: Some cultures especially value and pay attention to the complete communicative context (high-context, HC cultures), and some do not, placing more emphasis on the explicit verbal code (low-context, LC cultures). He further postulated variance regarding time: Some cultures value a linear, sequential, event-by-event approach to time (monochronic, M-time cultures), while others prefer a synchronic, multi-tasking, flexible attitude toward time (polychronic, P-time cultures). Hall's cultural types are often used in descriptive studies to discuss relative differences between cultural systems, but few scales or measures have been designed to test the specific degree to which cultures are contextually driven or time-variant.

Identifying Value Clusters and Patterns

In sociology, the functional structuralists Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils, in their theory of social action, argued that at least five contrasting pairs of cultural value patterns affect the decisions that every cultural group must choose between in their ordering of social institutions and behavior. These pattern variables were proposed as being the principal tools for structural analysis of differing societies:

- affectivity versus affective neutrality (the dilemma of whether to immediately gratify one's emotional needs or to be morally and emotionally disciplined),

- private versus collective interest (clarifying role-definition dilemmas, pursuing self-oriented private interests or the common interests of the collectivity),
- universalism versus particularism (endorsing a set of existential ideas or general normative rules, to taking the particularity of status in a relational system into account),
- achievement versus ascriptive role behavior (role attainment by personal performance vs. independent attributes recognized by a social system), and
- specificity versus diffuseness (detailed role expectations, as compared to a broader or unlimited range).

Though these concepts provided some breakthroughs, social scientists found it difficult to clearly delineate content for scale development, and others proposed similar ideas. In an attempt to systematize existing literature, sociologist Alex Inkeles and psychologist Daniel Levinson noted that studies carried out in the first half of the 20th century were characterized by extensive overlap, subjective choices, inconsistent levels of analysis (individual, group or culture), and methodological weakness. They argued that a set of standard analytic issues were needed, and their analysis yielded three:

1. relation to authority;
2. conception of self, including the concepts of masculinity and femininity; and
3. identification of primary dilemmas-conflicts and how to deal with them, including the control of aggression and the expression versus inhibition of emotion.

These laid the foundation for Geert Hofstede's later development of cultural dimensions. They further suggested that such issues needed both individual and cultural levels of analysis.

Framing Values Orientations

Florence Kluckhohn and her colleagues at the Harvard Values Project sought to operationalize Clyde Kluckhohn's theoretical definitions by framing values based on general life situations: Using questions about real life, universally experienced

situations, variations across groups could be identified. Initially tested on five distinct cultural communities in the Rimrock area of the American Southwest, she and Fred Strodtbeck later published *Variations of Value Orientations*, producing the first theoretically tested multilevel values orientations model (VOM), with a range of responses to each of the five:

1. a human nature orientation (evil—mixed—good),
2. a man and his natural environment orientation (subjugation—harmony—mastery),
3. a time orientation (toward past—present—future),
4. an activity orientation (being—being in becoming—doing), and
5. a social relationship orientation (lineality—collaterality—individualism).

F. Kluckhohn's team sought to include other domains such as orientations toward space (here, there, far away), and others proposed adding work, state-individual relationship or economic orientations, but none has been established as part of the VOM. The model has been used in divergent group conflict resolution, in examining changes in cultural mores over time, and to create cultural awareness of diversity in intercultural training, but has not led to standard measures or any degree of predictive validity.

Milton Rokeach did much to articulate the concept of values (as conceptions of the desirable, distinct from beliefs, norms, attitudes, opinions), operationalize the construct, and clarify specific values items by developing the Rokeach Values Survey (RVS) in 1973, which included 18 terminal (end-states of existence, goals in life) and 18 instrumental (modes of conduct) values. It became a widely used instrument in the decades following, especially because researchers could find specific values that differentiated various political, religious, economic, generational, and cultural groups and could equate these to attitude research. Though his relative ranking method made it easy to use, it presented statistical challenges.

Critiques of the instrument have largely centered on (a) the arbitrary and subjective criteria used for item selection (not necessarily representative or universally comprehensive) and (b) the lack

of dimensionality inherent in such a two-tier list of items. Though the RVS has been used in cross-cultural research, there is concern about its imposed-etic since the items were generated in a situated American context and about the ipsative nature of the survey, meaning that each participant provides the norm against which to measure item importance. The RVS can be credited with bringing new focus to values research and with highlighting the need for a more standardized measure of values.

Developing Measurable Dimensions

It was Hofstede who developed a model of measurable dimensions through his ground-breaking database of 116,000 respondents from 72 national subsidiaries using language versions collected from human resource surveys conducted at IBM. Hofstede focused his analysis on the work-related values of those questionnaires and initially covered 40 countries, which each had more than 50 respondents, and analyzed these in relation to national economic and demographic data to empirically identify and validate four independent dimensions labeled:

1. power distance (the extent to which less powerful members expect and accept that power is distributed unequally),
2. individualism-collectivism (from loose self-directed ties to integrated, cohesive loyal in-group ties),
3. uncertainty avoidance (the extent to which members feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations, and
4. masculinity-femininity (from distinct gender roles, assertive-tough-successful men and modest-tender-caring women to the overlap of emotional gender roles and both genders are more concerned with the quality of life).

Though these four dimensions were detected from work-related data, they have proven to be useful in many other spheres for comparing and contrasting national culture variations. Hofstede's cooperation with Michael Bond later inspired his network to study values of students in 23 countries using a decidedly Chinese Values Survey to see if

emic measures would replicate the etic dimensions Hofstede proposed, and indeed three of the dimensions were correlated, revealing a new dimension, initially called Confucian work dynamism and later renamed:

5. long-term/short-term orientation (from societies in which members primarily seek future rewards through adaptation-thrift-perseverance to those who focus on the present by maintaining face-fulfilling social obligations and the traditions of the past).

In Hofstede's extensive 2001 update of *Culture's Consequences*, a broader sample of 50 countries and three multicountry regions were analyzed, and the dimensions were more fully developed and compared across cultures. His work has formed the backbone for much cross-cultural analysis, training, and theorizing in the decades since.

Nevertheless, there have been critiques of (a) the representativeness of the source of the sample and the varying country sample sizes; (b) the level of analysis, taking nation as culture and ignoring individual value orientations and their variation; and (c) the universality or meaning of the dimensions in specific contexts. Hofstede and a host of cross-cultural researchers have answered each of these critiques, and the Hofstede 5-D framework continues to be the most widely used in research and training.

There have been several attempts to improve the Hofstede set of dimensions, one by the business trainer, Fons Trompenaars, who with Charles Hamden Turner posited seven dimensions (an eclectic mix of Hall, F. Kluckhohn, and renamed Hofstede dimensions), which enjoys much popularity in business training, especially in Europe. Peter Smith's statistical analysis combined with Trompenaars's 43 nation database produced only two distinct factors: one similar to individualism-collectivism and a type of democratic market versus a more socialist syndrome (where Eastern European countries cluster at one end). The second project is the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effective (GLOBE) survey that extended Hofstede's original five dimensions to nine and then analyzed each in two ways—as practices (as is) and as values (as it should be, the desired level). To the original Hofstede constructs of uncertainty avoidance and power distance, the Ind/Col scale

was split into institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, while the Mas/Fem scale was split into gender egalitarianism, performance orientation, and humane orientation, and time was added with the future orientation. Some of the GLOBE's most interesting findings derive from comparing respondents' values with their practices.

Nonetheless, the project has been criticized for measuring different content than Hofstede—measuring perceived or desired societal norms, not personal values—and confusing the two levels of analysis (individual and national). A number of academic articles alternatively defend and criticize either GLOBE or Hofstede—they are generally not seen as compatible frameworks, even though that may have been the original intent.

Integrating Dimensions into Frameworks

Several other Hofstede critiques were addressed by Shalom Schwartz and his associates, who through an extensive literature review sought to first develop a comprehensive values theory (an a priori theoretical approach compared to Hofstede's post-hoc analysis), pool values items in types and integrate those in a continuum, gather data from more normative representatives of national cultures (primarily from teachers and pupils), and did not assume that values construed at the individual level (my values) would reflect the same dimensions as pooled country data (national culture level). For each item selected from his review, Schwartz aimed for consistency of meaning across cultures. To develop a universal measure of values, he added representative emic (localized) items for further testing. Between 1988 and 1993 Schwartz surveyed 25,863 respondents including teachers, students, and adults of divergent occupations in 44 countries, using what has now become the 57-item Schwartz Value Survey (SVS).

Analysis of the data led to Schwartz's theory of individual-level values, where 10 dimensions were identified as having cross-cultural salience: self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, universalism (and areas originally thought to be universal, such as spirituality, turned out to locate in varied dimensions or not emerge in different religious traditions). Using multidimensional

scaling, these value dimensions were plotted next to those most related and opposite those most variant in a circumplex model. Schwartz thus produced the first integrated picture of how various value domains relate across cultures. Replication data from many studies have mostly confirmed the structure. Two axial dimensions emerge across the 10 individual types, namely

1. self-transcendence versus self-enhancement and
2. conservation versus openness to change.

SVS items might appear rather abstract for some social groups, so a complementary Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) was developed for less conceptually sophisticated populations, and studies using the PVQ confirmed the original values structure.

Believing that the principles that characterize individuals and those that guide society are different, Schwartz and his associates carefully reanalyzed the data, determining that 45 items seemed to have near equivalence of meaning across cultures. These were analyzed and plotted multidimensionally to yield three basic dimensions of culture-level variance, along which are seven distinct culture types:

1. autonomy (intellectual and affective) versus embeddedness (the nature of relationship and boundaries between the person and the group),
2. egalitarianism versus hierarchy (the way in which the desire for cooperative, productive activity among societal members is accomplished), and
3. harmony versus mastery (the regulation of relations of fitting in vs. directive action among people and nature).

To date, 76 national cultures have been mapped (with a sample well over 70,000). As in Hofstede, transnational regions with similar values structures can be identified, reflecting the influence of their shared geography, ecology, experience, sociopolitical structures, institutions, and more. As comprehensive as the model appears to be, it has not achieved much use in training or in descriptive comparison of cultures.

Other Dimensional Models

The work of Ronald Inglehart and his associates in the World Values Survey (WVS) focused more specifically on assessing political values toward developing a theory of modernization. But it has developed the largest sample (more than 250,000 respondent cases up through the wave of data collection in 2000) from societies now covering more than 85% of the world's population. Guided by two main hypotheses, values shifts in societies can be explained:

- a scarcity hypothesis (where an individual's priorities reflect the economic environment, putting the greatest subjective value on material goods that are in relatively short supply) and
- a socialization hypothesis (where a substantial time lag is involved for one's basic values to emerge, reflecting the conditions that prevailed during one's preadult years).

After five rounds of the WVS since 1970, several salient dimensions have emerged by which modernization processes can not only be observed, but possibly predicted:

- traditional versus secular-rational values (from maintaining traditional values, roles, relationships, obligations, and/or authority, often in more agrarian societies to showing more concern for nonreligious, bureaucratic, environmental values in more urbanized societies) and
- survival versus self-expression values (from emphasis on economic and physical security above all as opposed to an emphasis of self-expression, subjective well-being, and quality of life concerns).

Scores for these two dimensions are plotted coaxially to show a complex mix and balance of values (not the simple tradition to modernity line once assumed).

Recent factorial analysis of the Inglehart WVS data by Michael Minkov produces three dimensions. The first—"exclusionism versus universalism"—shows close correspondence to the well-established dimension of individualism-collectivism (or what

Schwartz calls self-direction-embeddedness). But Minkov's work suggests two previously unidentified values, which Hofstede has now added to his Values Survey Model for 2008:

6. indulgence versus restraint (for the first time confirming what Parsons foresaw as a range in affectivity and discipline) and
7. monumentalism versus self-effacement (Minkov called it flexumility, a combination of self-flexibility and humility).

Thus analysis of Inglehart's political-values data has both confirmed and added to the Hofstede's work-values dimensions, providing a more comprehensive set of dimensions. Further reanalysis of values data banks might produce more, or allow these current seven dimensions to be more fully understood or applied to other areas of human choice and behavior.

Another challenge in the values literature is the close conceptual association with beliefs. To address this issue, Michael Bond, Kwok Leung, and a host of collaborators set out to identify dimensions of beliefs. The belief construct is easily conflated with religious or ideological orientations, so the term social axioms was settled on to refer to the principles by which we believe our social world operates. Five salient dimensions at the individual level were identified, and they have apparently close conceptual overlap with F. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's original value orientations (listed in similar order): (1) social cynicism, (2) spirituality, (3) fate control, (4) reward for application, and (5) social complexity. When the data were analyzed at the culture level, only two clear factors emerged:

1. dynamic externality and
2. social cynicism.

More study needs to be done to consider how these relate to or affect values structures and to consider how implicit measures of personality or attitudes affect values.

Much has been accomplished in mapping out key value dimensions that allow us to assess human similarity and social variation across cultures. The individualism and collectivism dimension has been clearly the most studied, though Harry Triandis

and his associates have shown ideocentric and allo-centric variations for each, and Daphna Oyserman's team suggests that these concepts in varied research projects are not always consistent. Many cultural psychologists suggest that a self-construal dimension is more salient, with some cultures being more independent and others interdependent in their orientation. These ongoing scholarly debates, new data analyses, and existing data-set reanalysis show that the endeavor of dimensionalizing cultures that Hofstede helped launch is still alive and well, moving us forward in providing measures by which cultures (or elements thereof) can be scientifically compared and contrasted.

Steve J. Kulich

See also: Complexity and Communication; Cultural Types Theories; Culture and Communication; History and Cross-Cultural Communication; Values Studies;

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VARIABLE ANALYTIC TRADITION

In the simplest sense, a variable analytic approach to research means that researchers build scientific explanations by considering the effects of a variable or set of variables on another variable or variables. One application of this approach is the simple scientific experiment in which the researcher manipulates one variable known as the independent variable to observe the effect on another variable called the dependent variable. For example, researchers might expose two audiences to the same persuasive presentation, but manipulate credibility of the message source by leading one audience to believe the speaker is highly qualified while leading the other audience to believe that the speaker is a low-credible source. In this way, the researcher can observe the effect of credibility on dependent variables such as attitude toward the topic of the presentation.

Experiments designed to determine cause and effect relationships represent the purest form of science. The variable analytic tradition is important because it was the fulcrum, or pivot, for the shift to the scientific study of communication. The variable analytic approach continues to serve an important

role in contemporary communication research. Although the variable analytic approach is important to the progress of scientific communication theory, it depends on a set of central assumptions.

The central assumptions underlying the variable analytic approach to communication research include the following: (a) social interaction can be reduced to distinct, measurable variables, and (b) these variables are related in an organized and systematic way rather than in a random pattern. Although it is convenient to describe the variable analytic approach in terms of simple cause-effect relationships between two variables, the overwhelming majority of experiments in communication research are far more complex. Most manipulations of independent variables involve more levels of the factor. For example, rather than merely presenting high- and low-credible presentations, researchers might present high-, moderate-, and low-credible versions. Furthermore, researchers typically manipulate more than one independent variable in experiments known as multiple factor designs. In an attitude-change study, for instance, both source credibility and language intensity might be manipulated so that all combinations of levels of the independent variables are presented to audiences. Multivariate designs allow researchers to investigate the effects of one or more independent variables on multiple dependent variables at the same time. Richard Rudner described research that is conducted for the purpose of theory testing as operating in the context of validation.

However, in the 1970s, a selection of variables included in published scientific studies of communication often relied very little on formal theory in the selection of the variables. That is not uncommon, as Rudner observed, early in the evolution of a discipline or field. At that stage, researchers are most interested in the basic relationships among variables. Rudner describes this research phase as the context of discovery. The simultaneous emergence of the variables analytic approach and a scientific approach to the study of communication led to the erroneous depiction of the variable analytic approach as atheoretical. In contemporary research, however, choices regarding which independent and dependent variables should be included in a study and how those variables should

be measured or manipulated depend heavily on existing theory. In fact, the vast majority of experiments published in scholarly communication journals in the past 20 years are explicitly designed to test specific theories.

The major criteria for evaluating research conducted under the variable analytic tradition are internal validity and external validity. Internal validity depends on the degree to which the effects observed on the dependent variable are solely due to the independent variables rather than some extraneous factor. Donald Campbell and Julian Stanley carefully examined the factors that jeopardize internal validity in research focused on human behavior, and recommended specific details for the minimum requirements for valid research designs. External validity refers to the degree to which the observed results in an experiment can be generalized beyond the specific parameters of the experiment. For example, external validity in an attitude change experiment requires that the outcome of the experiment be similar even when different speakers, audiences, and messages are used. Theorists' confidence in the external validity of an experiment increases as the experiment is replicated using different samples, under different experimental conditions, and measuring variables in different ways.

Although the variable analytic tradition is most closely associated with the scientific experiment, the approach to communication inquiry has been extended to correlational studies and literature reviews. Techniques for analyzing data such as various forms of causal modeling, or the statistical establishment of the multiple causal pathways among a set of variables, which did not exist when the variable analytic tradition was formulated, have evolved and are now available to communication researchers. Also, developments in meta-analysis have provided methods for calculating the average effect of independent variables on dependent variables for an entire body of research literature. These techniques also allow researchers to test the host of hypotheses using the data from already published studies.

Michael J. Beatty

See also Empiricism; Epistemology; Inquiry Processes; Scientific Approach; Theory; Validity and Reliability

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VERNACULAR DISCOURSE

The rhetorical study of vernacular is the examination of discourse—conceived broadly—that emanates from and is directed to silenced and underrepresented individuals and communities. With burgeoning scholarly interest in the politics and practice of power, including the study of both domination and subordination, has come the recognition that scholars must attend not only to the discourse of the traditionally powerful, but also to the communicative practices of the often ignored and silenced. Vernacular is crucial to this interest in power; in a community's vernacular discourse are insights into its conception of itself, its negotiation of its identity, and its interactions with other communities. The study of vernacular is often the study of the discourse of traditionally disenfranchised, including racial-ethnic minorities—African Americans, Latinos/as, Asian Americans, Native Americans—gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual populations, and straight White women. Though much, if not most, of the emphasis has been on these communities, vernacular is not limited to the traditionally marginalized. Instead vernacular discourses may also be conceived of as those that vary markedly in content and politics from dominant discourses.

Although specific rhetorical attention to this discourse as vernacular is relatively recent, generally marked by the 1995 essay “The Critique of Vernacular Discourse,” by Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, rhetorical scholars have attended to vernacular discourse for some time. Much of this work has served in part as a project of recovery in which discourses of marginalized communities have been anthologized and analyzed. This revalorizing approach to vernacular has served the crucial historical function of rewriting rhetorical histories in more inclusive ways. Not surprisingly, most attention has been given to women, mostly

White, and African Americans, with limited emphasis on other populations. This earlier work heavily emphasized traditional rhetorical forms of discourse, with considerable focus on the compilation of speeches. It has often functioned in part as a celebratory practice, delineating the discourse of the community on its own terms, but offering little critical reflection on the ways in which vernacular can serve larger politics of domination.

More recently, scholars interested in vernacular have directed attention to several projects that have broadened its parameters. Although early rhetorical attention mostly emphasized speeches, rhetorical scholars have argued for an expanded notion of public discourse, noting that marginalized communities may adopt a range of discursive forms, including such texts as speeches, poetry, autobiography, performance, art, conversation, and online discussions. In part, this expanded conception of discourse is designed to capture the many different ways that communities talk. In addition, scholars have argued that the study of speeches only may in fact reproduce an incomplete collection of discourse. They note that the speech, as a form of discourse, is often already a production of a privileged community, for the giving of speeches requires that one has the cultural power to access the podium.

Finally, the study of vernacular is also designed to include the study of the everyday and the mundane. Across this expanded notion of discourse is an underlying argument about power. In concert with the critical rhetoric project involving obviously public messages produced by prominent individuals, the study of vernacular notes that power operates not only in top-down or juridical ways, but also on an everyday or micropolitical operation of power. To access the micropolitics of power requires the study of a broad range of discourse.

The emphasis on the micropolitics of power serves as a reminder that vernacular discourse emerges not just in response to dominant discourse, but also in productive ways—that is, vernacular discourse is not limited to contesting dominant discourse, but importantly it serves to define and reflect a community's definition of itself. Thus, studies, for instance, of low-rider culture among Mexican Americans and Chicanas/os help illustrate the ways that Mexican American and Chicana/o culture emerges and develops. Similarly, analyses of

rap and hip hop may provide insight into how African Americans argue against White communities, but as significantly, they also detail the specificity of hip hop culture in and of itself. In these ways, the study of vernacular discourse reflects the commitment to give rhetorical attention to the voices of communities that too often have been silenced. Here, the project very much still includes the recovery aspect of early vernacular studies and argues that with recovery comes enhanced understanding of the specific rhetorical dynamics of various communities and cultures.

With the attention to the recovery of vernacular discourse has come the argument that vernacular discourse should be subject to the same critical analysis as dominant discourse. Scholars have argued for consideration of the ways vernacular discourse might serve both liberatory and nonliberatory ends. Important is the argument that marginalized voices are not inherently resistive; instead, they may and often do work in concert with dominant voices. This aspect of the vernacular project, then, adds to theories of power and seeks to detail the ways that marginalized communities and vernacular discourse may reproduce larger politics of domination. For instance, queer studies have documented the heteronormativity, or the idea that heterosexuality is the norm, that underlies some queer discourse, while race scholars have traced the misogyny as well as the White privilege that permeates some discourse among racial-ethnic communities. The analysis of vernacular also reveals the resistive potential of vernacular discourse. Feminist analyses, for instance, document the ways women have reconceptualized and expanded gender ideals.

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See also Critical Race Theory; Critical Rhetoric; Critical Theory; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Queer Theory; Whiteness Theory

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VIOLENCE AND NONVIOLENCE IN MEDIA STUDIES

Violence in the media has been among the most vehemently discussed issues in public debates about media and a major concern in numerous scholarly traditions of media research as well. Typically, debates about media violence have centered on the question of causality—specifically, whether violence in the media causes real-life acts of violence. Researchers in the effects tradition looked for evidence of the impact of exposure to media violence, while scholars in later approaches like cultivation research and cultural studies addressed broader long-term implications of media violence on culture and politics. In light of questions raised by the latter approaches about the meanings and consequences of violence in the media, the philosophy of nonviolence has also been proposed as a global theoretical framework within which to critique media violence.

Nonviolence, as adopted from the thought of Mahatma Gandhi, shifts the focus of inquiry from questions about media as a possible cause of real-life violence to broader questions about the place of media discourses of violence in the context of real-world violence, especially in the form of terrorism and war. Nonviolence, like cultural studies, shows how certain narrow, historically and culturally specific ideological views of violence become naturalized in media discourses into appearing as natural, universal, and commonsensical. However,

nonviolence derives from a broader set of concerns than cultural studies in that it is driven by an ethical imperative not only toward politics or social justice, but also toward the recognition and reduction of the conditions of violence in the real world. Nonviolence, in other words, informs media studies with the critical intellectual resources to contest the naturalization of violence in media discourses and by extension the consequences in the real world of such discourses as well.

Violence in Media Studies

Violence in the media has been a long-standing concern of researchers, regulators, parents, and media creators. Even in the early years of mass media, concerns about the possible impact of violent depictions in media leading to real-life violence appeared from time to time. One of the earliest large-scale media research projects, the Payne Fund Studies of cinema, examined among other topics the possible relation between juvenile delinquency and movie watching, lending support to public concerns that children engaging in criminal behavior may have been influenced by movies. By the 1950s, concerns about crime and media had extended to comic books with their graphic depictions of crime, violence, and sexuality, leading to Senate investigations on the topic as well. In the following decade, as concerns about social and political unrest grew, television violence was studied elaborately as part of a broader commission on violence. Since the 1980s, popular music and music videos have come under scrutiny and criticism, most notably from the efforts of Tipper Gore and the Parents Music Resource Center, for allegedly promoting violence and glorifying criminal lifestyles. In more recent years, the graphic depiction of gory violence in video games has been a matter of concern as well, especially in the wake of unexpected acts of mass violence like those in Columbine High School. Although most concerns about media violence have revolved around graphic portrayal and possible imitation by audiences, somewhat different concerns have emerged about the media's role in representing another form of violence: war. Television news was criticized for sanitizing coverage of the 1991 Gulf War, and media coverage since the attacks of September 2001 and the subsequent war on Iraq have all been critiqued a great deal from various standpoints.

Causality and Effects Research

Violence in the media has been a long standing concern in public debates about the media. However, theoretical approaches to its study have varied. The question of causality, which often underlies debates on violence in the media, has been more central to some theoretical approaches than others. Effects research sought to investigate the causal hypothesis closely, employing rigorous laboratory methodologies and experiments. The findings of such studies have not necessarily provided closure on the question of whether media violence causes real-life violence. According to one review of such studies, roughly the same percentage of lab experiments claim evidence for and against the existence of media effects, and a fairly large percentage of experiments find no evidence either way. Despite the enduring importance of the causal question in debates about media violence, other questions have since emerged to usefully guide the field in its engagement with this topic.

Cultivation Research

Cultivation research sought to shift the focus of inquiry from immediate, short-term, behavioral responses in laboratory settings toward more naturalistic, long-term influences of the media environment on audience perceptions of reality in general. The work of George Gerbner has explored various aspects of media violence in terms of institutional imperatives, textual features, and audience perceptions. Gerbner's critique begins with the recognition of the institutional factors that lead to the production of what he calls commercialized violence on television, refuting the common argument made by media producers that they are merely responding to the market's demand for violence. The critique of commercialized violence has been supported by numerous extensive content analyses of television violence, which show a skewed world of characters and interactions. Cultivation theory does not propose a direct model of causal influences from this skewed world upon its audiences, however. Following Gerbner's predilection for approaching television as storytelling, cultivation examines the broader sensibilities about violence that television viewing cultivates on a long-term basis. Cultivation research suggests that violence in the media does not cause real-life violence, but

certainly affects the way audiences think about real-life issues, including violence and crime. In particular, heavy television viewers tend to believe television's overrepresentation of crime and violence and overestimate real-life violence more than light viewers (the mean-world syndrome), leading to criticism that the cultivation of fear by a media environment skewed by commercialized violence has led to support for harsh law-and-order policies and politics.

Cultural Studies

Cultural studies approaches to media violence have been concerned with shifting the focus of debate from moral panics and questions of causality towards a discussion of the meanings of media violence in everyday life. Some scholars have questioned the validity of the notion of media violence altogether, preferring to approach it not so much in terms of its relationship to real-life violence, but more so as one more element in the production of media texts. From this approach, media violence is seen on the same terms as say, music, lighting, drama, or comedy, and not as the object of public concerns. Cultural studies approaches have also engaged with other dimensions of media violence sometimes neglected in other approaches, such as aesthetics and pleasure. At the same time, cultural studies approaches seek to situate violence within broader discussions of politics and power as well, particularly in terms of class, race, and gender.

Following the important role played by television during the 1991 Gulf War, scholars sought to bring together the concerns of cultural studies and cultivation research. Justin Lewis called for empirical audience research using cultivation's precise techniques, but informed by cultural studies' broader philosophical and political predilections. His study with Michael Morgan examined the way American audiences thought about war in relation to their knowledge, or lack thereof, of U.S. politics and foreign policy. Later studies demonstrated how violence in the form of war was made acceptable to the public through selective media discourses and misinformation. The attacks of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were also examined in numerous studies about the role of media and particularly television. Drawing on some of the approaches discussed

above and using methodologies such as content analysis, scholars offered critiques among other things of the news media's complicity in taking a brand marketing rather than a serious journalistic approach to the coverage of war.

Summary

Although recent theoretical approaches in media studies have broadened the discussion of violence from a focus on instances of violent actions in the media and their possible causal relation to individual acts of aggressive behavior, certain fundamental questions remain about the deeper assumptions that underlie how violence is considered. Certain assumptions about violence in media and media studies have been traced to larger paradigms in modern intellectual history, associated most notably with Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud. For example, the unquestioned use of ideas such as survival of the fittest in a range of popular culture and everyday life contexts from reality shows to wildlife programs may be related to a narrow interpretation of Darwin that emphasizes the role of conflict and competition at the expense of cooperation and coexistence. Certain approaches in media studies, such as effects research, may be based directly or indirectly on Freudian assumptions about aggression and violence. Even in critical approaches that engage more explicitly with broader themes of social history, violence may be treated as secondary to other master concepts. For example, cultural studies critiques may approach media violence essentially as a symptom of a wider social and political condition, such as a capitalist political economy, in which commercial media fail in their duties towards informing democratic citizenry and may not explicitly question certain assumptions about violence itself. A more direct engagement with the question of violence in media and media studies may be possible by turning to the philosophy of nonviolence.

Nonviolence

Violence in the media can be critiqued, from the perspective of nonviolence, in a manner that engages some of the foundational assumptions about violence in nature and human history. Nonviolence illumines violence in the media and

how it constitutes the social, political, and economic relations of modern society. In order to appreciate how nonviolence works as a critique of violence, it is useful to dispel some common misperceptions about it. Modern and Western observers sometimes conflate nonviolence with pacifism and see it only as a political tactic. Other simplifications view it as a personal belief in refraining from retaliating when harmed. However, the political, tactical, and personal dimensions of nonviolence are only a part of a much wider philosophy that grapples with violence and existence at various levels ranging from the spiritual to the environmental.

Origins

Known in Sanskrit as Ahimsa, nonviolence is associated with three religious traditions of the Indian subcontinent: Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. In more recent and modern contexts, nonviolence has been interpreted extensively in Gandhian thought. Gandhi's explication of nonviolence was by no means confined to his own Hindu upbringing, but emerged from his encounters with it in other traditions as well, ranging from other religions to the writings of Leo Tolstoy. Although Gandhian nonviolence has gained global appeal for its political implications, what is relevant to students of social sciences is the broader critique of modernity as a way of life and a way of knowing, a critique often taken up in postcolonial approaches as well.

Gandhi's Critique of Violence and Modernity

Gandhi viewed nonviolence not merely as a tool for political protest, but as a universal truth. Truth, for Gandhi, was inseparable from nonviolence, and virtually a paramount ideal. Having once said that God is truth, Gandhi later began to say that truth is God. From this perspective, Gandhian thought sees nonviolence as an essential method for understanding the truth of things and conversely, sees as truth the innate nonviolence of nature and humanity. Gandhi, in other words, viewed violence as an aberration from nature and from human nature. He attributed the pervasiveness of violence in contemporary society largely to modernity's ways of knowing and living. Modern science, for him, failed to apprehend truth because of its avoidance of emotional experience and ethical guidance in

observation leading to partial knowledge at best, and a tolerance for untold cruelty at worst. Modernity, or what he often called modern civilization, was an expression of violence at every level, from intrapersonal violence in the form of fear, selfishness, and competitiveness to interpersonal violence between groups and nations, and finally violence in numerous forms against nature in general. For Gandhi, European imperialism was an expression of this violence rather than the other way around. It was a failure of knowledge as much as a failure of ethics.

Nonviolence as a Critique of Violence

Gandhian nonviolence did not, however, advocate a total rejection of either modernity or the social world, but instead informed his engagement with both in the form of his notions of universalism and of social and environmental justice. Gandhi, in a sense, broadened nonviolence from a religious philosophy and practice into a critical social philosophy. Scholars have described two forms of nonviolence in his thought: heroic nonviolence, which is more akin to religious renunciation in a spirit of martyrdom even, and civic nonviolence, which is engaged with the world in all its forms. As part of such a worldly engagement, nonviolence became for Gandhi not only a strategy, but a critique of violence as well, premised on one key intellectual and ethical recognition: that completely avoiding violence may be impossible, but minimizing it was not only possible but necessary.

Gandhian nonviolence may be summarized as follows: (a) Truth and nonviolence are identical, implying that only the avoidance of harmful thoughts and intentions could lead us to understand the truth, and conversely, that human nature is in its true form nonviolent (implying that violence is thus an aberration); (b) even if human nature is in its true form, human existence, like any life in nature, is based on some amount of violence for its sustenance that cannot be completely eliminated, but human beings have an obligation to nature and society to minimize the violence their existence imposes on the world; (c) minimizing violence is thus the main ethical imperative of nonviolence, and doing so requires an ability to recognize the conditions of our existence in terms of environmental, economic, or political relations,

and this ability is better derived from a plurality of cultural perspectives rather than a singular or unilateral one (e.g., by seeking universal sensibility among different religions rather than proclaiming the superiority of any one over the others).

Nonviolence in Media Studies

Nonviolence draws attention to the broader assumptions media may be naturalizing about violence and human nature. From the perspective of nonviolence, media discourses seem to depict violence as something natural, eternal, and inevitable. Three themes have been proposed for further research on this note: nature, history, and culture. Nature may be largely seen as violent by media audiences because of the overrepresentation of hunting and killing in wildlife programs and the subsequent glorification of the same in titles and promos. History may be seen as more violent than it was, once again because of the selective emphasis placed on weapons and battles in certain television-history genres. Culture may be seen as a cause of conflict especially in the context of the rise of the clash-of-civilizations thesis as an explanation for recent conflicts.

However, each of these themes finds specific critical refutation in Gandhian nonviolence. Gandhi's distinction between acknowledging the existence of violence in nature and accepting all violence as somehow natural, shows how media discourses may skew the representation of the place of violence in nature altogether. Gandhi's views on history are also instructive; he argued that if history appears as a sequence of wars, it is not because it was innately violent, but because these wars stand out as exceptions to an otherwise peaceful course. Finally, Gandhi's views on cultural differences and causes of conflict provide a strong critique of the clash-of-civilizations argument. For Gandhi, cultural differences were not the real source of conflict since he believed deeply in a universal notion of humanity. Violence, according to him, arose when there was an alienation within from that humanity, caused, for example, by modern industrial civilization, and not by mere differences in faith or culture.

Nonviolence in media studies thus broadens the scope of the discussion on violence, in the media, and in real life. It shifts the focus from direct, behavioral effects, and instead approaches media

depictions of violence as part of a broader cultural problem that stands in the way of a more truthful recognition of the conditions of real-life violence. It adds to the findings of cultivation research about the implications of systemic media messages for audiences and to cultural studies' broader concerns about violence as a category of popular understanding. It provides a theoretical foothold to engage with media violence not merely in terms of instances of depictions of violent actions, but in terms of broader discourses such as accounts of conflict and war in general. In particular, it enables a close reading of popular contemporary media mythologies about violence, nature, civilizational difference, and war. Finally, nonviolence encourages a more central place for violence within theories of communication in particular and society in general rather than as a secondary consequence of other master concepts by following the Gandhian injunction to recognize and minimize violence as a condition of existence.

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See also Cultivation Theory; Cultural Studies; Hindu Communication Theory; Media Effects Theories; Peace Theories; Postcolonial Theory; Public Opinion Theories

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VISUAL COMMUNICATION THEORIES

In the 21st century, visual modes of communication will become more dominant and more important to cultural functioning than verbal modes. Indeed, many developments in visual technology throughout the 20th century have laid the groundwork for this revolution. Visual media are more available, less expensive, and almost impossible to censor, and the culture is increasingly embracing the use of visual media for entertainment, education, and communication. The sheer quantity of visual representations is now such that the number of images encountered by an average person in an average day could hardly be counted. Scholars commented on the increasing visualization of communication throughout the 20th century, but the study of the communicative function and rhetorical power of images has expanded dramatically over the last 2 decades.

Visual communication studies are distinct from other theories of communication not so much by their theoretical background or methodology as by their targets of analysis. Since literally everything that can be seen can be analyzed and interpreted, the types of visual phenomena studied continue to expand. A brief list of the types of visuals that have received the most scholarly attention would include fine art, news photography, technical and scientific graphics, images in advertising, moving pictures (fictional, documentary, news), and still images—and more recently, video, disseminated through the Internet.

Theories of visual communication do not so much compete as offer complementary angles from which to view the many communicative aspects of visual representations. Visual communication scholars are less interested in debunking or overthrowing older theories than in developing new methods for shedding more light on the many complex ways in which images mean.

Semiotics

A starting point for any theory of visual communication is the understanding that virtually any image can be analyzed as a type of sign. Semiotic theories

are based on the assumption that virtually anything can be a sign or symbol, which means that it stands in for and elicits in the viewer's mind an object, person, or concept separate from the sign itself. Even visual phenomena that occur naturally, without communicative intent, can be interpreted as signs. An example of such a natural sign or indexical sign would be a tree bending in the wind, which one might interpret to mean that a storm is approaching. However, nearly all semiotic analysis of visuals is centered on those that are constructed by humans and intended to represent something that the viewer presumably will recognize.

What makes semiotics so applicable to the study of visual communication is the further assumption that signs can have (some say inevitably have) a complex and subtle array of direct, indirect, concrete, and abstract meanings. A flag, for example, stands for a particular nation, but it can also stand for patriotism or nationalism and for victory on the battlefield. Semiotic analysis works to tease out these complex and more subtle meanings and to determine the ways in which viewers' responses are influenced by visual elements that draw on established (if implicit and never directly expressed) cultural codes, values, and icons.

For example, Roland Barthes distinguishes between an image's denotation and its connotation. An image's denotation is simply the content of the image. The connotation, on the other hand, includes all of the values and emotions that the image may trigger in a viewer. The denotation of a picture of a mother and child is simply the two human beings, along with any other concrete objects contained within the frame. Its connotations, however, may include motherhood, protectiveness, comfort, or anxiety, among many others, depending on the viewer. The possible connotations of any image are influenced by its framing, composition, colors, and so on, along with the content itself. However, the connotations a viewer perceives from an image are at least equally driven by the internalized social and cultural codes that the viewer brings to bear when responding to the image.

As Barthes points out, photographs can be classified as indexical signs because just as a tree bending is a physical result of the wind acting against it, photographs are the physical result of light striking an object and reflecting back into the camera lens. In other words, although one can paint a person or

object purely from imagination—in fact, one can paint pictures of objects that have never existed, such as unicorns—a photograph cannot exist without the existence (or previous existence) of the person or object that it portrays. A photograph of my brother sitting in my kitchen proves that, at some point in time, my brother was actually sitting in my kitchen. Unlike paintings or drawings, the photograph proves the reality of what it represents.

Of course, the previous two sentences seem naively anachronistic, given the relative ease with which anyone with a PC and Photoshop can manipulate images in a manner once available only to the highly skilled professional. At the high end of the technological spectrum, entire buildings, cities, and landscapes are created in the computer, and live actors not only move against these backgrounds, but interact with them in often convincing ways. Although the viewer is aware, of course, that the film being viewed consists of actors in a fictionalized representation, he or she may not be aware that the boulder crashing down the hill past the actors never actually existed except as a digital creation. The inherent link between the photograph and the historical reality that it purports to represent has been irrevocably severed. Others have pointed out, however, that through staging, cropping, and darkroom techniques, photographic images have been manipulated since the invention of the medium. Ansel Adams, certainly the most famous naturalistic American photographer, spent countless darkroom hours, manipulating the play of light and shadow in his nature photographs.

Perception Theory

Perception theory is a term applied by Ann Marie Barry to theories based on neurological research. Such research was once limited to the study of how individuals perceive patterns when faced with visual phenomena. However, with the advent of increasingly sophisticated magnetic imaging technologies, researchers can now see, in real time, how individuals' brains respond to specific visual stimuli. By mapping the areas of the brain in terms of their primary functions and seeing which parts of the brain light up with electrical activity in response to different visual stimuli, researchers can determine how individuals are responding both cognitively and emotionally to a variety of images.

The term perception theory can also be applied to the far more speculative and wide-ranging work of theorists such as James Elkins and W. J. T. Mitchell. Elkins and Mitchell, both professors of art history, often range beyond their home discipline to discuss questions about how people respond to a variety of image types, along with questions about how, why, and when people interpret a series of dots, lines, and colors as a picture, or representational image, of something recognizable. Indeed, no comprehensive theory of visual communication will get far without addressing the fundamental questions of how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to images.

A basic assumption behind all types of perception theory is that the physical world does not consist of coherent visual patterns that we humans simply pick up with our eyes as we go through life. Rather, these patterns (which we recognize as representational images) are constructed within the human brain; they both reflect and reinforce individuals' existing assumptions about the nature of reality, and they are driven by social and cultural assumptions as much as by the hard-wiring of the human brain.

Visual Rhetoric

With its interdisciplinary nature and its borrowing from areas such as media studies and cultural studies, the field of rhetoric spent much of the 20th century expanding its sphere of analysis beyond speeches and other explicitly persuasive—and almost entirely verbal—texts to study a much wider range of symbols. If semioticians could argue that a wide range of phenomena could be considered symbolic, hence communicative, certainly rhetoricians could argue that just as wide a range of phenomena could be said to potentially influence the beliefs, opinions, and/or behaviors of those who were exposed to them. In other words, all of these phenomena could rightly be called rhetorical.

Much of the work in visual rhetoric uses concepts originally developed to analyze verbal discourse, including the rhetorical figures of metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche and attempts to demonstrate how these figures work in rhetorical images. The goal is to use these well-established and long-studied concepts as tools to help scholars understand how images work rhetorically. Other

visual rhetoricians argue that it is fallacious to apply verbal concepts to images and that we need to create new concepts and methodologies for the study of visuals. The work of both schools is accomplished by critically analyzing a wide variety of images, by examining the responses of viewers, and by studying the ways that the images being analyzed appear to draw on the influences of other, often famous and iconic images.

Both kinds of visual rhetoric scholarship, perhaps because of the relative newness of the enterprise, are inductive, consisting largely of analyses of individual visual texts, and the discipline is just beginning to build on these individual analyses to develop more comprehensive theories of how visuals work rhetorically.

Cultural Studies

Nearly all current approaches toward the study of visual communication take into account the social and cultural factors that influence individuals' responses to images. But the study of images as cultural artifacts goes further, examining images and viewers' responses to them and using both to learn more about the culture within which the images are produced, disseminated, controlled, viewed, and valued.

Sometimes the term visual culture is used to indicate the study of highly valued visual art and of how that art is valued, consumed, and used to influence and reinforce particular cultural values. However, a major motivation behind the initial genesis of the field of cultural studies was the desire to erase distinctions between high and low culture. To a cultural theorist, visual culture consists of all the visual aspects of a culture, and most cultural theorists believe that more can be learned about a culture by studying its common, mass-produced images than by studying museum pieces that the vast majority of the population never sees firsthand.

Popular commentators often argue over whether mass media images influence people's values and behaviors, or whether such images merely reflect the culture's preexisting attitudes and values. From a cultural studies perspective, this is a false dichotomy. Images that are either individually famous or representative of a popular type (e.g., thin young women in cosmetic and fashion advertising) both reflect and reinforce preexisting values. Such images

are used to control the attitudes and assumptions of the populace and to reinforce the values that allow existing power structures to remain unchallenged.

Stuart Hall, one of the founders of cultural studies as a unique discipline, was one of the first to argue that mass media images not only influence our cultural assumptions, but in the process, they actually create our social reality. At the same time, he insisted that the viewers of mass media images do not always soak up these images uncritically. He describes three types of responses to mass media images: dominant or preferred readings, which reproduce the meaning that the producer of the image intended to encode within it; negotiated readings in which the viewer largely accepts the dominant reading, but changes it to reflect his or her own personal, localized experiences; and oppositional readings, which argue directly against the dominant reading of the image.

By studying influential mass media images, then, as well as viewers' various responses to them, cultural studies theorists draw conclusions about the power relations at work within the culture. Power, social class (which in the United States—and increasingly in Europe—is closely interwoven with issues of race), and ideology (the culture's dominant yet unexamined values and assumptions) are important aspects of cultural studies work.

The Gaze

An influential concept for explaining the relationship between visual phenomena (or more specifically, the practice of looking) and power relations has been the gaze. Widely discussed and expanded upon by a variety of feminist and postmodern scholars, the gaze emphasizes the subject-object relationship that exists when one person gazes at another. In feminist and postcolonial work, those being looked at (or portrayed in a picture or film for others to look at) are subordinate to those who are looking. Film scholars examine the many ways that women are portrayed as being gazed at by male characters in films and displayed for the pleasure of male viewers of those films (often simultaneously). Scholars of literature, advertising, and so on examine their texts in similar ways.

The power of the gaze is not operative solely during the act of looking. Due to a variety of societal and media influences, young women tend to

grow up to think of themselves and all females at least partly as objects to be gazed at. This influences the ways in which females view and judge themselves and other women. Girls and women therefore become participants in the practice of their own objectification because of the nonstop barrage of images and messages insisting on the importance of female beauty and on the relative role of men and women as gazers and as objects to be gazed at.

Charles A. Hill

See also Cultural Studies; Documentary Film Theories; Film Theories; Meaning Theories; Media and Mass Communication Theories; Metaphor; Nonverbal Communication Theories; Rhetorical Theory; Semiotics and Semiology; Spectatorship

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VOCALICS

See Paralanguage

W

WHITENESS THEORY

Whiteness theory is an approach to the study of race rather than a theory as we normally conceive of it in communication. Whiteness theory is an outgrowth of critical race theory and focuses on what some have referred to as the other side of racism. Following critical race theory's view of race as an ideological social construction, Whiteness theory assumes that race is a historical formation constructed within a specific set of social and material conditions. Race is defined as a socially created classification that frames and influences social relationships between groups who have unequal levels of and access to power. Whiteness can be viewed as a particular position within these social relationships. The study of Whiteness addresses the ways in which Whiteness as a racialized system functions and is reproduced in political and social life as well as how Whiteness as a historically contingent social identity manifests in everyday interaction. Whiteness theory is an important attempt at articulating the functions and influence of Whiteness in the United States and elsewhere.

In the mid-1990s, Whiteness theory was introduced to the field of communication by Thomas Nakayama and Robert Krizek. Nakayama and Krizek established some of the basic precepts of Whiteness theory via their elaboration of Whiteness as a strategic rhetoric. Others in the field have extended their ideas in useful ways including (a) Whiteness as performance (John Warren, Leda Cooks, Jennifer Simpson), (b) Whiteness as

discourse (Lisa A. Flores, Dreama Moon, Melissa Steyn), (c) Whiteness as identity (Ronald Jackson, Judith Martin), (d) White absolutism (Michael Lacy), and (e) postcolonial Whiteness (Raka Shome). In the remainder of this essay, the primary tenets of Whiteness theory will be described: its apparent invisibility, its self-perception as a normative standard, and its source of social privilege.

Whiteness and Invisibility

The first precept of Whiteness theory conceives of Whiteness as invisible, unremarkable, and unmarked—in other words, normal and normative. The notion of invisibility suggests that the workings of Whiteness, White supremacy, and/or White hegemony are not readily apparent, at least not to many White people. Research has shown that white U.S. Americans have a lower degree of self-awareness about race and about their own racial identity than do members of other racial-ethnic groups. Whiteness is often the unspoken, silent marker of normality; it just is. For example, when Whites refer to others, the race of the person referred to is generally not noted unless the person is not White. The assumption is that people are White unless otherwise noted.

Given that race scholarship in the academy has primarily been focused on persons of color, Whiteness as a system, as a discourse, and as an identity has escaped close scrutiny, especially among white scholars. Without a critical examination of Whiteness, we ignore the foundation on which race, racism, and racial inequality have been

built in the United States. As the invisible center, a major strategy of Whiteness scholars in communication has been to unmask, name, and critically examine Whiteness. These efforts include examination of how Whiteness functions in various forms of popular culture such as hip hop, how Whiteness pervades the ways in which we conceive of our intellectual traditions such as has been done in the field of intercultural communication, how Whiteness is performed and reproduced in everyday discourse such as in White families and classrooms, and how Whiteness informs the identities of those in predominantly non-White countries such as India and the Philippines that continue to struggle with post-colonial experiences of Whiteness.

Despite how obvious the invisibility claim seems, it has been questioned by many in the field, especially scholars of color. For peoples of color, the workings of Whiteness are often quite obvious and easy to observe. Important to note in this regard is that this so-called invisibility aspect of Whiteness is relatively new; when White supremacy was being established in the United States, it was strongly marked. For example, posted White only signs were once displayed by many businesses throughout much of the country, there was a White requirement attached to naturalization possibilities up to 1952, and a one-drop rule existed for racial identification and categorization. Indeed, for much of U.S. history, Whites' consciousness of their Whiteness and the ability to invoke the power granted White skin were normative routines and assumptions. Once White supremacy was established and dominant, the strong marking of Whiteness was no longer as necessary. This helps us understand the current popularity of colorblind rhetoric that claims that racism is dead and everyone is created equal, so why all the continued fuss about race. In other words, the so-called invisibility of Whiteness may be, in reality, a historically specific phenomenon and an effect of its hegemony rather than an essential component of its manifestation.

Normative Standard

Not only is Whiteness often unexamined and invisible, but also it is often taken as a standard against which others are measured. Much like how feminist scholarship has highlighted the ways in which men's experiences are often treated as the norm

against which women are measured, Whiteness theory asserts that White has operated as an implicit norm, standing for all that is presumed to be right and normal. In other words, Whiteness is the place from which others are defined and evaluated, given that it is white people who hold the power to do so. Because Whites historically have controlled the major institutions of U.S. society, they have been able to appropriate and control the social and cultural mainstream and thus to make White understandings and practices normative. Given the culturally hegemonic position that Whiteness occupies, its seemingly natural and unquestioned status perpetuates and maintains its dominance. In addition, the mainstreaming of Whiteness has had important implications for White racial consciousness. For instance, in their everyday experiences, Whites are less likely to feel socially and culturally different and are much less likely to experience prejudice, discrimination, or other disadvantage as a result of their race. Given that Whiteness often goes unexamined, unnoticed, and taken for granted, Whites often feel a sense of culturelessness and racelessness. This feeling of White racial unconsciousness discourages Whites from perceiving the degree to which Whiteness permeates cultural understandings and institutional practices that, in turn, makes them more resistant to change. In sum, the normalization of Whiteness and White racial unconsciousness work dialectically to produce a social situation that makes unseating White supremacy challenging.

White Privilege

Finally, perhaps one of the most important aspects of Whiteness is its position as a system of racial privilege. The notion of privilege is a two-sided one that includes ideas of advantage as well as disadvantage. On the one hand, privilege may be thought of as a special right or advantage granted to a particular person or group. In this way, one can conceptualize White privilege as something gained by White persons simply by virtue of the racial position into which they are born. Conversely, in another way of thinking, privilege also gives White persons special freedom or immunity from liabilities or burdens to which non-White persons are subject. Taken together, then, White privilege both gives and takes away, both privileges and

exempts, both affirms and denies, and both rewards and penalizes.

And like any dialectical relationship, action on one side of the dialectic affects the other. For example, it makes little sense to talk about White privilege without acknowledging and attending to the disadvantages and penalties that accrue to people of color as a result. In real ways, Whites are granted social and material advantages and exemptions at the expense of people of color. In short, White privilege is founded on and depends on non-White subjugation.

In this view, certain social advantages, courtesies, and expectancies accrue to White skin. For example, Whiteness often enables White-skinned persons to shop in upscale retail shops without being under constant surveillance; to assume if stopped by the police, they will not accidentally be shot; to be able (if desired) to construct a daily life that involves only or primarily interaction with people who look like them; and to not have others assume that their skin color somehow prevents or impedes or challenges their ability to be successful, intelligent, or skilled.

Given that Whiteness is a system of privilege, differently positioned White-skinned individuals within that system will experience racial privilege somewhat differently. For instance, a gay White man must negotiate his White privilege in conjunction with male privilege and the disprivilege of his sexual orientation. Likewise, White skin may not protect White people from being poor, but it will likely ensure that the poverty experienced is different than the poverty experienced by brown-skinned persons. For example, the White poor, in general, are economically, socially, and physically better off than are the Black poor.

Not only does White-skin privilege manifest differently among different types of Whites, it is also a privilege that may be accessed by some people of color. Colorism, the privileging of light skin among people of color, is a phenomenon observed in many communities of color, both within and outside the United States. In fact, skin whitening products are huge sellers in Asia, Africa, and other parts of the world. In the United States, slavery and the rape of African women helped to construct a color caste among African Americans today. Although non-Whites might sometimes access or appropriate bits of Whiteness that they can use for their own social

advantage, clearly this is situational and does not protect from normative discriminatory practices that non-Whites face on a daily basis.

In sum, Whiteness and its effects can be clearly observed in the ways that Whites construct, frame, and publicly articulate understandings about race. For example, some accounts of Hurricane Katrina were racialized in attempts to demonize or demean Black victims of the storm. Our racial discourse reflects existing social relations and cultural understandings and it is also part of the definitional process by which racial understandings are created and reworked. Most importantly, how Whites view themselves and the dominant ways in which they define racial issues and their position within the U.S. racial hierarchy will shape and influence intergroup relations, political agendas, and potential resolutions.

Dreama G. Moon

See also Critical Race Theory; Critical Rhetoric; Critical Theory; Postcolonial Theory; Power and Power Relations; Racial Formation Theory

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WHORFIAN HYPOTHESIS

See Linguistic Relativity

WOMANISM

Womanism, or womanist theory, is a conceptual framework that captures the history, breadth, continuity, and diversity of Black women in pursuit of human solidarity and social justice. Womanism extends our knowledge of communication by providing a critical context for examining Black women’s lived communicative experiences, taking into account the material circumstances and ideological positions of African American (or Black diasporic) women. *Womanism* derived from the old Black folk expression of mothers admonishing their daughters to refrain from womanish behavior. This entry explores the history of womanism, its key tenets, and the contours of womanist thought and its relation to communication theory. The terms *Black* and *African American women* are used interchangeably to represent the interrelatedness of Black diaspora communities.

Origins and Tenets

According to Alice Walker who coined the term *womanist*, a womanist is one who embodies the

following characteristics: a preference for women’s culture, love for herself and other women, and a commitment to struggle and survival for all people—both women and men. The term *womanism* provided a more culturally appropriate alternative to the term *feminist*, which alienated some Black women, everyday activists, and academics. To be womanist is to position oneself and one’s academic scholarship within the global struggle for the emancipation of women, including multiple issues related to health disparities, women’s economic status, sexuality, political rights, violence against women, and marital and family status and rights affecting Black women in the United States and globally. Womanism is viewed also as a philosophical perspective. It is a way of thinking, acting, and being in the world—an epistemology, or Black women’s ways of knowing.

A womanist is not a separatist, except periodically for health, and is traditionally universalist, redefining all people as people of color to universalize individual struggles. Womanism entails a pluralist version of social integration in which, as Patricia Hill Collins observes, women and men live together like flowers in a garden, without losing their cultural distinctiveness. Womanism is committed to eradicating sexism and racism and other “isms” that plague the human community, such as classicism and heterosexism, while making an ideological space for autonomous movements of self-determination.

Key tenets of womanism include multiple jeopardy, lived experience as a way of knowing and making meaning of the world, and a culture of resistance. Multiple jeopardy refers to the ways in which African American women navigate the contradictions of multiple, interlocking oppressions (e.g., racism, sexism, classicism), and multiple, interdependent identities (e.g., Black, female, working class). Black women’s knowledge and meaning-making sensibilities are rooted in lived experience. The experiential aspect of knowledge and meaning forms the everyday theorizing of Black women and is often seen as counterintuitive to Western epistemologies. A culture of resistance has historically challenged and shaped Black women’s communication. The culture of resistance marks African American women’s personal and collective struggle against racism, patriarchy, and other forms of human oppression while developing means toward self-liberation and a more humane social order.

History

The history of womanism began with everyday Black women in the 19th century who were committed to empowerment and wholeness of entire people. Enslaved African women crafted an oppositional discourse that emerged as a response to the master narrative of gender, race, and class supremacy—a narrative that castigated, denigrated, and ignored the existence and humanity of Black women. Calling upon a legacy of resistance and struggle, Black women fashioned an intellectual tradition that had at its foundation ordinary women sharing the experiences of their everyday lives and that resulted in naming and thus redefining their identities. Black female slave narratives such as those of Harriet Jacobs, the antilynching rhetoric of Ida B. Wells, the Club movement of the late 19th and early 20th century with Mary Church Terrell, and the speeches of Black women abolitionists such as Sojourner Truth, Maria W. Stewart, and Frances E. W. Watkins Harper.

The second wave of womanist thought (1960s–1980s) was a grassroots initiative conceived by the Combahee River Collective and theorized by Patricia Hill Collins among others. Emerging from the practices of U.S. feminist women of color, this phase of womanist thought provided a counterdiscourse in the 1980s to U.S. mainstream feminist discourse. Thus, womanism offered an alternative terminology for Black feminists during a time in which many women of color articulated their marginalization or erasure within White feminist discourse.

Other contours of womanism have emerged to critically address the dynamics of the conflict between mainstream feminists and feminist women of color. For example, Africana womanism theorizes Black women's experience from a nationalistic, Afrocentric cosmology. This representation of womanism emphasizes the empowering effect of *nommo* or self-naming, and self-definition as its core theme in crafting identity and taking control of life circumstances in the pursuit of wholeness. Womanist theology, on the other hand, explores the complexities of sexuality, homophobia, and heterosexism as points of oppression in the Black church. Womanist theologians advocate a discourse of positive sexual ethics within the Black community that enables Black women to affirm, love, and embrace their own selves. Wholeness in womanist theology assumes affirmation of Black women in the fullness of sexuality while transforming the

discourse of heterosexist structures and systems of the Black church.

Although some scholars conflate womanism and Black feminism, noting their interrelated histories and traditions of struggle, others argue the two terms are incompatible and examine distinguishable characteristics of each. Critics of African womanism encourage consideration of the extent to which Africana womanist theory can shape and inform active community and grassroots participation in politics. It is important to note that womanism is neither a monolithic, essentialist view of African American women nor a static ideology. Rather, it is derived from African American women's varied, historically rooted patterns of existence and lived experience of multiple, interdependent identities and traditions of resistance to multiple, interlocking oppressions.

Black feminist and womanist traditions of thought and activism have intersected with other social movements to build coalitions and to articulate the struggles for social justice of marginalized groups in U.S. history. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s, womanism was identified in the radicalism of Black Panther women, such as Assata Shakur, Kathleen Cleaver, and Angela Davis, as well as the work of academic Black feminists such as Barbara Christian, Audre Lorde, and Patricia Hill Collins.

Womanism and Communication Theory

Communication theory from the perspective of womanism reveals Black women's intellectual production of thought, discourse, and activism that centers rather than marginalizes their unique sociopolitical and cultural experiences. In the discipline of communication studies, a discussion of womanism has attempted to make the voices of communication scholars heard in the ongoing conversation within African American women's studies and the voices of African American feminist and womanist scholars heard within communication.

Stories of survival, struggle, resistance, and liberation in everyday life experiences are the important elements of womanist discourse—a discourse that challenges systems of power and exploitation while crafting new vistas of meaning and experience. African American women's discourse, then, is a story of rhetorical strategies of women who transform the ordinariness of daily life into a rhetoric of survival, self-definition, personal respect, and

liberation in relation to the complexities of American life and culture.

Olga Idriss Davis

See also Black Feminist Epistemology; Critical Discourse Analysis; Critical Race Theory; Critical Theory; Social Construction of Reality; Power and Power Relations; Whiteness Theory

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Y

YALE COMMUNICATION AND
ATTITUDE CHANGE PROGRAM

See Attitude Theory; Persuasion and
Social Influence Theories

Selected Bibliography of Major Works by Topic

Note: This bibliography includes selected theoretical works. It is not intended to be exhaustive. With a few exceptions, the list does not include textbooks, handbooks, readers, anthologies, literature surveys, histories, commentaries, critiques, secondary sources, restatements, or special journal issues. In addition, works on methodology, research studies, and case studies have generally been excluded.

How to Use This Bibliography

This bibliography is intended as a place to find major theoretical works related to topics of interest. Each item in this bibliography is listed only once within a relevant category. General works written by or about theorists of historical import are listed by the theorist's name as a keyword (e.g., Burke, Kenneth). To find several related works, scan the list for several connected topics (e.g., discourse, text, interpretation, hermeneutics, meaning). To expand a reading list beyond what may appear here, look up relevant topics in this encyclopedia and pursue the Further Readings. If you wish to identify several works by a single author, look up the author in the list of theorists at the beginning of this encyclopedia or in the index.

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