

RESEARCH ENDEAVORS AND ACTIVITIES**Fall 1998-2002**

My research makes contributions within and beyond my discipline by offering theories and methods for explaining, describing, and assisting cultures, groups, organizations, and individuals who want to increase their understanding of the ways communication and culture are interrelated, particularly in regard to cultural change and diversity. My early work was influenced by cultural convergence theory, which predicts that the more that people communicate, the more similar they (or their cultures) become (Kincaid, 1987). Initial research that found support for cultural convergence theory took place in the United States (Fang & Lee, 1991, Kincaid et. al, 1983; Yan, Lee & Becker, 1992). As a result of my tests of cultural convergence theory in Japan, a country whose culture is relatively more homogenous than in the United States where assimilation is not a political objective, I became the first researcher to find support for cultural convergence theory outside of the United States (Becker, 1998a; see *Research Binder*, p. 9). Consequently, my research provides considerations for policy makers and cultural leaders regarding the implications of cultural convergence.

For example, I consider the political implications of intercultural communication by examining the debates related to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights regarding cultural relativism (Becker, 1997b; see *Research Binder*, p. 4). In another theoretical article, I explore the potential and limitations of social scientific attempts to apply thermodynamic concepts to social systems (cultural and organizational). I suggest that differences are decreased as a function of information exchanges that require consumption of energy from other systems, possibly threatening diversity (Becker, 1997a; see *Research Binder*, p. 5). The article concludes by suggesting that by considering networks of information flows, we may better be able to understand the relationship of communication to diversity and power dynamics, and therefore my subsequent work heads in that direction.

Another contribution to the discipline that developed from of my research in Japan was an exploration of the potential of cultural mapping, a method that provides a way to transform qualitative

data such as text into quantitative variables to allow for hypothesis testing (Woelfel & Fink, 1980).

Cultural maps describe the ways that individuals and group members perceive difference. They are based on the assumption that cultures can be described as the average tendency of group members to differentiate between pairs of symbols in similar ways. My research in Japan led me to conclude that although cultural mapping provides a precise way to describe and measure cultural differences, it ignores power dynamics and does not capture the depth of cultural variation (Becker, 1998a, pp. 322-323; see *Research Binder*, p. 9). Although I continue to use cultural mapping in my research, I have found new applications for it, particularly for diversity related issues (Becker, 2002a; see *Research Binder*, p.1).

I have also tried to overcome some of the limitations of cultural mapping by addressing the complexity of cultural diversity and change by including more of the researcher's and interviewee's voice and explicit considerations of power (Becker, 1999; see *Research Binder*, p. 8). My most recent research also includes experimentation that allows me to study the dynamics between culture and communication using cutting edge methodologies, such as neural networks (Woelfel, 1993) and new ethnography (Becker, 2001; see *Research Binder*, p. 2; Becker, 2002b; see *Research Binder*, p. 6).

"Data-Driven-Dynamic Approaches to Intercultural Communication and Diversity Training in Organizations," developed from years of research and experience in these areas. I initiated the process of publication by submitting my ideas for the article to the volumes co-editor George Cheney, as a response to a call for competitive submissions in the International Communication Association's newsletter. The article is currently in production (Becker, 2002a; see *Research Binder*, 1, back).

In 2001, I was awarded a President's Diversity and Equity and Initiative grant to study the perceptions of diversity in the organizational culture(s) of UHH. The research has allowed me to produce cultural maps that describe the perceptions of various groups regarding diversity at UHH. The research will also allow me to model the communication networks between different groups. The grant involved students with research and increased opportunities for dialogue about diversity (see *Grant Binder*).

In addition to my publications, I have presented a total of seven referee-selected papers, two at international and five at national conferences since coming to UHH in 1998. “Communication in the Age of the Displaced Worker,” a panel that I organized for the National Communication Association Organizational Division, was ranked second out of all the papers submitted to the entire division. According to the reviewers the high ranking was due to the “richness of the topic,” “its many facets,” and the “multi-theoretical approaches” that were included (see *Research Binder*, pp. 22-24).

On November 1, I will submit a proposal for a panel presentation for the International Communication Association conference in San Diego (Becker, pp. 10-11). If it is accepted, I will have presented a total of eight International and National conference papers (seven solo-authored and one co-authored). Prior to coming to UHH, I solo authored ten papers and co-authored ten papers that were presented at international, national and regional conferences. Therefore, I have presented the career total of twenty-seven papers (see *Main Binder, Appendix A, Curriculum Vitae*).

Several of my conference presentations were at the two premier communication research associations, the International Communication Association (ICA) and the National Communication Association (NCA). NCA has over 6,000 members and is the association that most communication researchers in the United States belong, and is the foundational organization of the communication discipline. ICA was formed in 1950, bringing together academicians and other professionals whose interest focuses on human communication. The Association maintains an active membership of more than 3,400 individuals of which two-thirds are teaching and conducting research in colleges, universities and schools around the world. Other members are in government, the media, communication technology, business law, medicine and other professions. Venues for the other papers include the International Conference in Social Sciences, the Pacific Asian Communication Association, the Western Communication Association, the Eastern Communication Association, and the Society for Intercultural Education, Training, and Research annual meetings.

Impact

It has been shown that 25% of citations from articles in twenty-seven communication journals and annuals (listed on the following page) were omitted from both the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (AHCH) (Funkhouser, 1996). Consequently, it is hard to really gauge the interdisciplinary impact of my work. Within the discipline, the number of serial publications I have is significantly higher than that of most of my colleagues. The Communication Institute of Online Scholarship (CIOS) maintains a comprehensive database of publications in the discipline. According to CIOS, my publication rate of three articles is higher than that of 83.8% of all communications scholars who have published (<http://www.cios.org/issues.issue8.htm> or *Research Binder*, Front Pocket).

Even if all single-publication authors are removed from the analysis, my publication rate is still higher than 58% of my peers (Stephen, 2001). Since not all communication scholars have even one publication cited in ComIndex, and this analysis excludes the impact of my other publications and conference presentations, these numbers represent a conservative measure of the impact of my research. The impact of my other publications may be assessed based on the institutional affiliations of the editors, co-authors, and the ways that the publications were generated.

Chapters in volumes published by academic presses were selected either by invitation from an editor or as a response to a call for competitive submissions. For example, “Geocommunication: A paradigm of place,” is part of volume on ethnography to be published by SUNY Press (*Research Binder*, p. 6). My piece was written in full collaboration with Frederick Corey from Arizona State University. The editor, Robin Clair from Purdue University, contacted me to ask if we would be willing to collaborate with Dr. Corey on a chapter for the book. Dr. Clair became familiar with our work when three of us presented on a panel we organized for the Ethnography Division of National Communication Association after discovering our mutual interests on an Ethnography Listserv. The volume has just been blind

reviewed and is in production. The table of contents illustrates the scope of the volume and Dr. Clair's epilogue discusses its significance (*Research Binder*, p. 7). Institutional affiliations of other contributors include Purdue University, University of Colorado, Arizona State University, San Diego State University, California State University, Sacramento, Northern Illinois University, Loyola-Marymount University, and Syracuse University and the University of South Florida, among others.

"Women in Organizations: Perceptions of Power," was developed out of a meeting of top scholars in the field of organizational communication that considered the future of organizational communication scholarship. I am first author on the piece because I initiated the idea for the research, developed the questionnaire, supervised the data collection, analyzed and wrote the results. *Organizational Communication and Change*, edited by Phillip Salem of Southwest Texas University, contains papers by Stanley Deetz, University of Colorado, Boulder; Linda Putnam, Texas A & M; Gerald Goldhaber, SUNY Buffalo; Patricia Riley, Annenberg School for Communication at University of Southern California, Eric Eisenberg, University of South Florida and others (For a list of authors and their affiliations see *Research Binder*, p. 8, back).

"The way in which communication may foster or inhibit socialization: The case of Brazilian Immigrants in Japan," developed out of research I conducted for my dissertation. The editors, Gary Gumpertz and Susan Drucker, approached me and requested that I contribute to the volume after hearing me present a discussion of my research at an International Communication Association conference (*Research Binder*, p. 9).

"Toward an ethical theory for comparative political communication based on the coherence between universal human rights and cultural relativism," was published the year before I came to UHH. It was competitively selected after I submitted it in response to a call for submissions for a forthcoming volume on politics, communication and culture that appeared in *Spectra*, the National Communication Association newsletter. The institutional affiliations of the editorial board include the University of

Massachusetts, University of Oklahoma, University of Georgia, University of Arizona, Tulane University, University of Kansas, University of Utah, University of South Florida, and others (*Research Binder*, p. 4).

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