Reimagining risk and crisis communication research through a cosmopolitan lens

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Introduction

The complexity of modern risks and crises is evident in everyday headlines: the severe impacts of climate emergencies, worsening refugee crises, and multifaceted health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Such crises transcend borders, mandates, and cultures. Today's transnational risks and protracted crises require global perspectives and solutions, although nationally focused efforts to address these overlapping "systemic events" are no less important (Kunelius, 2020, p. 1; see also Sellnow-Richmond & Lukacovic, 2024).

Against this backdrop, and in an era of increasing globalization and geopolitical shifts, there is a need to discuss what constitutes "cosmopolitan" risk and crisis communication, particularly in terms of research. Risk and crisis communication is highly relevant in light of the current circumstances, as risk communication ideally aims to help people understand potential hazards and manage them through informed decisions, while crisis communication aims to minimize harm and maintain trust during and after critical events. Because communicators are organizations of different types and purposes (e.g., governments and corporations), the field has become broad and heterogeneous, encompassing different disciplines ranging from public health to communication studies to political science.

Risk and crisis communication research has long been concerned with various issues, including identifying effective communication strategies during crises, how these strategies influence audience behavior or crisis perception, and the role of environmental factors (e.g., state–media dynamics) in shaping these outcomes, to name a few. To the extent that risk and crisis perceptions are influenced by an array of contextual factors, transboundary crises can therefore be viewed from different cultural perspectives and studied through multiple theoretical and methodological lenses (e.g., see Schwarz et al., 2016). Such risks and crises characterize what Beck (2011) called a modern "world risk society," where the spatiality and "incalculableness" of risks and crises require perspectives beyond previous international collaborations and epistemological advances in re-

search (p. 665). The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, hit both developing and industrialized nations (albeit disproportionately), prompting scholars from different settings to examine how governments, organizations, and other entities communicated within and across borders. If anything, the pandemic and comparable crises underscore the need for comparative approaches in research, primarily to understand how differences in macro-level characteristics influence communication, and for studies of environments that are rarely represented in scholarship (see also Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012).

Moreover, these crises also raise the stakes for global or intercultural communication practices, such as cross-border journalism, especially in light of the criticisms of the practice (to be discussed further in the subsequent sections). For instance, research has shown that during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, some news media outlets promoted problematic nationalist narratives and even misinformation, which may have contributed to fueling racist sentiments (e.g., Richter et al., 2021; Zhang & Trifiro, 2022).

What has been said so far raises the question: What can be said about risk and crisis communication research and practice concerning phenomena that have both universal and unique repercussions? This chapter tackles such questions, including critical issues related to the state of the art in risk and crisis communication research, particularly the persisting Western, or more precisely, Euro-American ethnocentrism in scholarship. We contend that this narrow focus does not serve a world fraught with protracted, complex crises and increasingly multicultural societies. The first section describes the state of research, followed by a discussion of the nature of complex crises and the corresponding need for effective intercultural crisis communication. The final section unpacks the nature of cosmopolitan risk and crisis communication research as a normative concept and develops suggestions for further conceptual and empirical studies.

Persisting Euro-American ethnocentrism in research

The last few decades have witnessed remarkable growth in risk and crisis communication research. This is evident in the increasing number of studies on (and from) settings beyond Europe and North America (the so-called "mainstream West"), the adoption of international comparative approaches, and the development of cross-country research communities (Löffelholz et al., 2023; see also Diers-Lawson & Meißner, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has also led to a surge in the number of studies in the field over the past three to four years; in China and the USA, for instance, the number of publications dealing with risk and crisis communication jumped to about three times the number of studies before the pandemic (Löffelholz et al., 2023, p. 22).

However, much remains to be done as the scholarship on risk and crisis communication is hardly "global" in the true sense of the word. It retains its strong Western bias, with "geographic and perspective blind spots" (Diers-Lawson & Meißner, 2021, p. 165; see also Diers-Lawson, 2017). Much of the knowledge production is still concentrated in institutions of the Western mainstream (or under the contested label of the "Global North"), albeit scholars from developing regions and industrialized Asian countries are publishing more and more (Che et al., 2022; Diers-Lawson, 2017; Diers-Lawson & Meißner, 2021;

Goerlandt et al., 2020; Löffelholz et al., 2023). The research has provided longitudinal evidence illustrating this deeply entrenched imbalance. Goerlandt et al. (2020), for example, conducted a scientometric analysis of the risk communication literature from 1985 to 2019 and found that approximately 75% of all the publications originated from five Western countries (USA, UK, the Netherlands, Germany, and Canada). Their findings are congruent with those of a previous study mapping the crisis communication literature from 1953 to 2015: more than 86% of the publications over the past six decades have been about crisis communication in Europe and North America, especially the USA, which accounts for more than 60% of the literature (Diers-Lawson, 2017). In terms of citation trends in the field, the most cited scholars are based at institutions in the Western mainstream, and most international cooperative research is also concentrated in these regions (Che et al., 2022).

Diers-Lawson (2017) described this state of research as a "state of emergency," given the fact that the most vulnerable regions are also the most underrepresented, with much less research production (p. 1). For instance, African countries have collectively contributed only 1.2% of the crisis communication literature over the last six decades, while South and Southeast Asia account for 3.2% (Diers-Lawson, 2017). It is not surprising, therefore, that researchers have questioned the extent to which practice is informed or enhanced by research in these areas, and whether known frameworks or theoretical assumptions in scholarship are actually applicable across settings. As Diers-Lawson (2017) wrote, "Functionally, crisis communication scholars and practitioners know very little about the topic as it applies to the majority of the world's population" (p. 11).

In recent decades, numerous studies have discussed the potential consequences of Western centrism in knowledge production, with repeated calls for the "de-Westernization" or "decolonization" of research (e.g., Ganter & Ortega, 2019; Glück, 2018; Waisbord & Mellado, 2014; Willems, 2014). The significant disparity in research development between the Western mainstream and many other parts of the world can lead to what Waisbord and Mellado (2014) called "universalistic pretensions based on a narrow slice of context-specific cases" (p. 365). Such "pretensions" can take the form of popular theoretical assumptions or established frameworks in the field, or even research epistemologies in general, that cannot fully account for circumstances in areas beyond the Western mainstream. For example, frameworks that are often used to underpin empirical research, particularly the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT; Coombs, 2007) and the Image Repair Theory (Benoit, 1995), have been criticized for their "lack of non-Western perspectives," leading to the exclusion of some strategies commonly used in other settings (Hu & Pang, 2018, p. 108). In the case of mainland China, for example, some of the commonly used corporate crisis response strategies were either inconsistent with the prescriptions of the SCCT or were not mentioned at all in the framework (Hu & Pang, 2018). For example, public apologies or defensive response strategies, which are prescribed in SCCT when appropriate, are rarely used in China, which can be explained by the prevalence of the "face-saving" mindset as a cultural value (Wang & Lauder, 2020, p. 7). In fact, risk and crisis communication is context sensitive, and any inquiry should therefore consider macro-level contextual factors, such as cultural influences and the role of the government (Löffelholz et al., 2023; Schwarz, 2016; Wu et al., 2016).

Furthermore, despite the existence of transboundary crises, crises as objects of analysis still vary across countries, as they experience unique crisis events, and crisis events capture media and public attention (or the public imagination) in different ways. This is evident in the historical development of the field and the recurring research themes that correspond to crises impacting specific regions: the scholarly attention to natural disasters and large-scale crises in many parts of Asia, the Chernobyl disaster and its impact in directly affected European countries, and the "weakness of civil society" and political opposition in the Middle East and North Africa (Löffelholz et al., 2023; see also Frandsen & Johansen, 2016; Huang et al., 2016; Saleh, 2016, p. 316). Even the conceptualization of risk and crisis can be influenced by political and cultural contexts. In the Soviet Union, for example, "risk" and "crisis" were generally viewed as "foreign notions" that were inevitable consequences of the Western capitalist order, in line with the propagandistic rhetoric of the time (Samoilenko, 2016, p. 399).

However, it would not be fair to say that the research landscape in regions beyond the Western mainstream is entirely barren. After all, as Diers-Lawson (2017) noted, there is a growing trend toward international comparative studies and a significant increase in the number of publications originating from and about Chinese societies (see also Che et al., 2022), with some scholars even proposing a Chinese model of crisis communication (Wu et al., 2016) and a framework for Chinese crisis communication research (Huang, 2010). Despite the dearth of research in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), empirical studies on risk and crisis communication still exist, many of which are qualitative or descriptive case studies (e.g., Adamu et al., 2018; Arora, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic also triggered increased knowledge production in these countries (e.g., George et al., 2021; Sakhiyya et al., 2024; Tam et al., 2021).

What might explain the disparity in knowledge production that threatens the plurality of academic discourse, not just in risk and crisis communication but in the field of communication studies in general? We argue that it can be attributed to five factors: 1) a research and development infrastructure that is insufficiently developed, which is tied to broader chronic societal dilemmas such as poor governance and systemic poverty, 2) the historical development of the field, where institutions in the USA and Europe gained footing much earlier than those in the rest of the world, 3) constraints or external influences on research production, such as pressures in tightly controlled political systems, 4) the English language as the "academic lingua franca," which contributes to the invisibility of work in other languages, regardless of the intellectual rigor involved (Lillis et al., 2010, p. 111), and 5) deeply embedded academic structures that favor scholarship and research traditions originating from and focused on high-income, predominantly Western countries, which in turn marginalize scholars from underrepresented regions and communities (Barreto de Souza Martins et al., 2023; Chakravartty et al., 2018; Fox Tree & Vaid, 2022; Glück, 2018).

The first four factors mentioned above can be briefly explained, but the last one requires further elaboration. The first relates to the lack of adequate support mechanisms for research, such as underinvestment and poor working conditions in academia in many LMICs (e.g., Heng et al., 2023; Quiroga-Garza et al., 2022). The limited investment in research can also hinder scholars from pursuing studies that require substantial financial resources, such as large-sample surveys. The second point concerns the relative advan-

tage of US-American and European institutions in research production, partly due to the earlier institutionalization of risk and crisis communication research, or even communication studies in general, in these regions (Löffelholz et al., 2023; see also Barreto de Souza Martins et al., 2023; Waisbord & Mellado, 2014). The third factor can be seen in how political influence and tight control over public information can limit research or academic freedom in certain settings, such as Russia, where the academic community has limited access to primary data on crises (Samoilenko, 2016). The fourth concerns the dominance of English as the medium in knowledge production, as seen, for instance, in citation practices in international journals, as was found by Lillis et al. (2010). By analyzing citations, reviewer comments, and ethnographic data, they found that there is a "pressure" to cite English-medium works and to publish in English, and that the journal "gatekeepers" are even "challenging citations in other languages" (Lillis et al., 2010, p. 131). In an academic landscape marked by these "Anglophone gatekeeping practices," there is a significant risk that valuable knowledge published in other languages may be overlooked by the broader research community (Lillis et al., 2010, p. 111).

The last factor is largely about the uneven accumulation of "academic capital" that is supposed to be gained from one's publication record, number of citations, networks, and the like (Barreto de Souza Martins et al., 2023, p. 481). Again, empirical research has provided evidence of this uneven playing field. For example, there is a severe lack of representation from the Global South in the editorial boards of top communication journals, with more than 79% of board members coming from Australia, Canada, the USA, the UK, and Germany (Goyanes, 2020; see also Chakravartty et al., 2018). Demeter (2019), who studied the "career paths" of 426 scholars from the Global South, found that it was "almost impossible" for Global South researchers to become internationally recognized scholars in the field of communication without some capital from the Global North (e.g., education or affiliation) (p. 578). Having capital from the Global North is also associated with increased chances of publishing in top-tier communication journals, as 85% of the Global South authors who have published in these journals have some form of Global North capital. In fact, there are even some top-ranked journals that have almost never published work from Global South authors (Demeter, 2019, p. 592).

There are also other research traditions that differ from those of the Western mainstream and are more often sidelined in academic discourse. For example, in the case of scholarship on pandemic crisis communication, researchers from LMICs tend to focus on "social epidemiology and collective health," as opposed to mainstream approaches focusing on social psychology, media effects, and individual behavior and risk factors (Barreto de Souza Martins et al., 2023, p. 488). Many researchers from LMICs also seem to prefer qualitative methods, as seen in Brazil during the pandemic, despite the international focus on quantitative approaches (Barreto de Souza Martins et al., 2023).

From the discussion, it is evident that the persisting Euro-American ethnocentrism in research is inextricably linked with systemic conditions that shape environments and fields of knowledge, such as underinvestment in research resulting from problematic governance. These conditions are extremely difficult to change, but in the face of prolonged crises and the increasing need for effective transnational and transcultural crisis communication, steps toward decentering knowledge production are necessary.

Prolonged crises and the challenges of transcultural crisis communication

For several scholars, the COVID-19 pandemic exemplified the new, more complex type of crisis that characterizes today's global risk society (Auld et al., 2021; Jin et al., 2021; Löffelholz et al., 2023; Sellnow-Richmond & Lukacovic, 2024). For what seems like countless times, the pandemic crisis has been described as unprecedented, or unlike any other crisis in recent history, because it is a health crisis that has generated political, economic, and other types of social crises of immense magnitude. It has been referred to by various names in the academic literature: "mega crisis" (Sellnow-Richmond & Lukacovic, 2024), "sticky crisis" (Coombs et al., 2021), "prolonged crisis" (Diers-Lawson & Omondi, 2024), and "super wicked problem" (Auld et al., 2021), all of which share several conceptual overlaps. As both a prolonged crisis and a sticky crisis, the pandemic has been characterized by 1) multiple sub-crises affecting entire societies, 2) different forms of uncertainties, 3) the need for complex solutions, 4) transcending cultures and borders, and 5) prolonged duration (see Coombs et al., 2021; Diers-Lawson & Omondi, 2024; Jin et al., 2021).

As a super wicked problem, the pandemic crisis can be viewed as a problem that can exacerbated by the very actors attempting to solve it (Auld et al., 2021). For example, the disease spreads rapidly due to international flows of knowledge, labor, and capital, from which people also benefit. Furthermore, measures to mitigate the effects are often shortsighted or address only part of the broader consequences (Auld et al., 2021, p. 711). For the purposes of the discussion in this chapter, we have chosen to refer to these crises as "prolonged crises," but it should be noted that these crises also exhibit the characteristics of super wicked problems and sticky crises.

However, the pandemic is neither the first nor the last of its kind. The climate emergency, for example, was already described as a super wicked problem more than a decade before the pandemic (e.g., Lazarus, 2009; Levin et al., 2012). The world has experienced crises that had transnational consequences and were widely debated in the global public sphere, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the global financial crisis, and others. The modern "world risk society" faces such transnational and complex risks and crises, and modern societies are "shaped by new kinds of risks, that their foundations are shaken by the global anticipation of global catastrophe" (Beck, 2011, p. 665). For Yuan (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic exemplified the "perfect storm of modern risk society," stemming from "man-made ecological disturbance" and spreading through the infrastructure of intensified globalization, such as international migration flows and greater economic and political interdependence among countries (p. 323).

In the context of a global risk society, Beck and Levy (2013) argued that "cosmopolitanized risk collectivities" arise largely through the communication of risk in the global media landscape and are therefore an important "facet" of the global risk society (p. 3). This serves as a theoretical starting point for the discussion of cosmopolitan risk and crisis communication. These cosmopolitanized risk collectives, such as transnational advocacy publics, emerge through the international mediatization of risk and constant exposure to risk-related information, even those coming from the other side of the world. An important example of this is the global civil society movement centered on climate change advocacy. The collectivities are partly anchored in the presence of a cosmopolitan mindset, which, in a normative sense, is characterized by a commitment to the virtues

of global justice and welfare, an awareness of the interconnectedness of the world, and a dialogue with different cultures, especially the marginalized identities (Cheah, 2006; Delanty, 2012; Waisbord, 2015; Wardle, 2015). The term "partly" is essential here, as the collectivities may or may not be informed by the ideal form of a cosmopolitan mindset. This normative and critical cosmopolitanism also informs research on cosmopolitan risk and crisis communication, which we will discuss in more detail in the next section.

While the concepts of nationhood, national identities, and even parochial attitudes remain intact, the communication of complex risks and prolonged crises cannot be viewed solely through nation-centric lenses, and even the concept of nationhood is being "reimagined" through cosmopolitanization (Beck & Levy, 2013, p. 6). As Beck and Levy (2013) noted, "Globalization provides a new context for the transformation of national identifications" (p. 6). In this regard, they asserted that contrary to popular assumptions in literature, cosmopolitanism is not the "antithesis to the essentialized version of the national" (Beck & Levy, 2013, p. 5). Instead, these two seemingly polar opposites (global and local or universal and particular) are "interconnected and reciprocally interpenetrating" (Beck, 2006, p. 72, as cited in Beck & Levy, 2013, p. 6). For example, exposure to other settings with different political systems can cause individuals to reconsider their views about national government.

The rise of cosmopolitan risk collectives and prolonged crises underscores the increasing importance of intercultural risk and crisis communication, the main forms of which include 1) organizations or public institutions communicating about transboundary crises and to transnational audiences, 2) organizations or public institutions communicating to a multicultural society, such as state government communication in large cities, and 3) media coverage of transboundary crises or news reporting for international audiences. However, many practitioners feel that they are not equipped to deal with multicultural publics, nor do they adapt their strategies according to the needs of different cultures (de Fatima Oliveira, 2013). In fact, there have been many cases where multinational organizations failed to implement an appropriate crisis response strategy in an international context, primarily due to a lack of understanding of cultural characteristics (An et al., 2010).

A number of studies have described the challenges and complexities of intercultural communication during crises (e.g., Kharbat et al., 2024; Lehmberg & Hicks, 2018; de Fatima Oliveira, 2013). For instance, research has shown how crisis perceptions and the effectiveness of communication strategies can vary widely across countries and cultures, such that collectivist cultures may perceive messages quite differently from individualist cultures (Claeys & Schwarz, 2016; see also An et al., 2010). At the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, government communicators in Europe and the USA, particularly in culturally diverse cities such as New York or Amsterdam, reported that tailoring communications to specific audience segments was one of the major challenges in their work, including translating messages into multiple languages and identifying opinion leaders (Löffelholz et al., 2023).

When it comes to news coverage, two major ethical challenges include representing cultural identities without peddling ethnocentric narratives and resisting instrumentalization for propaganda, both of which become more of a normative ideal when one takes into account the various influences on the journalist. Several authors have criticized the

lapses in reporting on international crises, international coverage on crises, or reporting on crises related to different cultures, as seen, for instance, in journalistic framing during conflicts as crises (e.g., Baden & Meyer, 2018; Nohrstedt, 2016). As Baden and Meyer (2018) noted, there are cases of "biased, ethnocentric interpretations" against an out-group, sometimes even justifying a warmongering agenda (p. 33; see also Baden & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2018; Löffelholz, 2004). There are also documented cases of sensationalized reporting on violent conflicts, often at the expense of necessary contextualization and accuracy, presumably to capture audience attention (e.g., Ishaku, 2021; see also Schleicher & Sarısakaloğlu in this book). The media, at times, facilitated the "othering" of vulnerable groups, such as Muslims and immigrants, creating an "us vs. them" dichotomy through the "discourse of fear" (Nohrstedt, 2010, p. 38). In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, some conservative media outlets in the USA spread misinformation and conspiracy theories, blaming China for the spread of the disease, and potentially contributing to "racial tensions" in the country in 2021 (Zhang & Trifiro, 2022, p. 1044). Vilifying the "Other" or an outgroup is also a strong theme in COVID-19-related news coverage across several countries in the Middle East and North Africa, all while reinforcing nationalist identities (Richter et al., 2021).

Given the rise of complex risks and prolonged crises, the challenges (and lapses) in intercultural risk and crisis communication, and the ongoing Western-centrism in knowledge production, it is crucial to discuss the elements of what can be called cosmopolitan risk and crisis communication research.

Principles of cosmopolitan risk and crisis communication research

In this section, we will propose some guiding principles for cosmopolitan risk and crisis communication research, inspired by the elements of normative cosmopolitanism mentioned in the previous section (e.g., see Cheah, 2006; Waisbord, 2015), Badr and Ganter's (2021) work on "academic cosmopolitanism" (see also Alves & Medeiros, 2021), Waisbord and Mellado's (2014) dimensions in de-Westernizing communication studies, and Diers-Lawson's (2017) intercultural communication research agenda. For some of the principles, we will provide examples from our experience with the DECIPHER project, an international research consortium funded by the German Research Foundation that examined COVID-19-related risk and crisis communication in the USA and six European countries.

As a normative framework, cosmopolitan risk and crisis communication research is guided by the following principles: 1) it recognizes the nature of complex risks and prolonged crises, especially their transnational nature; 2) it strives for a truly cosmopolitan perspective, one that is informed by critical de-Westernization, thereby including perspectives and realities from underrepresented environments; 3) it involves attempts to address long-standing inequities in academic spaces; 4) it accommodates the particularities of cultures and environments yet seeks to apply an inclusive yet unified framework for mature comparative studies; and 5) it is devoid of "epistemic hierarchization" and involves academic dialogue on equal footing (Alves & Medeiros, 2021, p. 12). Furthermore, following the United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030

(United Nations, 2015) and other agreements at the United Nations level, cosmopolitan risk and crisis studies should be people-centered. While many existing theories focus on image enhancement and reputation management, a cosmopolitan approach incorporates a humanitarian perspective that focuses more on stakeholders and the diversity of people affected by complex risks and protracted crises.

The first principle takes into account the characteristics of prolonged crises, as explained in the first section. Because the effects and causes of such crises can no longer be located within national borders, studies with an international or comparative perspective offer insights into how risk and crisis communication is conducted or perceived in different settings. As Esser and Hanitzsch (2012) noted, international comparative research allows us to see our own communication patterns in a different light by "[contrasting] them critically with those prevalent in other societies" (p. 4), thus answering the question as to how particular political, cultural, or historical contexts explain the variance in message reception or choice of communication strategies. Moreover, such studies allow scholars to question theoretical frameworks or ways of thinking that are considered commonsensical or taken for granted as "natural." In terms of practical implications, comparative studies show which solutions work in which contexts and why and which best practices from other environments can be adapted to the current setting (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012).

The abovementioned reasons were also the reasons for adopting a comparative approach in the DECIPHER project. In this project, we compared pandemic-related government communication, news coverage, citizen perceptions, and online discourse in Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the UK, and the USA. The countries were selected according to differences in system-level characteristics; for example, some countries represented individualistic risk cultures while others represented state-oriented and fatalistic risk cultures (Cornia et al., 2016). The rationale was to identify similarities or differences in communication and message reception patterns and how these related to system-level characteristics.

The nature of prolonged crises as multiplex crises also necessitates careful consideration of their cross-sectoral impact on society and the different considerations or "trade-offs" that influence crisis communication. It can be argued, for instance, that COVID-19-related risk and crisis communication is not only health communication but also a form of strategic government communication and is therefore also driven by political considerations. This raises the questions: How do communicators in different countries "juggle" these sometimes competing considerations (e.g., communicating safety vs. communicating uncertainty), or which considerations take precedence over others? And what particular features of the environment might explain this?

The second principle, meanwhile, is predicated on the elements of a cosmopolitan mindset, as mentioned in the previous section: commitment to virtues of equality and justice that transcend borders, strong knowledge foundations on global interconnectedness, and a critical understanding of the historical and contemporary dynamics of the Global North and the Global South (e.g., Cheah, 2006; Delanty, 2012; Waisbord, 2015). This means encouraging the inclusion of underrepresented environments (LMICs and industrialized countries beyond the Western mainstream) in comparative studies or encouraging research from and about these settings. This principle is crucial in addressing

what Diers-Lawson (2017) described as the US-centric state of research discussed in the first section of this chapter. This effort is best guided by the critical de-Westernization paradigm, which requires an awareness of the status quo in knowledge production and the factors that have led to persisting Euro-American ethnocentrism in research, and, more importantly, a willingness to help correct such disparities.

But first, we must ask what exactly de-Westernization means. The term has several meanings. For many scholars, especially in the so-called West, de-Westernization is more about inclusiveness or "considering experiences, research findings, and theoretical frameworks developed in the rest of the world," but for scholars beyond the mainstream West, it is more about "a necessary shift to reorient intellectual work against academic Eurocentrism" (Waisbord & Mellado, 2014, p. 362). The more radical tone, so to speak, of the second conceptualization can be understood in the context of the deeply embedded structures of Euro-American ethnocentrism, which was discussed in depth in the first section. These structures are linked to systemic conditions in the LMICs or in academia in general, and while it is extremely difficult to change these, research communities can start by de-Westernizing important dimensions of their research. They can de-Westernize the "subject of study" (conducting studies on the circumstances of underrepresented settings), the "body of evidence" (e.g., including LMICs or the Global South countries in comparative studies to arrive at truly global conclusions), the "analytical frameworks" (e.g., using theoretical frameworks that accommodate realities of the Global South, or modifying them for this purpose, or using indigenous frameworks from these countries), and "academic cultures" (understanding the differences in the practices, norms, and beliefs of scholars around the world and why certain academic cultures are more "privileged" than others) (Waisbord & Mellado, 2014, pp. 363–370).

De-Westernizing academic cultures involves a defining characteristic of academic cosmopolitanism: "intellectual and structural critique towards academia" (Badr & Ganter, 2021, p. 2). This structural critique underpins the third principle: helping correct long-standing inequities in academic spaces, as seen in the experiences and numbers of women and people of color in academia, especially in tenured positions and bodies that have a role in the accumulation of academic capital (see Fox Tree & Vaid, 2022). This can take the form of fostering collaborations with scholars from the Global South as principal investigators in comparative projects, including more scholars from the Global South on the editorial boards of risk and crisis communication journals, supporting scholars from the Global South in conducting research in their own settings, and promoting more collaborations among countries in the Global South.

In practice, however, such collaborations are more complex. In fact, collaborations in comparative studies in general are quite complex. Part of what makes it so is related to the fourth principle: capturing the particularities of the environments while still using an inclusive yet unified framework for comparative studies, which entails functional equivalence or the "equivalence of concepts" (Hanitzsch & Esser, 2012, p. 504). This principle is also in line with another aspect of academic cosmopolitanism: "room for differentiation" in the process of creating "common spaces" (Badr & Ganter, 2021, p. 2). Seeking functional equivalence, meanwhile, means ensuring an "identical, or at least similar, definition of core concepts across all investigated cultures in a comparative study" (Hanitzsch & Esser, 2012, p. 504). This also requires the construction of a theoretical framework that

can be applied across environments without ignoring important environmental particularities.

The fourth principle can be illustrated by describing our sampling strategy in the DECIPHER subproject on government communication. In selecting our respondents, we needed to identify representatives who could speak on behalf of executive, public health, and communication functions in the national and subnational governments. However, we encountered some complications due to system-level differences. For example, in some countries, those who perform key functions do not always meet the sampling criteria or work in units with mandates different from their supposed counterparts in other countries. In one case, the equivalent subnational government did not have the crisis management competencies that its counterparts in other countries had. Addressing these issues was, of course, a complicated task and required a literature-based justification, but this was largely resolved through regular discussions with our international partners, who were professors from the countries in our sample and had a long history of research on these environments. This is the "assembling strategy" in establishing equivalence: experts from different cultural origins take the time to discuss concepts and approaches and arrive at "universally applicable" but still context sensitive concepts (Hanitzsch & Esser, 2012, p. 504).

In the workshops and regular conversations with international partners, we were also able to extensively discuss issues of research epistemologies, all the while trying to maintain an open-minded attitude in a dialogue of equals, which illustrates the fifth guiding principle. The fifth principle is based on another facet of academic cosmopolitanism: an "open-minded and impartial attitude toward scholars and their work and seeks dialogue on even grounds" (Badr & Ganter, 2021, p. 2). As the consortium was composed of scholars from different disciplines, we were able to gain insights into the norms of knowledge production in other related disciplines as well as reflect on our own. This was also a step toward avoiding "epistemic hierarchization," borrowing Alves and Medeiros's (2021, p. 12) term. Epistemic hierarchization refers to the dominance of some research traditions that remain unchallenged by virtue of their position in the structures that provide academic capital, as discussed in a previous section.

The discussion in this section suggests that cosmopolitan risk and crisis communication research goes beyond the mere internationalization of scholarship. It addresses not only the deficiencies in research epistemologies but also the structural dilemmas of academia when it comes to the representation of Global South scholars or people of color in research communities. Addressing the latter is crucial because the themes, approaches, and overall research traditions in the field are linked to such issues of representation.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the persisting Euro-American ethnocentrism in risk and crisis communication research, exploring its causes and implications. We also discussed the nature of prolonged crises and cosmopolitan risk collectivities that have emerged due to the increasing interconnectedness of the world, as well as the challenges and critical

issues surrounding intercultural risk and crisis communication. Finally, we proposed a set of guiding principles for research on cosmopolitan risk and crisis communication. Our aim was not only to improve the study of global crises as the world risk society faces one protracted crisis after another, but also to address long-standing disparities in knowledge production that prevent the field from moving forward.

While the principles are grounded on normative cosmopolitanism, we provided illustrative examples from research experience. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen if these principles can actually be applied in cosmopolitanizing research (which one can test through future empirical studies). There is hope, as there are notable ongoing efforts to address the disparities in knowledge production. Compared to a couple of decades ago, the field has had substantial gains in terms of internationalization and institutionalization (Löffelholz et al., 2023). As mentioned in an earlier section, the academic community is incorporating more and more perspectives from beyond the mainstream West, as seen in the increasing number of comparative projects involving Global South environments and scholars publishing on realities in these areas.

To truly advance the field, it is essential to commit to a cosmopolitan approach in risk and crisis communication research, which involves not only seeking diverse perspectives and methodologies but also challenging Euro-American ethnocentrism in knowledge production and structures of academia. Only then can a genuine cosmopolitan turn take place in risk and crisis communication research. This cosmopolitan turn can lead to a better understanding of risks and crises, most which impact developing and underrepresented regions much more than industrialized ones, ultimately translating to more effective practice.

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