

**BIG IDEAS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS  
RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

# ADVANCES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

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ADVANCES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION  
MANAGEMENT VOLUME 4

# **BIG IDEAS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

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Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2019

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**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83867-508-0 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-83867-507-3 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-83867-509-7 (Epub)

ISSN: 2398-3914 (Series)



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# INTRODUCTION

All disciplines are guilty to some degree of introspection and self-reflection. Much time is spent in academic discourse dissecting issues that have engaged groups of academics in a specific field for many years. This, of course, can be valuable in building deeper understanding of the discipline and making moves to aid understanding for future generations of scholars. Public relations (PR) as a field of academic exploration and applied practice is no different. As researchers and teachers, we concentrate on the defined and refined areas of our field and explore them in depth. We research, write papers and teach our discipline in this way ensuring we are thorough and detailed in our analysis and understanding. We apply the principles of multi-layered scholarship to really get underneath topics and themes of interest to ourselves and our peers. And from this deep dive enquiry we aim to advance knowledge and crucially build confidence in the robustness of our enquiry.

But, every now and then it's good to break away from standard practice and the norm. It's refreshing to challenge established thinking and the status quo to explore alternative ways to look at problems and issues. We often talk in academia about the lenses through which we observe and make enquiry about our field or a topic within it. For this reason we are excited with this collection of papers that emanate from the original and exciting congress we held in Aarhus, Denmark, in September 2018. At this meeting of our academic community we were challenged to break out of the tramlines and think differently, or, as discussed, through a different lens. This fresh thinking was inspired by the conference theme from our Aarhus colleagues to look for 'big ideas' in PR. And that is what our international collection of academic colleagues delivered. Collected here are 12 selected papers which capture in different forms some of the novel and innovative ways to expand and view the frame of reference for the field of PR scholarship.

In the first chapter, Jule Keller-Bacher and Ansgar Zerfass explore the specific role of strategic communication as a facilitator for business internationalization. It provides a new and comprehensive rationale for explaining the contribution of strategic communication to the global success of companies and shows communication leaders how they can demonstrate the value of communication for internationalization. The chapter identifies an important contribution of strategic communication in today's globalized world, which demands further attention in academia and in practice by addressing three research questions: (1) How can strategic communication be conceptualized as part of the internationalization of firms? (2) Which specific objectives, responsibilities and practices

can be assigned to strategic communication within the process of internationalization? (3) Does the theoretical framework capture the significant components of strategic communication within internationalization, appropriately from the point of view of senior experts in the field? The study identifies four core fields of strategic communication within the internationalization processes: initiation, transformation, expansion and integration. Communication should be implemented differently within the typical periods of internationalization, and communication management should focus on different aspects during these processes. From a theoretical standpoint, this study emphasizes the value of a cross-disciplinary perspective on corporate communications, which helps to bridge gaps between management research and communication studies. The study expands the body of knowledge in strategic communication by integrating new objectives and activities.

Chapter 2 moves us into the realm of technology and how aspects of digitalisation and datafication are challenging PR. Sine Nørholm Just and Rasmus Kjærgaard Rasmussen argue that technological developments have created a need to re-conceptualize PR to account for data as affordance and actor. The conceptual chapter discusses existing communicative theories in relation to current changes in the media landscape and its technological underpinnings. Focusing on the areas of crisis communication and issues management, the researchers argue that datafication provides new ways of dealing with issues and, in turn, presents new issues for PR professionals. Thus, the chapter presents a novel conceptualisation of PR in which technological affordances and agencies go hand in hand with human efforts in the configuration of communicative assemblages. They argue therefore that viewing data solely as an affordance merely provides new tools for solving existing issues. When the independent agency of data is recognized and employed, more effective means of solving such issues appear, but data itself also becomes an issue. They use the Cambridge Analytica scandal as a case with broader discussions about electoral manipulation. In this regard, balancing the dual demands of efficacy and ethics is as pressing a concern for PR as ever. The conceptualization of PR in terms of communicative assemblages, they suggest, may not only explain processes of issues formation better, but also provide a starting point for handling such processes ethically and effectively.

The next chapter investigates online branded video and how they can create positive impressions for viewers. This study begins with an exploratory approach to understanding how online branded video results in positive impressions among viewers. In their chapter, Gregory G. De Blasio, Komala Mazerant and Brad Scharlott highlight scholars who have previously examined the characteristics of videos that can contribute to their appeal as well as different literature discussions that have identified social practices and emotions likely to influence the perceptions of branded content. Their study aims to bridge the gap between those two strands by asking which social practices produce the emotions that lead to greater enjoyment of a video. Using a series of multiple regressions, they construct a path analysis model linking key social practices and emotions that



lead to positive evaluations of branded videos. The model provides future strategic direction for the makers of online branded video.

Chapter 4 by Renate Dam, Wim J. L. Elving and Roel van Veen discusses their exploratory study that looks at how various organizations are engaging millennials in ‘energy transition’. The authors place the chapter in the context of the Paris climate accord at which almost all countries in the world agreed to reduce greenhouse gasses to limit impact on climate change. To achieve this, countries need to reduce fossil fuel usage and fundamentally change behaviour. In their study the authors explored how organizations are engaging with young people, often referred to as millennials on the topic. Millennials are seen as digital natives; they grew up with digital communication. But the question they ask is do organizations engage millennials in this energy transition and do they do it in a way that millennials understand? The study finds that organizations, with a few exceptions, do not use interactive media and elements that millennials use, and subsequently don’t engage millennials in a way that encourages them to support energy transition. The authors provide some suggestions how organizations can engage millennials more effectively and to a greater extent.

Moving outside of Europe, Zhao Alexandre Huang and Rui Wang discuss their work exploring diplomacy in China using Twitter. Using the theoretical frameworks of public diplomacy and PR, the authors in Chapter 5 have mapped how the Chinese government has used panda imagery to build its national brand on Twitter and how this ‘panda diplomacy’ has facilitated its para-diplomatic actions. Through this interesting case exploration the researchers’ findings uncover new attempts by the Chinese government to engage in digital diplomacy. They argue that by mobilizing panda imagery on Twitter the Chinese government has enhanced more friendly relations with foreign political leaders and the general public. This, they posit, has created a friendlier and more peaceful image of China on the Twitter platform worldwide.

Alexandra Crăciun provides a chapter that aims to redefine corporate identity as a PR tool, and part of a new communication syntax of hypermodernity (Lipovetsky, 2005, 2007). In line with relevant theories of narrative engagement coming from the post-structuralist semiotics and the “aesthetics of interaction” (Eco, 1978, 1979, 1990), corporate identity is discussed in Chapter 6 as a conversational instrument, retrieved and reconstructed by ‘echo chambers’ and ‘curiosity gaps’. The territory of the visual identity becomes part of a collective transaction, a sort of ‘open work’/ *opera aperta* (Eco, 1962), where the consumers are asked to build their own *intentio lectoris* (Eco, 1979, 1996), their own representamen (Peirce, 1998). In McLuhan’s terms, this can be translated as a ‘cooling down’ of the system of corporate identity. In her chapter Crăciun argues that ‘conversational branding’ is rooted in the dialogic model of PR, and provides an interactive usage of visual identity, and a new consumer-centric perspective in strategic communication.

Religion is one of our society(ies)’s biggest ideas, and Markus Wiesenbergs takes the book and the contributions on another turn with an exploration of the role of strategic communication in organized religion. His study examines how strategic communication can be modelled in organized religion with its specific

characteristics and logics by building a framework for strategic communication in this field of research. The framework he presents in Chapter 7 questions perspectives of strategic communication and communication management that only concentrate on entities like famous persons, groups, movements or organizations and rather less on belief systems, organized and less organized entities and their interactions with each other.

For Chapter 8 Sarah VanSlette explores a research gap in the field and specifically research and studies into the role of PR and communications for new enterprises. Her chapter argues there is a clear gap in research about how startup companies use PR in their tenuous and critical first few years of existence. She acknowledges a small body of literature focused on how startups should use marketing, but emphasizes how the PR literature is virtually non-existent. Citing a Google Scholar search, she found 50 results for titles with the words 'marketing' and 'startup' and only one result when searching for titles with the words 'public relations' and 'startup'. That single result is in fact an undergraduate project (Shimasaki, 2013) and emphasizes the missing body of research devoted to PR for startups.

Chapter 9 explores another neglected aspect of PR research. Paul Willis and Andy Green argue that while scholars in the field consider social capital's societal and organizational potential, little attention is paid to its practical aspects. For example, what steps should PR practitioners take when seeking to build social capital in support of their work with stakeholders? To initiate a discussion around these questions, the chapter introduces a conceptual framework developed as part of a research project involving an academic, PR practitioners and a professional association in the United Kingdom. This research collaboration positions the building of social capital as a key leadership competency for PR. The aim of the collaboration is to encourage and develop the PR profession's social capital building capability and capacity in the United Kingdom. With this goal in mind, the conceptual framework presented in the chapter is designed to inform a series of active, theory-driven interviews with practitioners during the project's forthcoming empirical stage. To underline the importance of the conceptual framework to the study's overall research design, its inclusion is discussed within the context of key ontological and methodological considerations.

For Chapter 10 we go inside the organization. Vibeke Thøis Madsen and Joost W. M. Verhoeven argue that PR professionals are increasingly taking on a coaching and training role, and communication technology has made employees more visible and approachable. As such they argue employees increasingly take on active communication roles with external publics. While PR professionals' roles are conceptualized fairly well, no framework exists that describes the many communication roles that employees play in contemporary organizations. Their chapter identifies different employee communication roles proposed in academic research in order to point out the increasing role of employees as strategic communicators in PR.

In Chapter 11 Mark Badham identifies, defines and explores four news media roles of conduit, facilitator, mediator and political actor through which the media participate with corporate, social and political actors in agenda-building

processes. The framework of the media's four agenda-building roles sheds light on how the news media perform their various roles as well as how other actors, such as organizations and media audiences, are able to mobilize the media performing these roles. This framework helps explain how and why media roles affect the way actors are able to influence the media agenda with the intention of shaping the public agenda.

Vanessa Moreira and Mafalda Eiró-Gomes investigate communication professionals' role and ethical responsibility in sharing information, misinformation and disinformation, specifically from the science and technology fields. Through a review of literature, the authors set out to contextualize the role of communication professionals in scientific and technological organizations in today's social and political environments. They conclude that communication professionals in scientific and technological organizations do need to embrace the responsibility to contribute to the empowerment of citizens regarding their access to information and ability to navigate through the overwhelming amount of data they have access to on a daily basis. Citing the rise and expansion of populist movements worldwide, they stake a claim for the importance to reflect on the role of scientific and technological organizations in the public debate. They argue it is here that public opinion is formed and therefore it is important that organizations involved in scientific and technology developments embrace this responsibility as part of their identity.

So we have 12 diverse chapters reflecting different aspects of the field of PR and communications and all providing innovative thinking and application to what we have discussed as big ideas in our societies. The chapters come from both theoretical and empirical positions thus providing refreshing interpretations and explanations of how scholars in the subject are addressing issues that concern them.

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# HOW STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FACILITATES THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF FIRMS: A SITUATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Jule Keller-Bacher and Ansgar Zerfass

## ABSTRACT

*This chapter examines the specific role of strategic communication as a facilitator for business internationalization. It provides a new and comprehensive rationale for explaining the contribution of strategic communication to the global success of companies and shows communication leaders how they could demonstrate the value of communication for internationalization.*

*The chapter identifies an important contribution of strategic communication in today's globalized world, which demands further attention in academia and in practice by addressing three research questions: (1) How can strategic communication be conceptualized as part of the internationalization of firms? (2) Which specific objectives, responsibilities and practices can be assigned to strategic communication within the process of internationalization? (3) Does the theoretical framework capture the significant components of strategic communication within internationalization, appropriately from the point of view of senior experts in the field?*

*The chosen approach is conceptual and empirical. A cross-disciplinary literature analysis has been performed to construct a framework that links possible forms and manifestations of strategic communication to different situations of international business development. Qualitative interviews with senior*

*communication executives were conducted to verify the plausibility of the theoretical framework from a professional point of view. The study identifies four core fields of strategic communication within the internationalization processes: initiation, transformation, expansion and integration. Communication should be implemented differently within the typical periods of internationalization, and communication management should focus on different aspects during these processes. Empirical findings indicate that the core fields depicted in the framework are either already applied in practice or perceived as plausible and doable.*

*From a theoretical standpoint, this study emphasizes the value of a cross-disciplinary perspective on corporate communications, which helps to bridge gaps between management research and communication studies. The study expands the body of knowledge in strategic communication by integrating new objectives and activities.*

**Keywords:** Strategic communication; business internationalization; communication value; dynamics of internationalization; communication goals; communication management

## INTRODUCTION

Globalization is widely seen to be a main tendency of our time (Mathews, 2006). It has created a truly international business environment during the last decades through worldwide deregulation, trade liberalization and integration of financial systems, as well as through an ongoing cultural, economic and social homogeneity (Clark & Knowles, 2003; Mathews, 2006). New patterns of economic interwovenness have been established. Today, companies might utilize, import or export activities; run international joint ventures; or establish global value chains. Markets for most goods, services and financial instruments are, nowadays, truly international. Thus, executives as well as communication professionals can no longer look upon markets as clear-cut, autonomous regional entities. They must cope with the characteristics of multiple environments, changing political landscapes and dynamic media markets, as well as heterogeneous stakeholder demands (e.g. Cavusgil, 1980).

Communicating and collaborating with customers, employees, co-workers, suppliers and partners from all over the world has, thereby, become a common and essential practice. Differences in cognitive patterns, leadership, strategies, verbal images and value structures need to be listened to and managed with great care (Macharzina & Wolf, 2015). Consequently, a growing need for harmonious and powerful border-crossing relationships that transcend cultural differences has emerged for businesses competing in global markets (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). With the emergence of this overall ambition, strategic communication is becoming an important driver for international business success in today's hypermodern world.

However, the specific role of corporate communications within internationalization has largely been neglected and never been systematized. Even though the international dimension of public relations and communication management has stimulated a growing body of research throughout the last two decades, existing approaches and definitions are mainly highlighting the practices of communication departments and professionals in different regions or the practices for communicating and managing communications across borders. A broader approach that examines how communication can support the overall process of business internationalization is missing until now.

This chapter takes an initial step towards closing this gap by answering three research questions: (1) How can strategic communication be conceptualized as part of the internationalization of businesses? (2) Which specific objectives, responsibilities and practices can be assigned to strategic communication within the process of internationalization? (3) Does the theoretical framework capture the significant components of strategic communication within internationalization, appropriately from the point of view of senior experts in the field?

The first question will be addressed by linking concepts from communication management to theories of internationalization (framework development). A new situational framework for explaining the influence that strategic communication departments can have on different forms of international development will be introduced in a second step (framework explication). Finally, the plausibility of the theoretical framework will be tested through qualitative interviews with senior communication executives (framework validation).

## **THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF FIRMS**

Current debates in management research support a dynamic and processual approach for the understanding of internationalization, rather than a more traditional comparative and static understanding. The literature on dynamic internationalization describes a movement of the enterprise towards other countries, driven by competitive advantage and economic objectives, as ‘the process of increasing involvement in international operations’ (Mathews & Zander, 2007, p. 9; McDougall & Oviatt, 2000; Welch & Luostarinen, 1988, p. 36). This rationale implies a unilinear sequential process of rising involvement in international operations. For extending this understanding towards ‘born global companies’, Calof and Beamish (1995, p. 116) suggest understanding internationalization as ‘the process of adapting firms’ operations (e.g., strategy, resource) to international environments’. Thus, international engagement is not necessarily bound to any specific direction of development, for example, from the home country to foreign countries.

At the same time, Mathews and Zander (2007, p. 9) emphasize that internationalization may be defined as the entrepreneurial process of the firm becoming integrated into international economic activities. Here, the term integration includes both push and pull and provides a more comprehensive view, depicting the global economy as pre-existing and offering resources to the firm that acts

upon entrepreneurial learning insights. This broad definition encompasses internationalization as a process of engagement and creation of inter-firm linkages within the global economy, “driven by entrepreneurial observation, calculation, and strategic action” (Mathews & Zander, 2007, p. 9). Thus, internationalization evolves by an interplay of competitive advantages and objectives (push) as well as of newly arising opportunities (pull).

The introduction of behavioural theories from international marketing and management will allow us to link this dynamic understanding of internationalization to characteristics of strategic communication. These theories analyse business decisions made when approaching new markets and capture several dimensions frequently discussed in literature: skills, knowledge and resources. They provide insights on how the role of communication can be theoretically captured, situationally differentiated and designed in accordance with strategies of internationalization.

For many years, business-related theories on internationalization have introduced different courses of development, temporal patterns and phases of internationalization. Three major approaches for explaining behaviour within internationalization can be identified: the stage approach, the network approach and the international entrepreneurship approach.

#### *Stage Models of Internationalization*

Stage models depict internationalization “as a linear and sequential process composed by a series of distinctive stages” (Lin, 2010, p. 2). They are supported by two major research streams: the *Uppsala Internationalization Model* (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975) and the *Innovation-related Internationalization Model* (Bilkey & Tesar, 1977; Cavusgil, 1980; Czinkota, 1982; Reid, 1981). Both approaches conceptualize internationalization as a gradual process, following certain steps to reach foreign markets. This sequential development is based on a series of decisions and incremental commitments based on perception, expectation, experience and managerial capabilities. Each step consecutively represents a higher degree of internationalization. The process, thereby, develops through successive phases. Starting with an initial situation characterized by no interest in internationalization or a comfortable situation in the home market, it evolves from psychologically close countries to more distant ones as decision-makers become more experienced.

The *Uppsala school* defines four linear stages: (1) irregular export activities, (2) export through independent agents, (3) establishment of an overseas sales subsidiary and (4) overseas production or manufacturing units. The gradual pattern of the internationalization process is mainly attributed to two reasons: (1) the lack of knowledge by the firm, especially ‘experiential knowledge’, and (2) uncertainty associated with the decision to internationalize. Due to the lack of international experience and information about the business environment in other regions, firms tend to enter foreign markets with caution (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). Acquisition, integration and utilization of knowledge in international operations explain an incremental participation in foreign markets.



A combination of successive learning processes and the gradual commitment of resources to international environments sheds light on the dynamics of internationalization. Apart from learning process theories, the concept of psychic distance has been an important contribution to theory development by stage models. Psychic distance refers to the sum of cultural, political and linguistic differences, as well as other differences that influence information circulation (Khayat, 2004; Lin, 2010). It can be conceptualized as a significant factor for companies to decide on whether or not to enter international markets. Johanson and Vahlne (1977) argue that weakening the psychic distance will make firms less hesitant to enter foreign countries. With growing international experience, psychic distance decreases and internationalization gains momentum.

By considering internationalization as an innovation for the firm, the *Innovation-Related Internationalization Model* provides a complementary perspective on the incremental development of internationalization. According to Bilkey and Tesar (1977), Cavusgil (1980) and Reid (1981), each subsequent step of export development is based on a management decision affected by 'push' or 'pull' mechanisms. Firm-specific characteristics and managerial factors facilitate or inhibit the process. Among others, Reid (1981) proposed a taxonomy that encompasses five stages, which can be supplemented to the work of Bilkey and Tesar (1977):

- (1) Export awareness: management is not yet interested in export. The stage addresses the problem of opportunity recognition and the arousal of need.
- (2) Export intention: the management is partially interested and willing to fill unsolicited orders, but makes no effort to explore the feasibility of active export. The stage emphasizes the need for motivation, attitude, beliefs and expectancy regarding export.
- (3) Export trial: management actively explores the feasibility of active export. The stage addresses the importance of personal experience from limited export (exploring need).
- (4) Export evaluation: the management is now actively involved in exporting to countries psychologically closer. The stage focuses on the importance of results from engaging in export (experimental need).
- (5) Export acceptance: the firm now is an experienced exporter. The management explores the feasibility of exporting to other psychologically more distant countries. The stage addresses the decision on further adoption or rejection of export.

Thereby, the authors illustrate that the attitude, the motivation, the experiences and the expectations of decision-makers have a significant impact on the progress of internationalization. Export business is believed to require a favourable attitude towards international expansion within top management, foreign market opportunities and the presence of spare resources within the firm (Zapletalová, 2013). In this sense, the role of decision-makers and factors influencing their decisions are integrated within the concept of gradual internationalization of firms.

Stage approaches are applicable in many ways. However, empirical studies have shown that international business development does not necessarily follow a unilinear learning model, and it is not always built on a one-way pattern of development (e.g. Oviatt & McDougall, 1994). Thus, other internationalization approaches, like the network approach or the born global research, need to be taken into account as well.

### *Network Approaches of Internationalization*

The network approach (Johanson & Mattson, 1988) improved the original Uppsala Model (1977) by outlining the importance of understanding any firm in its multilateral network. Incorporating concepts of model knowledge, commitment, ongoing activities and decision-making, the authors use the intra- and inter-organizational relations to explain motivations for and modes of internationalization. Thus, a firm's expansion is seen as a way of anticipating the interests of more and more stakeholders or building networks of external relationships. Such network positions may be associated with a privileged and early access to knowledge and information, or the attractiveness or value as a collaborator that further enhances knowledge assimilation capabilities (Kogut, 2000; Mathews & Zander, 2007, p. 6). Consequently, relations in existing networks can encourage the mode of market entry, facilitate internationalization and, thus, accelerate business growth.

For Johanson and Mattson (1988), internationalization is conducted through three steps of network activities: (1) extension, (2) penetration and (3) integration. Extension serves the company to impel the foreign network, either through own achievements "or by attaching itself to an existing network" (Lin, 2010, p. 7). Therefore, the company engages "itself into new types of *immaterial investments*, like information, contractual relationship and partnership that will connect the enterprise to its foreign partners" (Lin, 2010, p. 7). Penetration describes the further development of a company's position within the network as well as its growing resource commitment. Integration as an advanced step refers to the company's linkage to several networks and the coordination among those. Network theories emphasize that internationalization strategies are influenced by the company's position within its specific set of stakeholders. Relations with foreign partners are established and maintained in continuous ways to gain information access or human capital and, thus, accelerate internationalization. Despite the growing importance of inter-firm alliances for competitive and cooperative advantage, network relationships must be conceived as complementary to the traditional drivers of successful internationalization, like ownership, location and other advantages (Dunning, 2000; Mathews & Zander, 2007).

### *International Entrepreneurship Approach of Internationalization*

Whereas traditional frameworks provide powerful insights into the characteristics of gradual internationalization, they are not able to describe the internationalization of so-called born global companies (Shrader, Oviatt, & McDougall, 2000).

These companies either start fully international or emerge as global industry leaders in sometimes incredibly short periods of time (Mathews, 2006). The International entrepreneurship approach, as part of the Born Global research (e.g. Madsen & Servais, 1997), tries to capture the reality of such corporations. It provides a radical, non-incremental understanding of internationalization through an alternative view on learning and knowledge-building (Jager, 2010, pp. 38–39). According to this perspective, firms do not only gain experience and knowledge through internationalization, as outlined by traditional management approaches, but also use existing internal know-how or resources to initiate and influence the internationalization process itself (Jager, 2010). Thus, internationalization rather depends on previously gained expertise that can be defined by elements such as networks, entrepreneurial experiences, international experience, market knowledge and stakeholder relations (Brennan & Garvey, 2009). Internationalization is driven much more by the entrepreneur's social capital, knowledge or interest than by the company itself and its environment. This provides a more adequate model for observing companies with a strong engagement in international business even before organizational and industry maturity sets in.

Along these lines, the Gestalt Approach to International Business Strategies (GAINS) paradigm by Macharzina and Engelhard (1984, 1991) provides key insights on both perspectives – the continuous and the accelerated growth of multinational firms. The approach describes the dynamics of internationalization as an interplay of phases of calm and change. Based on empirical observations, Macharzina and Engelhard (1991) state that a period of 'relative' standstill or stability is always followed by a period of radical change. While the stable period can be translated into further adjustment or differentiation of existing corporate structures, the radical period describes a significant change or reversal in development direction, corporate strategy, organizational structure or management system (Macharzina & Wolf, 2015). Usually stable phases occur more frequently than sudden transition phases during the patterns of corporate development (Miller & Friesen, 1980). Companies can develop gradually from a national to a multinational enterprise as well as radically with different designs of internationalization (Macharzina & Wolf, 2015). Thus, internationalization can be compared to a process-oriented development with longer periods of relative stability and shorter periods of revolutionary change. This also includes the possibility of reversion to a national enterprise through divestment or renationalization.

### *Conclusion*

The application of theories and models that capture internationalization processes provides a profound explanation of the ways and reasons of business development within foreign markets. Successful internationalization requires a strong capability to learn new concepts and ideas, competences to manage external networks and an aptitude to adapt to different cultural environments. The kind of competition, the use of human capital, of organizational structure and

cooperation clearly contribute to international success. Internationalization also means openness to adjustments in general strategy as well as innovation itself. A company's approach to internationalization can be characterized by shaping, developing and creating an internationalization strategy, a long-standing development of relationships with foreign entities and selected markets, as well as knowledge acquisition, the use of internalized asset transfer and global value chains to maximize competitive advantage, the deployment of internal resources and structures, the shaping of partnerships and perception management within the network environment (e.g. Buckley & Casson, 1998; Dunning, 1988; Martynoga & Jankowska, 2017, p. 72).

As it turns out, various objectives and preconditions of business internationalization are closely linked to strategic communication. Processes of building visibility, managing alliances and relationships – as well as multi-stakeholder demands, meaning, reputation, innovation, culture, commitment and knowledge transfer – and dealing with the dynamics of power and conflict are highly relevant in internationalization processes. They can be reinforced by communication techniques and strategies. Since there is no existing literature about the role of communication in internationalization, it is necessary to develop a new model that takes into account all factors of internationalization that are related to communications.

## THE INTERNATIONAL DYNAMICS FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION

The study proposes that the salient features of a firm's international expansion are best captured in a framework that is based on entrepreneurial dynamics. Following this understanding, the *international dynamics framework* outlines entry points and pathways mapped by firms as they enter international business areas as well as the key factors that influence further behaviour and strategic choices.

In line with the literature discussed in the chapter, four periods of international development are relevant: (1) *pioneer period*, (2) *stabilization period*, (3) *growth period* and (4) *maturation period*. Each period can be linked to milestones like the discovery of opportunities, the deployment of resources or the engagement with international competitors (Mathews & Zander, 2007). The framework further suggests that the basic orientation of each period differs, moving from *expansion* to *consolidation* (cf. the GAINS paradigm). Pioneering moves like starting export activities need to be stabilized after a certain period of time, and markets that have been opened up need to be integrated and transformed into a productive international portfolio. Following these thoughts, each period of internationalization requires one particular approach of strategic communication. Even though business processes always involve the parallel execution of a many activities, the significance of diverse international dimensions is highlighted by distinguishing between different scopes for each period.