

# Theory in Practice in Public Relations through to the Fully-Functioning Society

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# PR as an Oxymoron: Conflict between Theory and Practice

**Authors:** Beris Artan Özoran (Ankara University, Research Assistant/Phd student in Public Relations Department)

**Ilgar Seyidov** (Ankara University, Phd student in Public Relations Department)

Nowadays one can say “either-or” era has transmitted to “and” era. In 1982 Kandinsky claimed that “While the nineteenth century was dominated by Either-or, the twentieth century was to be devoted to work on And” (Quoted by Beck, 2005: 19). So, it can be stated that everything is formed by the combination of contrasts. Like every field, “Public relations” is also a combination of two opposite forms. Therefore, it is an oxymoron. There is a conflict in between, public relations theory and public relations practice. As stated in Grung and Hunt’s famous 4 models of public relations, most of the theorists argue that there is a progress in public relations towards a “two way symmetrical” communication. They argue that firstly there were public relations models which are press agency and public information that are based on manipulation and persuasion. Nevertheless, in recent times, the new theories of public relations are distinguished by the equitable relationship between public and organizations. To be more precise, they claim that there is a transition from one-way communication to two-way communication. Also, they defend that this two-way communication is in a symmetrical form. However, practice differs from the theory. It can be claimed that there is not a clear progress in public relations practice. Within the framework of the current study the conflict that emerges when applying theory to the practice will be analyzed. By the literature review, this study will focus on the question of how public relations becomes to an oxymoron.

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# Activism as public relations: perspectives drawn from Australian asbestos activism

Philippa Brear BCom(Econ) MA FPRIA

Senior Lecturer School of Media and Communication

RMIT University

In 2001 Heath argued that the state of [PR] practice had been heavily influenced by the dynamics of change *forged by* activism, including the social and political upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s. He observed, citing Smith and Ferguson, that public relations had a role of developing “mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their activist critics” (2001). In Heath’s 2010 *Handbook of Public Relations*, however, Smith and Ferguson note the emerging acceptance among scholars of activists as practitioners *of* public relations, thereby moving away from corporate or governmental focused view.

This paper analyses the views of a group of asbestos campaigners whose achievements and work are spread across 40 years of asbestos activism in Australia – from the 1970s to 2014. It considers whether Australian asbestos activists view their activities as activism. It will also examine the activities of the interviewees to determine if they align with existing understandings of public relations and, therefore, if their activities can be said to fall within the ambit of public relations.

The paper will refer to conceptualisations and activism and public relations, including Moloney’s notions of “activist PR” (2006), and “dissent PR” and “protest PR” (Moloney et al, 2012). Kristin Demetrious argues that central to the tension between public relations and society is the “contested idea of the ‘public’ in modernity” (p13, 2013), and that “public communication” should refer to activism because it is not as compromised as “public relations” (2013).

Using a critical discourse analysis, this paper will offer insights into how, in practice, this form of activism can constitute public relations. It will also address tensions that arise in accounting for activism as public relations.

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## **Title of proposal: “It’s trivial, bitchy and dull” – women, the exit from public relations and the renegotiation of identities.**

*Theme: What does PR practice do well and what could it do better? (Honoring Heath’s support of work in the field of gender studies)*

**Author:** Liz Bridgen

**Institution:** Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK

### **General description**

Globally, women outnumber men in junior and middle management public relations roles across– but are in the minority in senior management. There have been numerous attempts to explain the reason for women’s under-representation in senior public relations roles but little attention has been given to the factors which cause women to abandon a career.

While academic writing acknowledges the complexity of the issue of women’s absence from senior level public relations roles, ‘professional’ research tends to focus on reasons such as family (e.g. Hanson Research, 2012) and thus falls into the ‘assumption trap’ about gendered reasons for leaving public relations.

Through a series of in-depth interviews with eight British women who have left public relations before or shortly after reaching management level, this paper attempts to establish key motivations behind female decisions to leave public relations as well as

exploring how women negotiate new identities in their future careers. Themes arising from the interviews include the role of mentors, power relationships in the workplace, the impact of childrearing, the impact of technology, the role of professional associations, the support (or otherwise) of peers, and career expectations.

The study found that the overriding reason for women leaving public relations was because they saw a lack of meaning in the work that they were permitted to carry out. Some felt that they were unable to take part in the 'meaningful' work as childcare restrictions meant that they were not considered (or felt unable to take up) the 'exciting' projects while others felt excluded by the 'bitchiness' in the workplace and the triviality of commercial public relations work. Overall, the interviewees believed that they were pushed, rather than pulled, into leaving public relations due to being side-lined into non-career roles, passed over for promotion due to their gender or feeling that they were unable to take part in a full range of occupational activities, thus removing them from relevant and career-enhancing power networks.

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#### State of Play between Practice and Academic: Collaborative Obfuscation of Intention

There seems to be a close alignment of practice and academic discourse when comes to the idea of conversation and how social media means the end to the charade of public relations controlling the message. Practitioners talk about needing to be “part of the conversation” by being involved in real time communication. Academics argue these ideas show the value of relationship and have revived the idea that “relationship” is the central concept in public relations. The two also share a discourse that social media ends any nothing that public relations people have any “control” over the message. It seems we are in world where the stakeholders control the message because they are empowered by Internet-based communication channels.

In this paper we argue this synchronization of practice and academic is a form of collaborative obfuscation of intention. Early on, academics tried to claim public relations was about information, not persuasion. This view hid the persuasive nature of language to frame ideas and influence people. It also hid the goal of public relations—to affect the behavior of stakeholders or “moving the needle.” Organizations, both profit and non-profit, were not paying billions of dollars per year to just inform people. Critical works insightfully exposed the information charade. Well that charade has returned under the guise of relationship and lack of control of the message. Edelman executives claim they cannot control the message any more yet they bill clients millions for serve that are designed to influence the attitudes and behaviors of stakeholders. You are not “part of the conversation” with stakeholders because you want a good chat. Nike posts tweets about running in the morning because that is when runners tweet. Those tweets are not just to say “hi, how was your run.” The point of the tweet is to sell shoes and running apparel—“hi, you might like to buy this product” is the honest translation.

The real time marketing hinges on finding an emerging topic of conversation and using that topic to develop an organizational message that becomes part of the discussion. The prototypical example is Oreo’s very popular tweet during the power failure during the 2014 Super Bowl in the U.S. Did Oreo hope to gain from this tweet? We venture to say the answer is yes. The new relationship and social media related discourse of public relations is the second coming of “public relations is information.” There is a similar obfuscation of the persuasive intention of public relations. There still seems to a collaborative attempt by many in the practice and academics to disavow persuasive intentions. In the end, its remains dishonest to deny the persuasive nature of public relations just as it was when public relations was defined as only information. This paper explores and exposes the collaborative obfuscation of intention that is emerging with the new discourse on relationships and conversation that drive the discourse of public relations.

W. Timothy Coombs and Sherry J. Holladay, University of Central Florida

[Timothy.Coombs@ucf.edu](mailto:Timothy.Coombs@ucf.edu); [Sherry.Holladay@ucf.edu](mailto:Sherry.Holladay@ucf.edu)

Title: **Robert Heath and the Rhetorical Paradigm of PR: One step back (to the classics) required before moving (the rhetorical paradigm) two steps ahead?**

Author: Dr Scott Davidson, University of Leicester

Abstract

The first aim of this paper is to review Heath's contribution to the building of the rhetorical paradigm for theorising and teaching public relations. Heath has built an enduring contribution to the field, not least through his advocacy of the good organisation communicating well as a bedrock of PR's role in a fully functioning society. This review is taken as an opportunity to critically reflect on the value of Heath's work for scholars who wish to accept that PR is constituted by persuasive discourses and perpetual competition between opposing interests and values. The second aim of this paper is to open up and explore the question of where next? How do we build on Heath's work to take the rhetorical paradigm into new directions and to embrace new problems? This paper will attempt this by applying agonistic theories of democracy. To mirror how Heath has drawn on classical writers such as Aristotle and Quintilian, this paper will also draw on classical texts (Aristophanes) as well the work of theorists who themselves have drawn on classical agonism (Arendt, Honig and Mouffe). Agonism comes from the ancient Greek word *agōn* - a contest or struggle. A key tenet of classical agonism was that protagonists should seek to win acclaim and admiration by performing openly in public, and agonists tend to extol plurality above dispassionate deliberation. This suggests some resonance with Heath, but more modern forms of agonism make post-foundationalist assumptions of the impossibility of any consensus existing beyond precarious hegemonic relationships. They also hold to a radical pluralism that when applied challenge assumptions that ethically grounded PR practice is that which seeks to eliminate conflict in favour of seeking consensus or the consolidation of communities. These suggest a more discordant connection with Heath's writing to explore.



# The Role of Social Media in Communication Crises: Metaphors drawn out of Practice

Patrícia Dias | [pdias@fch.lisboa.ucp.pt](mailto:pdias@fch.lisboa.ucp.pt) | [www.patriciadias.pt](http://www.patriciadias.pt)

José Gabriel Andrade | [jgandrade@fch.lisboa.ucp.pt](mailto:jgandrade@fch.lisboa.ucp.pt)

*Research Center in Communication and Culture, Catholic University of Portugal*

Inês Teixeira-Botelho | [inesbotelho@hotmail.com](mailto:inesbotelho@hotmail.com) | [www.inesteixeirabotelho.com](http://www.inesteixeirabotelho.com)

*Research Center in Applied Communication, Culture and New Technologies, Lusófona University*

The digitalization of contemporary society has triggered a paradigmatic change in Public Relations. The traditional dissemination model has evolved into a dialogue with increasingly informed, demanding and diversified publics. Organizations are challenged to manage a consistent and appealing communication that cuts through the clutter of information overload, gets attention and fosters engagement.

This change has implications in the power balance between organizations and their publics. Going from transmission to conversation forces organizations to abandon their monopoly as broadcasters and to actively listen to their stakeholders. Plus, organizations have no choice but to participate in this dialogue, as digitally-empowered consumers talk about brands, products and services, whether organizations like it or not, and are elected as trustworthy sources by other consumers.

In this digital environment, organizations are therefore more exposed and more vulnerable. Public Relations scholars and practitioners are therefore increasingly interested in Crisis Communication, as both research and experience have shown that the social media increase the frequency and the reach of communication crises.

Our research explores the interdependency of theory and practice in Public Relations by looking into the role played by social media in communication crises using grounded theory as our method. We have monitored communication crises in Portugal since 2011 and we have identified 6 relevant cases. Then, we explored these cases using

documental analysis and interviews to PR professionals involved. Drawing from practice, we suggest a categorization of the different roles played by social media using 6 metaphors: the thermometer, the megaphone, the bomb, the pillow, the fire extinguisher and the magic wand. These metaphors are then arranged across a matrix whose axes are the impact on reach and the impact on reputation.

Hence, our work comes full-circle by suggesting a theoretical categorization inspired in practice and useful for practitioners.

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# Off-the-record Communication: Reactive Tactic or Proactive Strategy?

Roumen Dimitrov

University of New South Wales (UNSW), Sydney, Australia

## Abstract

What is the difference between on-the record and off-the-record communication? What is their use and significance in public relations? We accept both are widely used; we split for them work fifty-fifty in some realms of PR practice (Davis, 2002). Scholars, who “are from Mars”, are vocal about the former; professionals, who “are from Venus” (Van Ruler, 2005), do not speak about the latter. If something has been off-the-record, there is a reason to keep it so.

“Golden rule is always assume everything you say is on the record” (Personal Interview). This, however, does not justify the conclusion that accredited sources should possibly avoid off-the-record conversations (Phillips, 2012). Those may be tactical and reactive, to kill a story, for example. Their use, however, can be strategic and proactive, “bread-and-butter stuff” (Private Interview). At a hermeneutic level, off-the record sharing of information provides not only facts “detached” from the (masked) source but also interpretative schemes that “help” the receiver to see those and other facts from a “privileged” view. And at an even deeper level, “beyond meaning”, the source involves the receiver in their presence, reality and values (Perelman, 1982), in their material “being” (Gumbrecht, 2004; Jameson, 2003), including structures of feeling (Williams, 1977).

I contend that off-the-record communication is not a marginal tactic but central strategy in areas of institutional practice such as political and corporate public relations. Indirect communication implies strategies of silence, and off-the-record communication is one of them (Dimitrov, 2014). If public relations works best

indirectly, through earned media, word of mouth, and third party endorsement, then “off-the-record” is often the best way of releasing the control over the message and “allowing” other, more credible speakers, including journalists, to take ownership of it. The difference between “on-the-record” and “off-the record” is the difference between advertising and public relations.

In support for my claim, I use three cases of “off-the-record communication”: the origins of “lobbying” in the Westminster system (McGrath, 2005), the Obama administration’s “off-the-record” briefing of US journalists after Edward Snowden’s revelations about the National Security Agency (NSA) (Shister, 2013), and the scandal with the “crazy mates” journalist tape of the former Liberals leader and Premier of Victoria, Australia, Ted Baillieu (Watch, 2014).

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# Voice, recognition, social justice and PR: Theory and practice

*Submitted by:*

**Dr Lee Edwards**

*Associate Professor, Communication Studies and PR  
School of Media and Communication,  
Clothworkers' Building North  
University of Leeds*

The focus of this paper is on the role played by PR in civil society as a source of voice, recognition and social justice for marginalized groups. The paper begins by suggesting that the traditionally dichotomous views of PR as either a force or good in civil society, or a significant distortion of democracy (e.g. Sommerfeldt, 2012, Moloney, 2004, Coombs, 1993, Miller and Dinan, 2008, Davis, 2002), result in an 'either/or' understanding of PR's role in society: either it is bad, or it is good, there is no in-between. I suggest that such theorisations are unsatisfactory because they do not cater to the great variety of both PR work and outcomes that occur on a day to day basis. In an attempt to overcome the 'either / or' polarisation of these positions, and develop the idea of PR in a 'fully-functioning' society (Heath, 2006), I theorise PR's societal role as a channel through which individuals and groups can secure 'voice' and recognition for their experiences of the world. Drawing on the work of Honneth (1996), Boltanski and Thevenot (2006[1991]), Sen (2009), and Couldry (2010) I suggest that PR is a means through which various forms of 'voice' may be expressed, narratives of the world may be justified, and, ultimately, mutual relations of recognition are affirmed or denied.

The second half of the paper applies this theorisation to two empirical studies of PR, conducted with *Rape Crisis England and Wales* and *Fixers*. The two charities have the pursuit of voice and recognition for marginalized groups as their central objective, and are politicized in their approach to PR, engaging with the power that effective PR can offer them. The findings illustrate the value of the proposed theoretical approach as a means of engaging systematically with the social justice that PR is capable of delivering, and thereby extending our understanding of PR's role in a fully-functioning society.

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Running Head: CEO COMPENSATION

# **“Because I am Worth It”**

**A Rhetorical Analysis of the Debate Regarding CEO Compensation**

Øyvind Ihlen

Department of Media and Communication, University of Oslo

&

Einar Lie

Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo

Paper submitted for

The Barcelona International PR 2015 Conference, Barcelona, June 30–July 1, 2015



## **“Because I am Worth It”**

### **A Rhetorical Analysis of the Debate Regarding CEO Compensation**

The CEO-to-worker pay ratio is steadily increasing in many countries something that leads to debates about the compensation level of executives. Corporations typically highlight how they are competing for the best candidates and that the market for CEOs is international, hence the compensation level must reflect these facts. A realism topic is in use, implying that the critics are idealists that are not in touch with the realities and needs of the corporate world. The critics, on the other hand, appeal to corporate social responsibility and question the justice and symbolic effect of the vast differences in compensation. Still, there are huge national differences between the compensation levels. The so-called Nordic model has, for instance, been dominated by egalitarian values and the CEO-to-worker pay ratio is not as large in the Nordic countries as in, for instance, the USA. Increasing globalization and political shifts have, however, likely led to changes in the debate and a greater acceptance for the pay differences. Building on empirical material from the debate in central newspapers, this paper tracks the historical and rhetorical trends in a particular Nordic country, Norway, and relates them to the idea of a “fully functional society” put forward by Heath (2006). The analysis will be informed by rhetorical theory on topics (Gabrielsen, 2008; Söderberg, 2012) and perspectives on economic history (Ihlen & Hoivik, in press; Lie, 2012).

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## **ABSTRACT**

# **Media Relations plays a crucial role in building healthy discourses and joint learning in the public health and development field**

**Bhupesh Joshi, Director**

**Communicators India, New Delhi, India**

Shifting focus of media relations from gaining favourable media coverage to building healthy discourses with journalists will help develop trust and long-term sustainable relationships with media professionals, and thus give the communicator a greater ability to advocate issues of social concern.

Media relations has been found to be effective in co-creating and improving dialogues and promoting deeper understanding of the narratives relating to public health and social issues, which are identified as those requiring serious deliberations. However, it is also important to note there is a need to play down the desire to gain or influence media coverage as an immediate objective. Instead this must be seen as a long-term goal that is best achieved through joint learning and education.

The paper attempts to develop some guidelines for effective media relations in the public health and social development field by analysing the findings of the author's interactions with close to 300 media persons across India as part of a media education programme, supported by UNICEF, George Institute for Global Health and Oxford University very recently in 2014. (Ghosh, 2014; Press Institute of India, 2014) Further it borrows from media, public relations & democracy literature to appropriately substantiate the findings. (Bau, 2009; Hallahan, 2001; Heath, 2001 Johnston, 2013; Kim, 2009)

The paper demonstrates that by delving deeper into the theories and juxtaposing them with the current trends in media outreach initiatives of international NGOs, one can actually create a foundation for specific media relations approaches that may have the power to influence social, environmental and public health programmes positively.

The paper attempts to look at 2 aspects of media relations in the social development field—its crucial role in a) message dissemination and guidance through strategic outreach and media information kits and b) creating healthy discourses through two-way communication with journalists.

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# **Practical Applications of Public Relations Theory and Public Policy Issues: A Student-Generated Social Media and Research Agenda for Dealing with Drug Abuse**

Rachel Kovacs

Adjunct Associate Professor

Department of Media Culture

College of Staten Island

City University of New York

# **CSR, Public Service Broadcasting, and Collaborative Community Development at Home and Abroad**

Rachel Kovacs  
Adjunct Associate Professor  
Department of Media Culture  
College of Staten Island  
City University of New York

# **Astroturf lobbying damages stakeholders' trust! Or maybe not?**

**Findings from a perception measurement study**

--- Research Paper ---

Authors:

Irina Lock

University of Lugano

Institute of Marketing and Communication Management

Peter Seele

University of Lugano

Institute of Marketing and Communication Management

# Astroturf lobbying damages stakeholders' trust! Or maybe not?

Findings from a perception measurement study

## *Abstract*

Astroturf lobbying is a public affairs practice referred to as “instant manufacturing of public support for a point of view in which either uniformed activists are recruited or means of deception are used to recruit them” (Faucheux, 1995, p. 20). It is considered a technique that damages trust and violates both the authenticity of organizations that engage in astroturfing and the credibility of real grassroots movements (Kim, 2013). Hence, it hinders organizations to build mutually trustful relationships with their stakeholders in the sense of organization-public relations theory (Heath, 2013).

However, do these theoretical claims also hold in practice? If confronted with instances of astroturfing, do stakeholders perceive organizations as less trustworthy and authentic and more secretive? To study the phenomenon of astroturfing for the first time empirically, we conducted a large student survey (N = 148). With the help of two anonymized cases of astroturfing and one grassroots scenario as a control we asked students about their perceptions of trust, authenticity, and secrecy of the astroturfing organizations.

Our results show that perceived levels of trust and authenticity are higher when students are confronted with a grassroots case than with astroturf scenarios. Thus, following the literature, astroturfing is rather not perceived as a trust-building activity. However, we also found that perceived secrecy remains high overall. Qualitative content analyses of two open-end questions shed light on the associations that students have when confronted with an astroturfing versus a grassroots case.

With this research we thus contribute to the literature on public affairs by investigating for the first time empirically in how far grassroots and astroturf lobbying contribute or hinder organization-public relations' theoretical notion to build mutually trustful relationships with stakeholders.

(278 words)

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# Public Relations is not Media Relations: Is it a Dream?

**Asst. Prof. Dr. Burcu Öksüz**

İzmir Kâtip Çelebi University

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Media and Communication

**Asst. Prof. Dr. Zülfiye Acar**

Gaziantep University

Faculty of Communication

Department of Journalism

Though in the academic literature, it is emphasized that Public Relations (PR) should not be seen only as media relations, in practice, the media relations has a very dominant position at the communication studies carried out by many companies. There are many PR practitioners who have journalism background. However the number of the practitioners who have started to work in the sector after having PR education at the universities has been highly increasing. “Journalism and public relations education which had been provided under the same department at Turkish universities till 1987-1988 academic year, have gone into division as ‘Journalism department’ and ‘Public relations department’ starting from that time.” (Yengin, 2004). Therefore, it can be said that previous journalist dominance has diminished at the public relations sector in Turkey. However, by virtue of the fact that some companies and practitioners consider the media coverage the first priority of PR, this much is certain that the dominant position of media relations is ongoing. On the other hand, still many companies measure the success of their PR by how much place their companies have taken. This situation creates major pressure on the PR practitioners to have close relations with the media members and to make them write articles about their companies. Thereupon, PR practitioners have to take the time for the media relations and the media relations comes into prominence more than the other PR functions.

The aim of this study is to reveal the PR functions at the companies and to evaluate the position of the media relations in the PR studies. Therefore, it is aimed to find out at what extent the discourse of “Public relations is not media relations” is accepted in practice and actualised. Accordingly, a research about 20 companies which are in the list of the largest 500 industrial organisations of Turkey according to the Istanbul Chamber of Industry (ISO) and which are located in the city of Gaziantep will be carried out. Gaziantep as one of the largest and most developed cities in terms of industry has many large companies. The PR/corporate communications managers will

be interviewed profoundly within the scope of this study and PR functions performed by companies will be discussed in details in consideration of the datum obtained.

**Key words:** Public Relations, Media Relations, Public Relations Practitioners, Turkey.

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# **Reinventing Public Relations in IMC:**

## **Establishing the Value of Public Relations**

Brian G. Smith, Ph.D.

Purdue University

For the last two decades, public relations scholars have danced around the tendency for organizations to integrate communication activities under the marketing umbrella, otherwise referred to as integrated marketing communication or IMC (Kerr, et al., 2008). Writing it off as a marketing trend or labeling it a threat (as reported by Hallahan, 2007), public relations scholars have largely ignored the IMC process, despite the discipline's relevance to a concept that emphasizes coordinating "otherwise fragmented activities...in a strategic way [to] focus on the audience's needs, concerns, and interests" (Hallahan, et al., 2007).

Meanwhile, marketing has reinvented itself as public relations within the context of IMC (Hutton, 2010), expanding its focus from customers to the broad array of stakeholders that influence an organization's success, including employees, investors, community members, and opinion leaders (Schultz & Patti, 2009), and implementing social marketing programs that resemble public relations initiatives (Hutton, 2010). The reason? At the heart of IMC is the notion that customers and stakeholders are not mutually exclusive—a stakeholder may be a customer and vice-versa—making stakeholders a priority in the marketing mix (Gronstedt, 1996). This marketing encroachment will continue as public relations continues to overlook IMC.

This paper seeks to move public relations theory closer to the profession, and the profession closer to the management table, by analyzing the principles of IMC in PRSA Silver Anvil-winning campaigns. Findings suggest that public relations may establish professional and theoretical contribution to IMC through stakeholder engagement (a concept championed by Heath [1994]), including dialogue, interactivity, and issue advocacy. As such, findings underscore the importance of building on the Barcelona Principles, including influencer engagement, stakeholder engagement, and measuring conversations and communities, rather than just online coverage.

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# What in the world is PR? Towards a new, more diverse history of public relations

Tom Watson, PhD  
Bournemouth University

This paper considers the interpretation of the histories of public relations' development in more than 50 countries outside North America, drawn from evidence in a recently published research book series.

Public relations' evolution and development has been presented mostly as a 20<sup>th</sup> century creation from the United States that acted on behalf of powerful corporate interests. Since 2008, this presumption has been increasingly challenged by cases made for its role in activism (Coombs & Holladay, 2012) and high-conflict politics (Somerville & Purcell, 2011); and of its evolution in Europe in the nineteenth century without reference to North American or British stimuli (notably in Germany by Bentele & Wehmeier, 2009).

Recently, the *National Perspectives on the Development of Public Relations: Other Voices* (Watson, 2014/15) series has provided new evidence of not only the development of public relations and its long-term practice in models and styles that were not the result from Anglo-American influences, but also showed the impact of US corporatist agency PR and British colonial governmental information practices in unexpected countries.

The paper offers an initial thematic interpretation of these histories of the development of public relations from most continents and regions. Discussion will include conceptualisations of public relations, internal and external influences on the formation of public relations and modelling of practice.

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# The Indigenization of Crisis Response Strategies in the Context of China

Yang Hu<sup>1</sup> and Augustine Pang<sup>2</sup>

1 Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

2. Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Abstract (extended)

Both public relations (PR) practitioners and scholars have been examining crisis responses strategies (CRSs) in the Western contexts (Snyder & Foster, 1983). A fairly detailed set of CRSs has been identified with the image repair theory (IRT) and the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) established as two of the most utilized theories in crisis responses (Avery, Lariscy, Kim & Hocke, 2010).

While both the IRT and SCCT are suggested as useful frameworks for designing communication in times of crisis, it is argued that this provides only one set of possible articulations (Curtin & Gaither, 2005). The typology of the IRT can account for new types of crisis responses by examining more cases in different cultures (Harlow, Brantley & Harlow, 2011) while the weaknesses of the SCCT lie in its unidimensional nature (Fediuk, Pace & Botero, 2012) and its problematic application to complex real-world crises (Adkins, 2012)

There is a pressing need to understand crisis communication to suit the needs of cultures, and this has gathered momentum among Asian communication researchers (e.g. Lee, 2004; Luo, Huang & Wang; Ye & Pang, 2011). China and the Chinese context, because of its rich intellectual and cultural traditions, as well as vibrant economic growth, offer many unique management phenomena and ideas for an indigenous analysis (Lin & Germain, 2003; Shenkar & von Glinow, 1994). In addition, the number of corporate crises has accelerated in past few years capturing intensive local and international attentions, for instance, the melamine-tainted milk scandal in 2008 (Ye & Pang, 2011). In spite of well-developed and rigorous research paradigms in the West, Western perspectives may not fully address the unique circumstances that the Chinese corporations face (Lee, Mak & Pang, 2010).

For this study, the authors attempt to examine CRSs that are employed by practitioners in China which are not captured by the IRT and the SCCT and uncover the underpinning social contextual factors that may contribute to the employment of these strategies. In-depth interviews were conducted with Chinese PR practitioners and government officials who are working in propaganda department. Through the 20 interviews, the authors found three new CRSs, which are “barnacle”, “third-party endorsement” and “setting up new topics or launching new projects”. The “barnacle” strategy is recognized as an institutional communication tactic employed by the State-owned enterprises (SOEs) to rely on the central government’s might to smooth matters over and quiet down negative voices. “Third-party endorsement” means companies tried to resort to the third-party to support their statements or enhance communicative effects. “Setting new topics” is described as a public relations stunt mostly created by the private-owned enterprises (POEs) while the SOEs are more likely to “launch a new project” to mitigate the negative effects in the long term. Besides these strategies, other tactics used “behind the scene” in the context of China, are also discussed. Political power, cultural backgrounds, media natures, public idiosyncrasies and companies’ problematic status are found to have contributed to the employment of these strategies.

Key Words: crisis response strategies, the context of China, Chinese practitioners

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## Abstract

Since the 1980s, both public relations (PR) practitioners and scholars have been keen on examining the crisis responses strategies (CRSs) in the Western contexts. A fairly detailed set of CRSs has been identified. The image repair theory (IRT) and the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), two of the most utilized theories in crisis responses studies, have established “a dominant paradigm in crisis communication research” (Avery, Lariscy, Kim & Hocke, 2010).

While both the IRT and SCCT are suggested as useful frameworks, it is argued that the IRT would benefit from sufficient flexibility to account for new types of crisis responses by examining more cases in different cultures (Harlow, Brantley & Harlow, 2011). The main limitation of the SCCT lies in its problematic application to complex real-world crises in different contexts (Adkins, 2012).

In China, the number of corporate crises has accelerated in past few years, with each of them capturing intensive local and international attentions, for instance, the melamine-tainted milk scandal in 2008 (Ye & Pang, 2011). The Chinese context, because of its rich intellectual and cultural traditions, as well as vibrant economic growth, offers many unique management phenomena and ideas for an indigenous analysis. Thus, in this study, the authors attempt to examine CRSs that are employed by practitioners in China which are not captured by IRT and the SCCT and uncover the underpinning social contextual factors that may contribute to the employment of these strategies. Through twenty in-depth interviews, the author found three new CRSs, which are “barnacle”, “third-party endorsement” and “setting up new topics or launching new projects”. Political power, cultural backgrounds, media natures, public idiosyncrasies and companies’ problematic status are found to have contributed to the employment of these strategies.

Key Words: crisis response strategies, the context of China, Chinese practitioners

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# Revisiting the ‘emotional-intelligence’ model of professionalism in public relations: a case for integration



**Dr Liz Yeomans**, Principal Lecturer - Research

**School of Strategy, Marketing and Communication**  
**Faculty of Business and Law**

Leeds Beckett University, Rose Bowl, City Campus, Leeds LS1 3HB, United Kingdom

The ‘emotional-intelligence’ model of PR professionalism (van Ruler, 2005) has received little attention from public relations scholars, largely because many scholars’ interests are to develop theories and methods that practitioners can use to help to solve communication problems for their clients. However, research consistently shows that practitioners do not use the research-based knowledge available to them but instead follow their own, situationally-relevant models of professionalism.

The ‘emotional-intelligence’ model describes a form of professionalism that is: interactive and client-centred; involves personal qualities such as creativity, flexibility and enthusiasm (e.g. van Ruler, 2005; Pieczka and L’Etang, 2006); involves emotional

labour, is highly situational and is learned on the job (Yeomans, 2014). However, there has been little, if any, debate concerning the theoretical relevance of an emotional-intelligence model of professionalism. Its intimate relationship with experiential learning suggests that there is no space or place for scholarly contribution. This paper revisits the 'emotional-intelligence' model of PR professionalism, outlined by van Ruler (2005), to reconsider its theoretical value to an integrated understanding of professionalism, including an overlap with the 'status' model of professionalism.

Drawing on a qualitative study of UK PR consultants (Yeomans, 2013) using perspectives from emotional labour theory and the sociology of the professions, I argue that PR agency interactions in particular support an emotional-intelligence model of professionalism. Within the small agency setting, practitioners develop an embodied form of expertise that uses their social, cultural and emotional resources, as well as gender. These resources are deployed, differentially and reflexively in intensive professional relationships that manage the emotions of the self and others, including agency directors, clients and journalists. Furthermore this research demonstrates a postfunctionalist understanding of professionalism as a *continuous, interactive process* through which practitioners re-state their professional expertise and legitimacy in order to earn trust (Fournier, 1999). If we accept the theoretical relevance of the emotional-intelligence model to PR work then we might address some of the theory/practice gaps.

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Abstract of a paper for consideration for **BARCELONA MEETING COM#5: Theory in Practice in Public Relations through to the Fully-Functioning Society**

Submitted by Philip Young, University of Lund, Sweden

and Timothy Coombs, University of Central Florida, USA

## Understanding the Digital Naturals: From Theory into Practice

Researchers working on the *NEMO: New Media, Modern Democracy* project at Lund University have developed the concept of *digital naturals* as a lens for capturing the experience of those who routinely use online platforms and channels as an integral part of their daily lives.

Initially, digital naturals was used in preference to the outmoded *digital natives* and its unhelpful antonym, *digital immigrants* (Prensky, 2001). For some time it has been clear that efforts to define communication behaviours by chronology – that those born after a certain date somehow intrinsically understood the online experience in a way that those born earlier could never do – was inaccurate and did both groups a disservice. This false distinction has significant operational limitations – for example, it distorts and limits an analysis of target groups – but also impacts on younger people who are assumed to have skills, competences and insights that they may not possess, and can be seen as profoundly anti-democratic and exclusive.

Digital naturals are defined as *individuals who are comfortable in an online environment, being equipped through experience and exposure to both its cultural norms and the technological competencies required to operate effectively* (Åkerström & Young, 2015).

The digital naturals approach sees individuals in terms of expectations and *propensities*. It is a fluid and flexible approach that embraces and explains a wide range of behaviours.

Using examples drawn from crisis communication, this paper explores ways in which the insights afforded by digital natural theory can be applied to public relations practice. Specifically, it introduces frameworks that can be adapted for practitioner use and sets out ways in which the approach can give insights into likely behaviour, attitudes and responses. The paper explores how the behavior of digital naturals alter crisis communication during all three phases of a crisis: pre-crisis, crisis response, and post-crisis. These changes are contrasted with a backdrop of claims that crisis communication has been revolutionized requiring a new set of terminology and abandonment of old practices.

It concludes by beginning to address important questions about the manner in which tensions between academic terminology and the discourse surrounding industry positioning (Coombs, Holladay & Young, 2015) can be constructively resolved.

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# The Importance of Reputation in Sport and Media

Robert Gill

Swinburne University of Technology

Melbourne, Australia

## Abstract

The relationship between sport and media are integral to a sport's reputation. Trying to managing media in relation to branding in professional sport has had it challenges. In Australia the largest spectator sport is Australian Rules football. The governing body, the Australian Football League (AFL) Commission, operates media relations as an external stakeholder management strategy and dedicates considerable resources and policy to media relations in order to carefully manage its brand. Part of this branding involves the reputation of the match-day officials who adjudicate the games, the umpires. This paper examines the reputation of AFL umpires, and reviews how traditional and social media reflection on the performance of the umpires may affect their reputation, and ultimately the AFL brand.

By its own admission, the AFL appears to have a brand problem with their game-day umpires. For many years the AFL Commission has been challenged in recruiting and supplying umpires to minor leagues that the AFL control. It has developed many engagement strategies to try and build good relations between the umpires and the football public. But it appears that media commentary and social media posts do not reflect positively on the AFL umpire fraternity, which may be having a negative effect on the AFL brand.

Based on the findings, the paper will provide media solutions to managing and/or retaining a more positive umpires' reputation with the AFL public stakeholders. This information may provide guidance to the AFL Commission regarding public relations and media relations strategies to improve umpire reputation, and ultimately the AFL brand.

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# Why not prize rather than misprize: Reputation problem of public relations

**Burcu Öksüz (Asst. Prof. Dr.)**

İzmir Kâtip Çelebi University

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Media and Communication

**Merve Genç (Ph.D. Student)**

Hacettepe University

Faculty of Communication

Department of Communication Sciences

The reputation of PR practitioners among public has become an increasingly discussed issue within academia. The researches mainly highlight the problems on credibility and image of PR practitioners; public perceptions on their professional identities, status and prestige (Sterne, 2011; Ames, 2010; Callison, 2009; Sallot, 2002). Unsurprisingly, the results of the researches show that PR, mostly practiced by women, has a poor connotation.

Similarly, this research mainly focuses the public perceptions on identity, reputation and credibility of PR practitioners in Turkey. Thus, the attempt is to reveal how public perceive PR practitioners; how they value PR as a profession; and how their motives in evaluating the profession change. However, the originality of this study lies behind its research methodology. In the literature current data is mostly acquired from quantitative methods. In order to undermine the disadvantages of one-way research approaches, this study aims to apply two different methods to obtain both generalizable and in-depth data. First an online survey composed with close and open ended questions will be conducted. Then in-depth interviews including projective technique will be carried out.

Key Words: Reputation, PR practitioners, PR profession, Turkey

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# Game Theory Innovations and the Fully Functioning Society

Charles Marsh

University of Kansas, USA

## Abstract

Game theory has been part of public relations theory-building since, at least, Murphy's seminal article introducing the notion of a mixed-motive model to excellence theory. Early proponents of contingency theory also mined Murphy's findings to position contingency as a more-plausible alternative to excellence theory.

Prominent among the game theorists cited in public relations literature over the past 20 years has been mathematician and professor of political science Robert Axelrod, who emphasized the Prisoner's Dilemma, a game in which decision-makers have incentives to reject cooperative relationships. Axelrod's finding that, within the Prisoner's Dilemma, cooperative strategies outperform conflict-oriented strategies indicated that game theory might support social-harmony approaches to public relations. Axelrod's conclusions, in fact, helped prompt evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, author of *The Selfish Gene*, to declare that a better title for his work might have been *The Cooperative Gene*.

Though absent from public relations literature, recent advances in Prisoner's Dilemma theory (and accompanying endorsements of cooperative strategies) support concurrent developments in public relations theory, particularly the reflective paradigm and Robert Heath's fully functioning society theory. Often designed by Martin Nowak, professor of biology and mathematics at Harvard's Program for Evolutionary Dynamics, the new games use powerful computer programs to incorporate such innovations as thousands of iterations, consideration of existing reputations, and asynchronous (rather than standard synchronous) decision-making for different players. In Nowak's words, the new games indicate that cooperation generally outperforms egocentrism even "in an unrelentingly cold-eyed and competitive environment."

Following David McKie's enduring call to import the findings of new sciences into public relations, this paper would detail the support that recent, specific innovations in game theory offer for Robert Heath's fully functioning society theory of public relations.

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# PR, power, and political positioning

Deborah Wise

University of Newcastle

This paper builds on the work of Heath, Motion and Leitch (2009) who argued that meaning is the crux of power dynamics and, as such, there is a need to investigate where power forces intersect in societal idioms. In this study a positioning theory framework was applied to investigate how battles for legitimacy between two opposing political leaders were discursively contested. Specifically the study sought to examine if applying the framework provided a means of examining how discourse was used to shape understanding, construct power relationships, and create identities within a particular political context. The study found that through the intersection of positions, speech acts/actions, and storylines both leaders attempted to shape meaning through statements and counter statements as they attempted to retain/gain power. This study adds to current knowledge on positioning in public relations by applying the ideational, relationship and subject position functions to the analysis of public relations texts. At the core of positioning theory is the notion that the rights and/or duties of an entity to do or say certain things is delimited according to the local moral order. This study also adds to the work undertaken by Heath, Motion and Leitch (2009) by analyzing public relations from a social constructionism perspective that provides insights into discursive contestations for power through an examination of rights and duties to enact particular discourses.

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# **Zones of Meaning: Informing conceptualizations of digital personae use in public relations**

**Melanie James**

**Mark Balnaves**

**Marc Adam**

**University of Newcastle**

Many organizations are represented on Internet platforms to help reach their public relations goals. In recognizing there is an inherent lack of social warmth and human contact in the virtual world (compared to the physical world), this conceptual paper examines the role 'digital personae' play in the co-construction of zones of meaning in public relations. Digital personae can be viewed as being co-constructed from digital data, online platform capabilities and human agency. They are used as a proxy for a real person or other entity. Heath (1997) and Heath and Palenchar (2008) drew on the social constructionist work of Berger and Luckmann (1966) and others, and adapted the concepts within 'zones of meaning' to public relations. We have extended this work to map public relations 'digital personae', which can include online components such as textual and discourse selections, including images, and their interpretation. Such factors can act as "symbolic language" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 55) which can build up classification schemes within people's minds "indicating degrees of social intimacy, and so on" (p. 55).

In public relations, digital personae can be viewed as being strategically co-constructed with audiences/publics in an effort to create social presence on online platforms. It is suggested that successful social presence creation could help audiences/publics form their trust beliefs towards the online platform, which may in turn help them form trust beliefs towards the partners they interact with using this platform (Teubner et al., 2014). This is where the theoretical intersection of digital personae and zones of meaning occurs.



With digital persona as a means to encourage publics/audiences to engage more closely and thus build relationships with personae, Heath's work on zones of meanings is a way of dovetailing new work into what is understood in extant literature and research findings.

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**Title of the proposal: The impact of a vocal minority of Twitter users and visual mockery on crisis perception and boycott intentions**

**Author: Joon Soo Lim, PhD**

**Institution:** Department of Public Relations

S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications

Syracuse University

# **The impact of a vocal minority of Twitter users and visual mockery on crisis perception and boycott intentions**

## **Abstract (284 words)**

This study examines how an incidental kerfuffle triggered on Twitter can be blown out of proportion and result in an unexpected groundswell of public outcry and online protest.

Using a sample drawn from Amazon's Mechanical Turk, an online experiment was conducted in a 2 (high social proof vs. low social proof) X 2 (mockery vs. non-mockery image) between-subjects factorial design to examine how perceived consensus heuristics and visual irony interplay to influence individuals' estimates of bandwagon perception, perceived crisis, intentions to share the tweet and mockery image, and their boycott intentions.

The experimental context simulated the so-called Motrin Moms case in which Johnson & Johnson had to pull down its ad amid a flood of outcry and calls for boycott from a vocal minority of Twitter users. A fictitious brand name "Ibpren" was used in a mockup of the original ad. After the exposure to the ad, participants were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions.

Results demonstrated the main effects of social proof (H1a) and visual mockery (H1b) on the bandwagon perceptions. In testing H2, participants in the high social proof condition perceived others to be more concerned about the issue than themselves, but this perceptual difference was not observed in the low social proof condition.

Consistent with the predictions, participants in high social proof condition had higher perceived crisis than in low social proof condition (H3a). Participants in the mockery condition had also higher perceived crisis than in the non-mockery condition. Social proof interacted with mockery to influence participants' intentions to share the tweet and the image, which answered RQ1. Finally, behavioral hypotheses regarding participants' boycott intentions were partially corroborated, showing a significant effect from mockery but not from social proof.

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# Indigenous Māori principles and the Fully Functioning Society

**Janne Galbraith**

Phd Candidate,

School of Communication Studies  
Auckland University of Technology  
Auckland, New Zealand

## **Abstract:**

### **Indigenous Māori principles and the Fully Functioning Society**

Heath (2006) and Taylor (2011) argue that organisational public relations efforts contribute significantly to an ideal, fully functioning society because they provide publics with information necessary to make enlightened choice. Academics critical of this position (Weaver, Motion & Roper 2006; Boyd & Waymer, 2011) maintain that Western-style capitalism (under which organisational public relations operates) is distinguished by adversarial communication that undermines democratic notions of equality because an unequal distribution of power and resource exists between an organisation and its public.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how the inclusion of indigenous methodology (Smith, 1999) in the engagement practices of a post-colonial, bi-cultural society (New Zealand) bound in partnership via a treaty of cessation (Treaty of Waitangi, 1840) between a colonial power and an indigenous people might apply to Heath's theory of a fully functioning society. This will be explored using examples of engagement between local regional councils and Māori over harbour and freshwater management (Lowry, 2012; Tipa 2009). As legislated in the Regional Management Act 1991 and the Local Government Act 2002, organisations must consult reasonably and in good faith with Māori on issues that affect them. To redress imbalances of power and resource inherent in these organisation/public relationships, indigenous methodologies can be used to structure bi-cultural engagements and dialogue. Using indigenous methodologies and cultural models in these engagements, promotes the depth of understanding, reflection and tolerance of difference necessary for the

“enlightenment” of all parties. Further, bringing together these seemingly incompatible systems of thought – indigenous knowledge systems and Western scientific theory – in ways that enhance understanding and inclusion ultimately increases participation and helps build long term, sustainable relationships (Love & Tilley, 2014; Harmsworth & Awatere, 2013; Durie, 2010; Tipa, 2009) across difference that could further the realisation of Heath’s fully functioning society.



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# **Moving Beyond Perceptions By Publics: Social Capital Theory as a Framework for Studying Organization Public Relationships**

Vincent Hazleton, PhD, APR, Fellow PRSA  
Professor of Communication  
Radford University  
Radford, VA, USA

Melissa Dodd, PhD  
Assistant Professor of Communication  
Central Florida University  
Orlando, FL, USA

William Kennan. PhD  
Associate Provost  
Radford University  
Radford, VA, USA

Moving Beyond Perceptions By Publics: Social Capital Theory as a Framework for Studying Organization Public Relationships

Broom, Casey, and Ritchie (1997) proposed that a central focus of public relations research and theory development should be organization public relationships. This call for focus has generated significant numbers of published articles on this topic in the last 18 years. Most of the research has focused around two different models, both based upon the study of interpersonal relationships. One line of research is based upon 17 interpersonal dimensions identified by Ledingham and Bruning (1997). The other line of research is associated with a six dimensional instrument proposed by Hon and Grunig (1999). Both lines of research have focused on measuring public's ratings of organizations as indicative of organization public relationships.

This paper proposes Social Capital Theory as an alternative to interpersonal research based models of Organization public relationships. The paper examines the potential of the three dimensional model of social capital proposed by Hazleton and Kennan (2000). Dimensions of structure, communication, and relationships provide a theoretic paradigm that is more consistent with the dynamic interactive characteristics of organization public relationships than approaches based on perceptions of one party to public relations interactions. The social capital approach emphasizes perceptions and actions of organizations as equally important in the process of relationship formation, maintenance, and exploitation. Perceptual research privileges individuals as the unit of analysis and tends to ignore the organizational and collective character of public as stakeholders. Structural concepts such as network structure, density, and appropriable social organization are explored as useful concepts to guide research. In the area of relationships, the simple distinction between weak and strong ties provides a parsimonious model for exploring relationships. Special attention is paid to issues and in and methods of measuring relationships within the social capital theory framework.

# Strategic Communication for a Crisis-Driven World

Shari R. Veil

University of Kentucky

## Abstract

There was a time when crises were considered unique events that only happened to corrupt organizations, when stock prices didn't plummet within hours of quarterly reports, when sales weren't influenced by online rumors. This paper suggests that organizations now operate in a crisis-driven world and must therefore treat crisis communication not as a one-time reputation band-aid but as a deliberate, systematic, and continual process. Heath (2013) argued, "an organization's reputation in small or large part depends on its contribution to society's collective ability to manage risk" (p. 389). And yet, much of the crisis communication research, particularly in public relations, has focused on what needs to be said when by whom to restore an organization's image after a crisis. Little attention in our discipline has been devoted to communicative actions that can be taken to prevent a risk from manifesting into a crisis. For example, having a crisis communication plan to turn to after a major fire should go hand in hand with making sure the organization has an evacuation plan. After all, communicating after the fire will go much more smoothly if everyone gets out alive. A strategic approach would consider this rhetorical enactment as part of and not separate from crisis communication. This paper examines four specific exigencies, including organizational misdeeds, economic downturns, online reputation threats, and natural disasters to demonstrate how strategic crisis communication can engage audiences to collectively manage risk and preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of organizational goals in a crisis-driven world.

Heath, R. L. (2013) Who's in charge and what's the solution? Reputation as a matter of issue debate and risk management. In C. E. Carroll (Ed.), *Handbook of communication and corporate reputation* (pp. 388-403). New York: Wiley-Blackwell.

# Women, experts and scholars: Investigating public relations knowledge and expertise in Australia

Kate Fitch

School of Arts, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia

## ABSTRACT

This paper explores constructions of public relations knowledge and expertise in the Australian context. Drawing on an analysis of industry archives relating to public relations in higher education and the Public Relations Institute of Australia [PRIA]'s introduction of a national course accreditation program in 1991 and interviews with practitioners and educators, it considers shifting understandings of public relations knowledge and the links between education and practice in the late twentieth century. Education plays a significant role in legitimising a field, by defining and conceptualising its body of knowledge (L'Etang, 2008; L'Etang & Powell, 2013). An analysis of industry attempts to regulate university education therefore offers important insights into how a professional association both constitutes public relations knowledge and understands education as an important mechanism of professionalisation (Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2009; Noordegraaf, 2011) through the application of specialised knowledge for social and economic gain (Larson, 1977).

The findings confirm Australian public relations was perceived by the professional association as unique, despite the influence of US scholarship and textbooks, and public relations knowledge as largely experiential and produced through (Australian) practice. The experts were therefore senior PRIA members. As public relations began to establish itself as a legitimate field for scholarship, education was widely understood in terms of its significance for the professionalisation of the industry. PRIA Fellows and state councils, unhappy with university education and "the academic agenda," sought greater practitioner involvement in university education in the 1990s. PRIA had an ambivalent attitude towards education in relation to gender and anxiety about the field's professional status constrained understandings of public relations knowledge and expertise along gendered lines (Fitch & Third, 2010, 2014).

This paper problematises public relations knowledge in order to understand how and why particular discourses of public relations, particularly in relation to education, remain prominent. The findings challenge understandings of public relations that are

underpinned by discourses of professionalism and consider why PRIA, primarily through state councils and the College of Fellows, conceptualised public relations as a business and management practice, despite its association with communication studies in the academy. Managerialist and professional understandings of public relations frame its knowledge in terms of meeting business objectives and serving organisational and client interests. However education systems can function to maintain or interrupt discourse (Foucault, 1972). The institutionalisation of public relations in the academy contributed to the development of alternative conceptualisations of public relations that focused on socio-cultural, critical, and ethical perspectives, offered a critique of the role of public relations in maintaining social inequality and serving corporate interests, and fostered a broader understanding of public relations. The significance of the findings reported in this paper is the dynamic and contested understandings of public relations knowledge illuminate the education–practice debate and highlight the need for more understanding of the construction of public relations knowledge beyond intangible expertise and vocational skills (Edwards, 2014). Further, they contribute to the development of a critical pedagogy.

**Key Words:** Education; Gender; Knowledge; Practice

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# Internal Public Relations: Being A Part of The Bigger Picture

Deniz Sezgin PhD Ankara University, Faculty of Communication

Eda Sağlar Ankara University, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Public Relations and Advertising, MA Student

Dilec Seit Ankara University, Graduate School of Social Sciences Public Relations and Advertising, MA Student

The presence of individuals who work in cooperation and communicate in order to reach a mutual target, are vitally important for institutions. At this point, internal communication, not only creates a better employer-employee relation; at the same time, produces a strong effect on how the employees will act, what kind of performance they will demonstrate and correspondingly what kind of performance the institution will acquire (Balta Peltekoglu, 2014: 522). The objective of internal public relations studies is, creating a team spirit and creating an institutional consciousness by informing the employees about the institution's aim or problems. Nowadays, an organization's success is directly proportionate to the employee's success and the employee's success is directly proportionate to their relations with the institution.

At the present time, the institutions are bound to effectively communicate with their employees in order to increase productivity, create a positive perception and attract productive labor. Public Relations which can be expressed with notions such as; productivity, profit, positive image, reputation bears meaning in, belonging from the point of employees, to be considered important and agreement with the decisions (Okay and Okay, 2013: 286; Sezgin, 2015: 66; Kozlu, 2013: 147). With changing and developing corporate structures, institutional management while focusing on staff employment is seeking to increase the commitment of the staff along with it; increase the employee motivation, make them feel more valuable and thanks to this, plans to shape work efficiency in a more qualified way. For every institution, the type of suitable internal public relations depends on, the institution's communication format and communication strategies as well as, its budget.

In this study, Turkish Airlines' Globally Yours Aircraft internal public relations project which was carried out in 2012 in order to show how much they value their personnel, has been researched. Within this project, Turkish Airlines aimed to reach out to 17.000 employees working in different part of the world at the same time, wanted to enhance the employee motivation and sense of belonging. Within the project, firstly the photo shoot of 17.000 personnel was conducted. After the shoot, acquired photographs were arranged to be clothed onto the aircrafts by designers. The aircraft launch event was

realized with the participation of the employees. This strictly employee oriented project realized by Turkish Airlines who has a positive image with its service and projects directed to its customers, clients and business partners has created a positive effect. With this project, the employees were shown they were considered important and cared by the institution and were a part of the bigger picture, just like the ones clothed on the aircrafts.

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# Managing The Gap Between Theory and Practice: Dogadan Herbal Tea Company's Public Relations Implementations

Deniz Sezgin PhD Ankara University, Faculty of Communication,

Eda Sağlar Ankara University, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Public Relations and Advertising, MA Student

Dilec Seit Ankara University, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Public Relations and Advertising, MA Student

While the developments in today's business world, competition, and rapid and intense flow of information change the nature of products and services, companies need to pay greater attention to corporate communication and all the elements that constitute this identity in order to remain strong, to survive and to create a positive image in highly competitive environment. Companies that don't update their corporate communications and public relations, no matter how good their products or services are, are likely to have less chance of competition in the market.

With changes in the market, consumers' expectations and preferences change as well. Today, not the actual products but the meanings that are assigned to them are being consumed. The consumer, who integrates his/her own identity with the meaning that a certain product possesses, also buys the meaning that belongs to this product. The product and the company's identity have a mutual decisive role upon the action of purchasing. Corporate identity is an important tool which realizes the communication of the institution with its periphery. Together with the visual elements, it brings together a corporate design, corporate philosophy, corporate behavior, and a corporate culture. Corporate identity describes "who a company is", "what it does" and how it does it". (Sezgin, 2015: 56; Sezgin, 2013: 121; Cornelissen, 2014; Okay, 2013: 97; Bennett and Kottasz, 2000: 224).

Within the framework of public relations theories, there are certain obligatory activities in order to enable the institutions to introduce themselves appropriately to their target audience, to be remembered and to be preferred. Nevertheless, this process alters itself from time to time during the implementation phase, takes on a new format or even an entirely new direction. In this study, in order to reveal the gap between theory and practice in public relations, the communication implementations of a Turkish market leader international herbal tea manufacturer company "Dogadan" is analyzed and in-depth interviews are held with its PR managers. Whether a market

leader company refers to theory in its PR implementations; “how”, “in what manner” and “according to what” they determine their roadmap constitutes the subject of this study.

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Authors : Emma Wood

Institution Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

General description

## Collaborative Dialogue without being Pollyanna ?

Thinking about public relations research directions, Heath (2006, 95) considers ' the prospects of collaborative dialogue, without being Pollyanna, as the embracing form of communication, even for promotion and publicity.' This contribution analyses a case where dialogic communication is an effective means of enabling teenagers in Edinburgh to understand Scotland's problematic social norms regarding alcohol consumption – and make better decisions about choosing whether to drink or not to drink. It's involved almost 2,000 teenagers so far, and is replicable -so could be adopted as an effective communication approach across large populations. It is based on many of the dialogic principles Heath (2006, Heath et al 2006) raises and resonates with the principles of Fully Functioning Society Theory (Heath 2006, 2013) particularly in relation to contributing to society, sense of community, collaborative decision making, co-creation of meaning and the alignment of interests. The approach could also be argued as giving a group usually excluded from 'communication and decision making infrastructures' (Heath 2006, 95) (teenagers) agency by understanding and developing discursive power and reflexivity. So, in relation to the conference themes, the case illustrates theory informing practice. Unfortunately, it also illustrates the gap between the way practice is conceptualised by professionals and scholars.

In our experience, practice does not seem to understand dialogue as a relevant public relations paradigm (or even an approach in the PR armory). Consequently , dialogic approaches like this have to be funded from 'Pollyanna' budgets (health and engagement) leaving communication specialists to channel communications funding into persuasive campaigns despite strong evidence suggesting that building peer resistance is a more effective approach (NICE Public Health Guidance , 2007, Percy et al, 2011, Cochrane Intervention Review, 2011, Foxcroft and Tsertsvadze, 2011). Perhaps this is because, as Pieczka asserts (2011), PR academics have not been specific enough in explaining exactly what dialogue is and what it can achieve. So the contribution ends by developing another conference theme – that Martians need to clearly interpret their work if Venusians are to see it as relevant and actionable.

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# Breaking down the stakeholder environment: an issue orientation approach to understanding publics' behavior in the digital era

*Diana-Maria Cismaru,*  
Associate Professor, Ph. D., NUPSPA  
Bucharest

*Raluca Silvia Ciochină,*  
Ph.D. Student, NUPSPA Bucharest

*Denisa Andreea Tudor,*  
Ph.D. Student, NUPSPA Bucharest

With the emerging impact of publics affecting organizations in the social media landscape, there is a constant need for evaluating and segmenting publics according to their level of involvement, online influence, visibility and interaction with the organization. Following the logic of Robert L. Heath (2009), publics are more than stakeholders, “collectives that have something that the focal organization wants or needs (...) they are also stakeseekers; they want something in exchange from the focal organization” (p. 6). This is particularly relevant considering publics do not necessarily express their needs openly to the organization, but are rather submerged by the fluid structures of the online environment. The ways publics manifest at a certain moment can have a large impact on how organizations further optimize their strategies and conceive future public relations programs. As Brabham (2012) noted, the possibility of unexpected publics engaging in a campaign can pose various challenges to communication practitioners who have not anticipated their involvement. Thus, publics' behavior and needs have to be anticipated in many respects. Also, the appropriate placement of messages in the particular channels that correspond to the intended audience may determine the campaign effectiveness. Using interviews with PR practitioners in various positions, the main scope of this study is to examine the permeability of the online interdependency between publics and organizations and the ways practitioners apply segmentation tactics when implementing communication programs in social media.

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# Public Relations in an Era of Public Participation:

## A Missed Opportunity

Stéphanie Yates, Ph.D

Nadège Broustau, Ph.D

Université du Québec à Montréal

### **Abstract / General Description**

Because of their bad reputation, public relations tend to evolve in parallel with the public participation current associated with organizational governance. Yet, the theoretical reflection developed over the last 25 years within this disciplinary field and the practical learning acquired through experiences have the potential to shed some relevant light, notably in relation with the dialogic process at the core of public participation initiatives. Thus, it seems that we despise public relations specific expertise based on negative perceptions and the lack of credibility of those who possess these knowledge. We put forward that this cleavage, noticeable in the literature, is also persistent in practice, at least in the Quebec (Canada) context where, among the specialists on participation, only a few have an academic background including some communication components. We argue that the two fields should be brought together and that they could benefit from one another if some bridges were built between them. We especially tackle the dialogical perspective that the excellence model in public relations has enhanced and the gap between, on the one hand, the hermeneutic vision or the interactionist consideration that it can imply and, on the other hand, the actual practices of polyphonic discourse strategies developed by organisations in participative contexts. What is particularly at stake here is the receptive process by which the situation definitions emerge, evolve and the intentional issues of organisations and their publics. We also examine further developments that could help the public relations field gaining in credibility, which seems a condition to this reconciliation between “two solitudes”.

**Keywords:** public relations; public participation; dialogue; ethic; credibility.

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# **Nattering or networking; closing the gap between theory and practice.**

**Ralph Tench**

**Lucy Laville**

**Leeds Beckett University**

A review of the public relations (PR) literature would suggest that PR practitioners are good at strategically developing relations and as Ledingham and Bruning (1998) argue 'increasingly scholars and practitioners are defining public relations as relationship management'. However Watson (2008) identifies value creation through social capital and relationships as ranking most highly as a research priority, suggesting a gap in the public relations literature that may be addressed by reviewing management literature and practices.

The strategy of creating value through relationships is barely referenced in PR literature. It has however been researched in detail in the disciplines of economics and sociology (Goyal, 2007; Grief 2006 cited in Stephen and Toubia, 2010), and in marketing (Stephen and Toubia, 2010; Srivastava and Singh 2010; Pangani 2013), as well as management (Schertzer et al, 2013) where strategic planning attempts to minimise opportunistic behaviour.

Given the lack of evidence of strategic networking in the PR academic literature it may at best be described as opportunistic behaviour, as 'self-interest seeking with guile' or 'deceit-orientated violation of implicit or explicit promises' (Williamson, 1975; Donaldson, 1990 cited in Morgan and Hunt, 1994, p25). Therefore the role of developing relationships for PR practitioners may largely be considered to be a soft skill with little strategy or planning attached to it.

An empirical study of PR practitioners identified that the most successful relationships are based on an informal arrangements (Laville 2014). These findings are supported by Burt (1992) and Granovetter (1974) cited in Portes (1989) who identify the 'relative absence of ties', and 'structural holes that facilitate individual mobility' as more beneficial than strong links and networks.

The researchers have identified an opportunity to review the management literature and empirical studies that may contribute towards addressing the gaps in the PR literature.

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# CONFESSIONS OF A PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONER: HIDDEN LIFE IN THE OPEN PLAN OFFICE

Paul Willis, Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom

This paper is presented as a counterpoint to normative research which sets out what PR practice should be and the accounts of working life put forward by leading figures in the industry. In adopting this orientation the author draws on contemporary developments in historical biography which have seen a move away from so-called “great man” perspectives on events, to research which pays attention to “everyman” accounts, particularly the personal stories of men and women experiencing the same episodes on the “front-line”. The paper suggests that a focus on C-suite narratives in public relations research has tended to result in an arid and sanitised understanding of how PR teams work. The study argues that neglecting the voices of those who do not hold formal positions of power and authority prevents a nuanced appreciation of working life and how things get done. Episodes from his career as a PR practitioner are used by the author to illustrate this point.

These personal stories are framed theoretically by Chia’s (2011) research on the efficacy of the oblique. Chia contends that traditional accounts of practice underestimate the importance of peripheral and seemingly insignificant factors which can be more influential than those designed to make a difference. Through a consideration of these insights the paper positions humour as a crucial intangible asset of PR practice, while noting it remains an unappreciated and unexplored subject of scholarly inquiry in the field. To spark academic interest, the author highlights the important role humour plays in the social interactions between PR employees, particularly in the creative process, in the maintenance of morale in uncertain working environments and as a mode of resistance. This aspect of the discussion is grounded in the literature from organisational studies which explores the role of humour in work place teams (Westwood & Rhodes, 2007).

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# Programmatic thoughts and childhood obesity

*Public communication campaigns from public relations view on the way to empower governments and create a real dialogue between publics*

Beatriz García Cortés  
Universitat Pompeu Fabra  
beatriz.garcia@upf.edu

## Abstract

This article explores the disconnection between knowledge about the power that exposes Heath (Heath, Motion and Leitch, 2009) and the praxis of different governments to tackle childhood obesity with public communication campaigns.

Not only will be treated the concept of power, but also the vision: the ability wasted to observe powers and meaning systems, based on theories like *framing*, from an interpretive perspective.

Forgetting in the projection of a public communication campaign for childhood obesity concepts such as *self* or *identity* and its relationship with society, means forget the audience for which the strategy is created.

Montero (2001) warns of the fact that society, with its "good advices" believes that the obese person is provided with solutions to the problem and this person would seem that chooses pleasure to health.

The stigmatization of obesity appears in speeches from an early ages. In study with 6 year old childs, they described their obese peers as lazy, dirty, stupid, ugly and liar persons (Staffieri, 1967).

Governments have to play the role of coordinators between publics to contribute to social development. But so far, public policies in this area have been focused on informing and not in generating strategies with the agents involved in a coherent and holistic way.

## Keywords

*Public campaign, power, childhood obesity, identity, public relations*



# The Constitutive Meaning of Food Activism: Public Relations Theory and Societal Change

Ashli Quesinberry Stokes, Ph.D.

University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA

To enrich public relations theory, scholars need to continue to view activism from outside the traditional Excellence perspective (Stokes, 2013; Stokes & Rubin, 2010). Online food activism provides an excellent opportunity, with activists successfully pressuring numerous global food corporations (including Kraft, Subway, McDonald's, and Starbucks) to modify their ingredients to better meet increased societal interest in healthy eating. As activists pressure corporations to reveal their ingredients and make changes to their manufacturing processes, corporations must balance these demands while maintaining strong sales of their products. This chapter draws on constitutive rhetorical public relations scholarship (Heath, Toth, & Waymer, 2009; Stokes, 2013; Stokes, 2005) to analyze how activist pressure gradually shifts overall corporate food practices in the interest of public health. Constitutive theory contends that activists and corporations simultaneously shape public expectations about food quality standards even as they communicate their public relations goals, and the paper relies on several contemporary examples to explicate this process. In particular, the paper explores the activism of "The Food Babe" (<http://foodbabe.com>), listed as one of the thirty most influential people on the Internet, to illuminate the activist/corporate dual creation of meaning about food. Viewing activism as a generative source of public relations opportunity, rather than as something to combat, helps corporations better respond to public pressure in the Information age. This online food fight provides scholars with a clear example of the need to further develop theory regarding activism and public relations.

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# **Theory Provides Conceptual Frameworks—But Which Frameworks are Most Grounded for Public Relations Practice?**

By

Bonita Dostal Neff, Ph.D.

Professor & Chair

Department of Communication

Indiana University Northwest

Paper submitted to the Barcelona International PR Meeting #5

30<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2015

## **Abstract**

### **Theory Provides Conceptual Frameworks—But Which Frameworks are Most Grounded for Public Relations Practice?**

Perhaps the next big battleground among scholars is the directional focus for theory development. As announced at a recent conference: “The PR discipline has nothing new to learn from rhetoric, a 2,300 year old area of study. If you want to learn something new—study public relations.” Thus the volley has been declared and now the examination of scholarship commences.

The premise that rhetoric has nothing more to say about the practice of public relations obviously seems to be very much more of an aim at staking more territory in the public relations research arena than truly trying to understand the nature of the public relations process in all its complexity. As Heath stated in his chapter on “Rhetorical Theory, Public Relations, and Meaning In Giving Voice to Ideas”: there are “three pillars of public relations theory.” The first pillar is “the message and meaning business,” the second pillar, systems theory, helps to “improve the processes of communication,” Its “rhetorical heritage—meaning and the good organization communicating well,” the “PR’ theory and practice—the nexus of rhetoric and ethics” and “critical studies completes the troika of pillars for public relations.” As Robert

Heath, himself stated, "classical treatises on rhetoric do not tell the whole story of how rhetoric can support and guide the practice and scholarship on rhetoric." The arguments set forth in this research establishes the need for integrating the thoughts and concepts from the rhetorical body of knowledge to more fully explicate the rhetorical intent when new platforms of communication and conditions for communicating become increasingly complex.

Abstract

# Measuring PR ethics in the context of social media: quantitative and qualitative methods

Dr. Margalit Toledano, Department of Management Communication, the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

The impact of social media on professional ethical values and conduct has recently concerned a growing number of scholars from different disciplines (e.g., Drushel & German, 2011; DiStato & Bortree, 2014; Bowen, 2013). However, many difficulties are involved in researching the concerns. For a start, measuring ethics is a challenging task. Professionals do not tend to share information about their failure to follow the profession's ethical standards and would be unlikely to confess to misleading audiences. Studies of public relations practitioner experiences in using social media when communicating on behalf of organisations depend on self-evident and subjective concepts of ethics.

Another challenge is how to approach the topic. Few research projects that investigate ethical issues in the practice of public relations use such qualitative methods as case studies (Bowen 2013), in-depth interviews (Waters 2014), and focus groups (Toledano & Wolland 2011). Waters (2014) researched the openness and disclosure in social media effort by interviewing 25 communication leaders at *Fortune 500* and *Philanthropy 400* organisations and explained: "Given that these research questions are exploratory in nature when considering the growing scope of openness and disclosure, a qualitative methodology was chosen over quantitative surveys" (p. 8) . According to Waters the interviews allowed communicators to discuss the concepts frankly. Toledano and Wolland (2011) used focus groups to identify New Zealand practitioners' ethical dilemmas around the use of social media: "Focus groups were chosen as a good way to listen to, and learn from, relevant people. Ethical behaviour is a sensitive topic and hard to measure in any way...focus groups did encourage participants to share experiences" (p. 46).

The research presented in this paper drew from the findings of Toledano & Wolland (2011) to develop quantitative measurement of ethics. It used a survey of public relations practitioners that received an online questionnaire with 13 attitudes

questions. These were designed to identify the professionals' concepts around very specific tactics that public relations practitioners might use while communicating on social media. This first of its kind, the survey was distributed electronically to potentially 1200 members of the Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (PRINZ) in February 2015. PRINZ used its online e-report and Facebook page to invite members and non-members to click on the link and answer the questionnaire which was open from Jan 27 to Feb 19, 2015. 52 valid responses, of which 71% were from PRINZ members, were analysed. In spite of the limitations inherent to the use of surveys it was possible to identify current concepts of practitioners around ethical conduct. For example: an overwhelming majority, 96% of the respondents, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: "It is ok to pay social media experts for distributing rumours and negative messages about organisations that compete with my employer or client". However, only 66.67% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: "It is ok to pay bloggers to deliver the organisation or client's message as everybody is doing it anyway" and only 77% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "it is ok for PR practitioners to write comments on social media without a disclaimer about the sponsor that paid them to do it". These findings indicate a certain lack of knowledge and understanding of the professional standards. This despite the fact that almost 79% of the respondents said they had academic or industry qualification in PR and almost 54% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I'm well trained to deal with ethical issues relating to organisational communication on social media".

Online surveys do enjoy certain advantages. For example, "the speed with which questionnaire can be sent and returned ... [and in] data analysis" (Stacks, 2011, p. 233) as well as the anonymity they offer to respondents (and, in so doing, encourage frank admissions of unethical behaviour). Nevertheless, this paper concludes that such surveys are limiting tools and restrict the researcher to pre-determined assumptions. Effective measurement of practitioners' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour around professional ethics, especially on social media, should involve qualitative, as well as quantitative tools.

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# Mapping an Academic Legacy: Tracing the Influence of Heath and Ryan's 1989 Article "Public Relations Role in Defining Corporate Social Responsibility"

This research traces the academic legacy of Robert Heath and Michael Ryan's 1989 article "Public Relations' Role in Defining Corporate Social Responsibility" in the *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*. This article, published at a critical time for the convergence of public relations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in both research and practice, left a significant impact on academic studies in a number of related fields.

This article forms the basis for later research that examines the role of the public relations practitioner of the ethical conscience of the organization (Bowen, 2008) as well as position that rebuts such a responsibility (L'Etang 2004).

Through the 1990s and the 2000s, Heath and Ryan's thoughts on communicating CSR informed research on the best way for a corporation to communicate using then-new technologies such as the web (e.g. Esrock & Leighty, 1998).

Wide-ranging in its geographical impact as well, Heath and Ryan's article contributed to studies of CSR in areas from Spain to Taiwan and from Germany to sub-Saharan Africa (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007; Ho & Hallahan, 2004; Pratt, 1991; Silberhorn & Warren, 2007).

By considering the many studies that relied on Heath and Ryan's 1989 article, this research adds to the conference's efforts to recognize the contributions of Professor Heath. Additionally, its findings show how a single journal article can influence the academic literature on a particular topic.

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# Bob Heath and PR: Balancing the ledger, evaluating the legacy (to date), and acknowledging the intellectual strategies

As a late entry to academic PR – I joined the field by accident in 1997 – I have often wondered a little how dire it would have been without the range and depth of Heath's interventions. Accordingly, this paper wonders a bit more deeply by constructing a Chaos history or alternative history (often known as a "What if . . ." history (e.g., what if Hitler had won the second world war) by imagining "What if he hadn't joined the discipline?" Although this is a little tongue in cheek, alternative histories do surface issues around values and present situations and future possibilities drawing on Niall Fergusson's (1997) seminal work *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals* and more recent historical "counterfactuals" – including Cowley's (2000) collection whose title tries to trademark *What if™*.

In the second part of the paper, as one of the major legatees of his work, and one who is evolving into a "post-critical" scholar, I'll offer a subjective evaluation of what matter most to me personally and why. Finally, the paper will conclude by arguing that as well as the impact of his individual writings and editorial practices, Heath has made a massive contribution to gaining credibility and building the reputation of PR by strategic interventions and innovative projects.

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Professor David McKie  
Management Communication Department  
University of Waikato

Professor Jordi Xifra  
Department of Communication  
Pompeu Fabra University

# **Towards a Theory of Middleness for Public Relations**

**Gareth Thompson**

**London College of Communication, University of the Arts London**

## **TOWARDS A THEORY OF MIDDLENESS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS**

This paper proposes a theory of middleness for public relations, which confronts the intermediate characteristics of public relations practice and its place between different disciplines.

### **Literature Review: The Place and Practice of Public Relations**

Heath (1992) offered a welcome escape from years of Grunigian (1984) capture of PR scholarship with his work on rhetoric and the fully functioning society. Mckie and Munshi (2012) have gone on to argue that public relations can offer value to society through communications activism

Yet some recent writing on public relations has developed a self-absorbed sense of unrealistic ubiquity, which has added to the gap between the actuality of practice and the academy.

### **A Theory of Middleness**

The paper contests the ubiquity assumption that public relations is everywhere and can solve many of society's problems. The theory of middleness argues that public

relations is less significant in business and society than some recent literature (Coombs and Holladay, 2006) has argued

Instead of being at the centre of society or business, public relations is in the middle, a location which reflects the abstract wandering of educators and practitioners between a duality of matched pairs, which express themselves as gaps as well as questions.

Public relation as a profession or an industry?

Public relations in a media school or business school?

Public relations for clients or for the media?

Public relations for corporate or activist interests? `

Debray's (2000) interdisciplinary study of media communications with an emphasis on the 'institutions of transmission' offers a powerful conceptual framework from which to develop a theory of middleness for public relations.

This approach confronts the abstract interregnum of public relations practice rather than assuming ubiquity and embraces its mediating nature. A post-structuralist theoretical approach suggests rich meaning exists in the gaps the model identifies.

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# Linking Words and Emotions. An Application to the 2013 CDC Tips

## Campaign

Eulàlia P. Abril

Glen Szczypka

Sherry L. Emery

University of Illinois at Chicago

Address correspondence to

Eulàlia P. Abril

Department of Communication

University of Illinois at Chicago

## Linking Words and Emotions. An Application to the 2013 CDC Tips Campaign

### Abstract

In 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched the “Tips from Former Smokers” campaign. Tips featured individuals whose smoking had caused scary and very visual health consequences, including amputation, tracheotomy, paralysis, and heart surgery. The Tips ads appeared on billboards, in print, on TV, radio, and online (Flock, 2012).

Since then, the CDC has re-launched Tips every year after that. Data from the 2012 Tips campaign showed that, by all accounts, it was a success (Emery, Szczypka, Abril, Kim, & Vera, 2014). Aside from increased volume in quit call lines and in number of visitors to online quit sites, Emery’s study showed that the discussion on Twitter about the Tips campaign had users engaged with the campaign as desired: displaying fear of smoking.

As data from the 2013 is becoming available, several questions remain. First, was the 2013 campaign—with more stories and different features in the ad repertoire—still a success as revealed in Twitter messages? While the Tips 2012 ads focused on scary graphic cues, the Tips 2013 also included ads with emphasis on affect-laden personal testimony (with less graphic images and containing more sorrow and repent). Second, which linguistic cues did the ads elicit from their textual, audio and video features? Third, what was the relationship between linguistic cues and the emotions the ads elicited? Finally, which ads were most successful in eliciting the desirable emotions?

This study analyzes the corpus of Tips campaign-related tweets obtained via the Twitter Firehose, thus utilizing the entire population of messages ( $N = 146,759$  tweets). Using topic modeling (Blei, 2012), we provide a novel and rigorous method for media campaign evaluation within the framework of the Extended Parallel Process Model (Witte, 1992). Results indicate that message acceptance was 93% of the tweets containing any emotion, and that “Terrie’s story” was, by far, the most successful set of ads.

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# Place Brand Image and Public Relations: Galicia and USA Audience

Ana Belén Fernández Souto<sup>1</sup>, Carmen Maiz Bar<sup>2</sup>

1 Facultade de Ciencias Sociais e da Comunicación. Campus a Xunqueira s/n. CP 36005. Pontevedra. Universidade de Vigo. España.

2 Facultade de Ciencias Sociais e da Comunicación. Campus a Xunqueira s/n. CP 36005. Pontevedra. Universidade de Vigo. España.

## ABSTRACT

This paper reflects on the importance of Public Relations techniques, tactics and strategies for the creation of a place brand image. Our research is supported by Turincentiving (R2014/020), a Research Network funded by Xunta de Galicia, the Galician Government, which is aimed at carrying out a prospective analysis of incentive tourism within Galicia, focusing on a very specific target audience: the United States of America.

That is the starting point for our presentation at the Barcelona PR Meeting # 5. We will then lay out a theoretical framework for place brands, particularly considering their creation and configuration and focusing on the use of Public Relations tools for that purpose.

In addition to that theoretical framework, we will provide information regarding American tourism consumption in Galicia -information compiled, on one hand, by interviewing students and young American citizens living in that Community, and, on the other, using opinion surveys about the projection and image of Brand Galicia, both independently and within the Brand Spain context.

This paper also analyzes the communication strategies currently being used to strengthen Brand Galicia and to improve its position in the above-mentioned niche market. Recommendations and future work guidelines will be given. Last, we will present the conclusions we have reached after completing the research.

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# Targeting effective communication campaigns: challenges and trends

**Authors:** Pilar Buil and Pablo Medina Aguerrebere

**Institution:** Universidad Internacional de Cataluña

**Abstract:**

Companies and organizations develop their mission in a new social and economic context. The internationalization, the merger of companies, the stakeholder's active role and the loss of trust by institutions are some of the factors that are changing the public relations strategies in Spanish companies. The focus of this research is on the study of the main points that companies must work in order to build global brands that enjoy reputation and credibility among their stakeholders. With this objective in mind from April 2014 to October 2014, we collected a sample of interviews conducted to several heads of communication who work for companies with strong reputation: *Inditex, Mercadona, Telefónica, Repsol, Banco Santander, Mutua Madrileña, Acciona, Universidad de Navarra, Gas Natural Fenosa* and *La Caixa*. Our preliminary results seem to indicate that good reputation is an output that requires communication as a managerial role. Moreover it deals with specific public relations strategies and techniques focus on the brand

**Keywords:** public relations, reputation, communication campaigns, stakeholders, strategy

**Título de la propuesta:** Gestión efectiva de las relaciones públicas: desafíos y tendencias

**Palabras clave:** public relations, reputation, communication campaigns, stakeholders, strategy.

**Autores (Institución):** Pilar Buil Gazol, Pablo Medina Aguerrebere, (Universitat Internacional de Catalunya)

**Resumen:** La internacionalización, las fusiones entre compañías, la crisis de confianza por parte de las instituciones y el papel activo de los *stakeholders* son algunos de los factores que están cambiando las estrategias de comunicación institucional de las empresas españolas. En este artículo, se identifican las palancas de cambio que deben trabajar dichas compañías para crear marcas globales que gocen de reputación y de credibilidad entre sus *stakeholders*. Para ello, desde principios de abril de 2014 hasta mediados de octubre de ese mismo año, se han entrevistado a los Directores de Comunicación de las empresas españolas con mejor reputación internacional según Merco (2013): *Banco Santander, Repsol, Telefónica, Mutua Madrileña, Acciona,*

*Inditex, Mercadona, Universidad de Navarra, Gas Natural Fenosa y La Caixa.* Los resultados muestran que potenciar el rol directivo de la comunicación institucional y centrar dicha actividad en la construcción de la marca y de la reputación, son aspectos determinantes para convertir a las empresas en instituciones memorables.

**Keywords:** relaciones públicas, reputación, campañas de comunicación, stakeholders, estrategia.

**‘Spinning the Economy’:**

**Central banking post-crisis communication  
on the global stage**

Clea Bourne

*School of Media and Communication, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK*

Corresponding author: Clea D. Bourne, Department of Media &  
Communications,

Goldsmiths, University of London, New Cross, London, SE14 6NW, UK

### ***'Spinning the Economy':***

#### ***Central bankers communicating risk and stability on the global stage***

Central bankers took on mythical status during the 2000s after combined efforts to quell the Asian Financial Crisis ushered in a halcyon period of 'low risk'. Language is pivotal to central banking, with monetary policy the primary risk management tool through which central bankers carefully craft a nation's 'monetary story' (Woodward, 2000). Losing control of that monetary story could mean losing control of a central bank's communicative relationship with its many publics (Holmes, 2014). Following Kunczik (1996), this paper will address the importance of a nation's post-crisis economic image on the international stage.

Central bankers were among the major players accused of contributing to the Global Financial Crisis. The US Federal Reserve and its longest-serving Chairman, Alan Greenspan, came in for greatest criticism. On 23 October, 2008, Greenspan was summoned before a US Congressional hearing. Despite demitting office two years earlier, Greenspan's testimony made headlines around the world. This paper will argue that Greenspan's testimony represented far more than a defence of his regulatory role. In keeping with literature on congressional hearings (Diermeier and Feddersen, 2000), it is argued that Congress united in an act of strategic communication, providing Greenspan with a platform to re-assert his position as economist-in-chief in order to 'remake' the US economy (Holmes, 2014). Throughout his testimony, Greenspan focused on restoring trust in the US economy by dismissing the Global Financial Crisis as a once-in-a-century event; insisting that markets were 'chastened' while risky financial instruments had disappeared, never to return.

The paper will contribute to an understanding of public relations techniques at the highest levels of global finance, while engaging public relations scholarship in a conversation with cross-disciplinary work on 'how central bankers talk' (Blinder et al, 2001).

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# **Students' Perceptions of Social Media Pedagogy in Higher Education**

*Ai Zhang*

*Stockton University*

*Lin Zhu*

*University of Massachusetts Boston*

*Deepa Anagondahalli*

*University of Maryland College Park*

## **Abstract**

Social media use in public relations industry has become increasingly prevalent (Falkow, 2011). Public relations practitioners are in a constant demand to showcase their mastery of social media knowledge, tools, and skills in today's fast-changing work environment. Practitioners have frequently reiterated the importance of teaching students the necessary social media skillsets to help them succeed in the industry (Todd, 2009). As a result, within the past several years, higher educators have begun to incorporate social media pedagogy into classroom teaching, learning, and community building. A stream of research has emerged examining the specific ways in which public relations educators have adopted social media sites (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn) to facilitate teaching and learning. For example, Fraustino, Briones, and Jansoke's study (2014) documented live twitter chats with students conducted at three different universities and showed that participating in these chats helped students digest the theories and concepts learned in the classroom, enhance their digital communication skills, and broaden their professional networks.

However, since social media pedagogy is still an emerging approach, there is debate among higher educators regarding how and if such a digital pedagogy is beneficial to students' learning experience (Anderson & Swenson, 2013). For example, Bonzo and Parchoma's (2010) study highlights one potential problem of social media pedagogy, which is the incongruity between institutional expectations and student expectations in terms of social media usage in higher education. Tess (2013) also challenged the lack of empirical evidence in supporting social media pedagogy as effective and conducive to classroom learning.

Within this context, the present study intends to offer more insights on the debate on social media pedagogy. Specifically, it aims to measure students' perceptions of the role of social media use in their own learning. Employing a mixed-method approach, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups, the study selects participants in public relations classes from two different universities in the East Coast of the United States. Their perceptions of social media's efficacy in augmenting and facilitating classroom learning are examined. In addition, participants are asked how they believe social media use in the classroom can be improved, or utilized in ways not currently given attention to. Finally, theoretical and practical implications of the study are discussed.

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# WOMEN IN PR LEADERSHIP

**Author:** Olivia Loeffen, Masters Student

**Institution:** The University of Waikato

**Abstract:**

Leadership is crucial to the success and reputation of Public Relations (PR) organisations. The Trends Survey 2014 conducted by the Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (PRiNZ) of its members shows that 74 percent of PR “specialists” are women. On a global scale, women are estimated to make up two-thirds of the industry workforce. Yet the empirical evidence suggests a lack of females in top PR leadership positions. A recent 2014 Power List of PR leaders published on PRWeek, included thirty-two male influential PR leaders, compared to just eighteen women. Although there is no shortage of literature on leadership theory and practice, interestingly, very little academic research has focused on women leaders within public relation organisations.

This study used an appreciative inquiry approach, combined with elements of action research to explore how women move into leadership roles. Women leaders from public relations, business, and not for profit organisations were interviewed to understand their individual leadership journeys. The resulting analyses showed that strong role models at work or at home exert the greatest influence on participants. Interestingly, differences of opinion were expressed as to whether leadership in public relations is different to leadership in other disciplines. With a higher percentage of women within the public relations sector, participants had originally thought it may be easier for women to move into leadership positions. However the results of the thematic analysis showed this was not typically so. The learning from this study and the experiences of these participants showed that predominantly male workplaces are not as big a barrier to leadership as previously assumed in the literature. The preliminary findings suggest a that major factor is having a person, either male or

female, who believes in you and is prepared to give you a break in your leadership journey and/or wants to see you succeed.

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# **Risk, rhetoric and responses: Robert Heath's agenda setting for public relations and risk communication**

So far as public relations is concerned, risk communication has been contested territory (Galloway, 2010). While risk managers and risk management standards institutes acknowledge the importance of communicating risk successfully, they have veered in the direction of drawing from technical subject matter experts rather than from communication, including public relations, specialists. Yet the tide has been turning, impelled by scholars such as Professor Robert Heath, whose writing and research since 1990 has articulated an evidence-based, theoretical rationale for a public relations role in risk communication.

Such a role sits within the rhetorical perspectives on public relations that he and others have proposed, but also goes further to claim risk communication as a sub-discipline of public relations (e.g. Palenchar & Heath, 2002). A bold claim of this nature would raise questions were it not for the extensive scaffolding Heath and colleagues have built around it through decades of risk and public-relations-focused research. As the field of risk communication itself has developed increasingly nuanced approaches to understanding and implementing its brief (e.g. Reynolds & Seeger, 2005), so has Heath led the way to placing risk at the centre of public relations scholarship and practice, especially in relation to strategic issues management and crisis communication (e.g. Heath & Palenchar, 2009).

This paper examines Heath's risk-related *oeuvre* and considers it in the context of the work of leading risk theorists and risk communication studies since 1990. It argues that the scholarship of Heath and others has not only changed public relations but also has influenced the broader risk communication domain, which now has the opportunity not only to conceptualise the importance of effective communication but also to implement it guided by the insights from decades of public relations risk research.

## **PROPOSAL**

April 2015

Paper by Erika Casajoana (Open University of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain).

# **Catalonia-Spain: A War of Words?**

**Analysis of the Arguments Used by Catalonia and Spain in their Quest for International Legitimacy for their Political Positions.**

**Proposed to the 5th BCN International PR Congress, June 30th-July 1st, 2015**

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Last year I presented at this very same meeting a paper on the internationalization of Catalonia's self-determination process.

This year, I propose to analyze the „war of words“ that has played out on the international arena between the Catalan and Spanish authorities to gain legitimacy for their respective political positions.

Last year I focused on the main political communication tools the Catalan pro-independence movement was using to persuade the European Union and the world to overcome its natural aversion to „nationalism“ and embrace this pacific, grass-roots, impeccably democratic drive to try to secede from Spain.

This year my attention will be on the arguments, words, and narratives the opposing parts are using before the moment of truth of the Catalan elections of September 27, 2015. The Catalan pro-independence political parties have stated they intend to interpret this election as a plebiscite on independence, given that Spain firmly refuses to allow a referendum on self-determination.

The Catalan self-determination process is keenly observed by sympathizers and foes around the world since it seemingly appeared out of nowhere in 2010. It has already become a benchmark for other nations aspiring to their own statehood. This is why I would like to present this research to the 4th BCN International PR Congress, as a follow-up of my papers in recent years.

Erika Casajoana

-Consultant, Open University of Catalonia

-Lecturer, School of Public Relations (ESRP), ascribed to the University of Barcelona, Spain

### **Biographical Statement**

Erika Casajoana is an expert on political and media training services and strategic communications. She helps organizations make an optimal use of mass media to reach targeted audiences.

Based in Brussels, Ms. Casajoana lectures on lobbyism at the Open University of Catalonia ([www.uoc.edu](http://www.uoc.edu)) and the Public Relations School (ESRP) ascribed to the University of Barcelona, Spain.

Erika Casajoana graduated from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs with a Master of International Affairs, and holds a Master in European Studies and a law license from the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

Ms. Casajoana writes regularly on international affairs in several Spanish publications.

# **Why relationship management matters: Impact of OPR and crisis response strategies on perceived crisis responsibility.**

## **Authors:**

Diana Ingenhoff (University of Fribourg), Candace White (University of Tennessee),  
Susanne Klein (University of Fribourg)

## **General description:**

(see abstract enclosed) The paper refers to Heath's (2013) request to study the dimensions and layers of OPR and investigates how positive OPR can reduce the responsibility attributed to an organization for a crisis, based on a study of Brown and White (2011) who found stakeholders with relationships with an organization were less likely to attribute blame for a crisis to the organization, regardless of which crisis strategy was used.

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# LEADERSHIP AND AGENDA SETTING IN CORPORATE MORAL

Pavel Slutskiy, PhD, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand  
pavel.slutsky@gmail.com

Enric Ordeix, PhD, Ramon Llull University, Spain  
enricor@blanquerna.url.edu

## ABSTRACT

The objective of this article is to analyze how leadership and moral theories of corporate actions acquire normative status. The analysis is focused agenda setting as one of the roles that opinion leaders play in changing moral standards for corporate moral responsibility, there is a demand for independent moral validation of corporate decisions, actions and initiatives, because publics want an independent view on the moral evaluation of various companies, in response to this demand opinion leaders try to provide credible and objective information

that appears to be more trustworthy since opinions leaders are assumed to be beyond corporate control.

Independence and regular public exposure makes opinion leaders influential enough to set the benchmarks and basic requirements for corporate moral standards. Often such opinion leaders are also the primary source of information on moral validation of corporate initiatives for many stakeholders. Because opinion leaders can substantially influence public expectations on corporate moral responsibility, monitoring emerging concerns that they raise becomes an essential part of corporate communications.

*Keywords: opinion leaders, corporate moral responsibility, moral standards, agenda setting,online influencers*