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SUBDUING ATTITUDE POLARIZATION? HOW PARTISAN NEWS MAY BE INNOCUOUS FOR ONLINE PUBLIC

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We live in an increasingly polarized society (Abramowitz, 2013; Westfall, Boven, Chambers, & Judd, 2016). Many factors are feeding this tendency although the media, in particular, the partisan media together with selective exposure, are often deemed responsible (Stroud, 2010; Wojcieszak, Bimber, Feldman, & Stroud, 2015) because they can lead to fragmented publics (Sunstein, 2007) and polarization (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009; Wojcieszak, 2010).

However, in the online environment, despite selective exposure of partisan news, online publics do *not* necessarily dismiss contrary information (Brundidge, 2010a; Garrett, 2009a, 2009b). If so, what are the consequences of exposure to *both* likeminded and contrary news on attitude polarization? While research has looked at the effects of exposure to biased information on polarization in controlled experiments (Coe et al., 2008; Feldman, 2011a, 2011b; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979; Taber & Lodge, 2006), unresolved issues remain.

First, these studies did not test the effects of exposure to more than one news article, let alone exposure to a *heterogeneous* bundle. Second, it remains to be investigated whether the effects on polarization hold when there is a control group exposed to traditionally balanced news with the *exact* same information. Third, these studies used short statements, cable news, or generic news stories, but not online news. Finally, the effect of exposure on polarization was tested as a direct effect, but not as an indirect effect.

Thus, we seek to test the effects of a heterogeneous partisan versus a balanced news bundle on attitude polarization using experimental data. In addition, we distinguish whether the effects on polarization are direct or indirect via several processing biases, hence contributing to understanding how attitude polarization may arise from media exposure. Despite evidence that online partisan news leads to media biases, study results show that partisan news does not affect attitude polarization. Implications for political campaigns are discussed.

Key Words: Partisan news, attitude polarization, hostile media, news story credibility

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How Companies are Seizing the Dialogic Opportunities Provided by Social Media to Communicate with their External Audiences

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Some companies are seizing the conversational opportunities social media offer for communicating with their publics, although most firms still have a one-direction communication on social media and are underutilizing the potential of these tools (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007; Hether, 2014; Kent, 2013; Macnamara, 2010a; Madichie & Hinson, 2013; McAllister-Spooner, 2009; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010; Sevick Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Taylor, Kent, & White, 2001; Watkins & Lewis, 2014; Xifra & Huertas, 2008).

Last years, some research has studied communication opportunities provided by social media from a qualitative perspective (Capriotti & Pardo, 2012; Jo & Jung, 2005; Kent & Taylor, 2002; Kim, Park, & Wertz, 2010; McCorkindale & Morgoch, 2013; Waters & Tindall, 2010), by adapting and applying the theoretical framework proposed by Kent & Taylor (1998) to guide relationship-building on the Web.

This research assesses the level of dialogic communication developed by leading Spanish companies and a selection of 20 Fortune 500 firms with their external audiences on Facebook, Twitter and blogs. With this aim, a dialogic conceptual tool based on Kent and Taylor's (1998) framework has been created and applied to all the sample. The tool checks the presence or absence of 45 dichotomous variables and 12 sub-variables on three dimensions: Presence, Content and Interactivity.

The selected sample includes all the IBEX 35 companies which have a blog and/or a Facebook page and/or a Twitter profile and a selection of 20 Fortune 500 firms with blog and/or a Facebook page and/or a Twitter profile. A total of 31 blogs, 51 Facebook pages and 76 Twitter profiles have been analyzed during six months.

Inter-method triangulation has being applied to carry out the research: virtual ethnography, non-participant observation and critical discourse analysis (CDA).

First results of this research will be presented at BCNmeetingPR#6.

Key Words: social media, dialogic communication, public relations

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THE REPUTATIONAL RUCKUS: SHOULD PR CARE?

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If there's a boundary between public relations and reputation management, it's hard to find. While the London-based Chartered Institute of Public Relations sees PR and reputation management as effectively synonymous, the existence of specialized reputation consultancies, supported by an institute with its own academic journal, suggest that a distinction can be drawn. Yet, as in other fields, the interface is fuzzy and dynamic. Does this matter for public relations? Should practitioners worry about jurisdictional creep? This paper suggests that the answer is "no" – it doesn't really matter. This case is based on the idea that whatever PR might think about what it is and what it does, ultimately it is the client who determines the brief for public relations professionals: to adapt an ancient English proverb, "PR proposes, the client disposes". So if the client's focus is on building or protecting a reputation, that's what practitioners must do, whether alone or in collaboration with marketing and other disciplines. From this perspective, worries about territorial encroachments on public relations' "turf" are a form of professional introspection that is unproductive in terms of establishing PR's credentials with those who pay for its services.

Yet it is useful to consider the reputation-influencing responsibilities that PR might acquire, as "reputation management" is about much more than media relations and publicity. Rather, it is about close monitoring of publics' opinions in the "attention economy" (Lanham, 2007) and responsive adjustments to the shifting reputational sands. Arguably one of the most credential-enhancing directions for PR to take in relation to reputation is "reputation risk" management: helping senior executives to identify potential threats and address them in a timely way. But doing so successfully will require "risk literacy" (Galloway, 2012) which is still nascent in all too many parts of the public relations domain. Improve it, and PR's own reputation, and ability to be seen as a credible partner in addressing corporate dilemmas of all kinds, is likely to improve.

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ASSESSING FACEBOOK AS A DIALOGIC COMMUNICATION TOOL FOR ORGANIZATIONS. ANALYSIS OF THE 100 MOST VISITED MUSEUMS OF THE WORLD

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Social networks have obtained a relevant presence in Public Relations programs and they are changing the way to disseminate information and engage in dialogue. They permit a more balanced and participatory model of communication between publics and organizations, based in dialogue and conversation, not persuasion. The main objective of this paper is to evaluate how organizations are using Facebook (the most important social network) to interact and engage in dialogue with their publics. Specifically, this research analyzes the presence and activity of the most visited art museums worldwide on this Social Network. This work asks if they are using this platform in order to be recognized as 'museums 2.0'. Our results illustrate that the museums we studied (the 100 which are most important on the global level) have a very clear presence on Facebook. However they are not using all the opportunities that this social network offers as an interactive and dialogical means of communication.

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Key Words: Public Relations, Dialogic Communication, Social Networks, Facebook, Museum 2.0, Interaction

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Public Relations, Popular Culture, and the Entertainment Industry: Stan Lee and the Construction of Marvel Comics

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With its recent purchase by Disney and the release of blockbuster superhero films on an ongoing basis, Marvel Entertainment adds new elements to an astonishing history of creative and commercial success. Related to an extremely popular fiction universe that dates back to the 1930s, Marvel's superhero characters like Captain America, Iron Man, and Thor have turned the company into a money-making machine, a purveyor of mass entertainment, and an established popular culture brand.

In an economy that often circles around entertainment, it is interesting to reflect on the way public relations have been instrumental in the creation of the identity of entertainment companies. In this context, one of the central factors that constructed the image of Marvel is the public relations work developed by editor-writer Stan Lee. Aside from the fact that Lee's usage of public relations techniques has strongly contributed to Marvel's corporate branding, the editor also managed to establish relationships with stakeholders—and, more specifically, to build a strong, even emotional relationship with the comic-buying public. To sum up, the case of Stan Lee stands out as an example of how public relations can serve entertainment and popular culture.

Thus, the main objective of this paper is to identify and analyze the public relations techniques that Lee employed to promote Marvel Comics, articulate the company's fandom, and even develop his own personal brand. We also aim to contextualize Lee's effort in the public relations paradigms of the second half of the Twentieth Century—that is, the decades that planted the seeds of the contemporary Marvel Comics. Consequently, we aim to perform an analysis of techniques from a historical perspective that takes into account the theoretical models of public relations.

Key Words: Marvel Comics, Popular Culture, Public Relations Techniques, Corporate Image

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PREVALENCE OF TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVE IN THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN COLOMBIA

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Academics have noted that public relations increase legitimacy when exercised from a strategic communication perspective. In the theoretical analysis of communication in organizations, public relations is the discipline which has discussed more widely concepts like relations with stakeholders and strategic communication (Van Ruler, Vercic and Vercic, 2008). Hence it can be said that trained professionals in the area have a unique advantage to impact the business strategy.

However, the findings of three studies conducted in Colombia during 2010, 2012 and 2014, which are reported in this paper, show how, in times in which studies on the field, seem to be consolidated, there is a technical emphasis in the professional practice. According to the results of researches considered, applied in communication departments from companies of various sectors and public relations agencies, this matter would serve three main causes: a) the training those working in communication organizations in the country have received, which until now has been predominantly journalistic; b) ignorance of some company managers about the added value by the work of these professionals in the organization, and c) the fact that some practices that early practitioners had, which weren't seen as ethical, persist in the minds of citizens groups and journalists. Even some professionals working in this field see public relations as efforts by organizations to advance their own agendas, which apply only in relations with the government, customers, companies in the same sector and the media, to achieve visibility.

Key Words: Public relations, strategic communication, communication agencies.

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THE DOWAGER PR MANAGER: WHAT PR CAN LEARN FROM DOWNTON ABBEY AND OTHER POPULAR CULTURE, AND HOW WE CAN USE POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT TO TEACH PR STUDENTS ENTERTAINMENT

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This panel will incorporate two of the conference's themes – entertainment and teaching – to discuss the ways that popular entertainment (movies, television, books) can be used to engage students in PR courses.

Popular culture – including television, movies, and cultural trends – plays an undeniable role in the lives of today's undergraduate students. Rather than ignore these as distractions, the panelists suggest instead that we tap into students' passion for popular culture by encouraging them to draw connections between TV and movies and the field and practice of PR.

In addition to discussing popular entertainment that features characters in the field of PR and communications, panelists will also discuss books, television shows, and movies that can demonstrate important concepts without actually taking place within the field. Whether it's the personal politics of the Dowager Countess in *Downton Abbey* or John Oliver's rousing call for viewers to advocate for net neutrality on *Last Week Tonight*, students can find countless examples of PR and communications in their favorite movies, television shows, and novels.

Panel members will report on varied ways of incorporating popular entertainment texts such as books, television, and movies into public relations pedagogy. Panelists will discuss their own efforts to accomplish this integration in their classes and will give examples of texts that can be used to illustrate important public relations concepts.

Key Words: PR, popular culture, entertainment

Entertaining PR: Popular culture and the "smiling professions"

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Kate Fitch
Murdoch University

Judy Motion
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Philip Young
Birmingham City University

The panel will develop a debate around popular culture and public relations [PR], the ability of fiction to expose ethical dilemmas, and the interaction of promotional culture and PR practice. In doing so, it considers what Hartley refers to as "the smiling professions": the media, publicity and promotional industries that create "media publics … in the name of pleasure and voluntary entertainment during leisure time" (1992, p. 10). In this way, the papers point to the transformative and critical potential of PR in popular culture in the entertainment age.

An exploration of what "popular" means and how popularity occurs is a critical starting point for making sense of the relationship between popular culture and PR. It is generally understood that if something is popular it is widely liked and readily accessible. Popular culture is a multi-faceted, nebulous, catch-all term applied to the mass consumption of contemporary ideas, values and practices circulating within particular cultures, and is expressed through such modes as entertainment, music, sports, media, fashion, and technology.

For PR, popular culture is both a strategic resource for connecting with society and the product of promotional efforts. The blurred distinctions between popular culture and promotional culture open opportunities for PR to commodify and popularize social and everyday practices while simultaneously normalizing celebrity and entertainment cultures. Alternatively, popular culture produces "new language, meanings and visions of the future" and "a place to build community networks, and organizational models" (Duncombe, 2002, p. 8). It acts as a nexus, integrating "the everyday, the intimate, the immediate" (Jenkins,

McPherson & Shattuc, 2002, p. 3) with political concerns about collective, participatory and egalitarian imperatives and mass commodification and consumption. This nexus focuses our interrogations into the relationships between PR and popular culture.

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Key Words: Celebrity; Entertainment; Ethics; Fiction; Food; Popular Culture; Public Relations;

Promotional Culture

Kate Fitch: ***Seeing "the unseen hand": Celebrity, promotion and public relations***

Did you know David Bowie had the same publicist for 30 years? Alan Edwards, who founded his PR company in 1977 with £150 and a telephone, describes public relations as "the unseen hand" behind successful music acts (as cited in Burrell, 2016). Yet, promotional work is increasingly visible as celebrities function as "human 'commercial intertexts'" concerned with both cultural status and economic value (Davies, 2013, p. 112; Turner, 2013). This paper explores the changing role of PR in the production of celebrity and shaping of contemporary public culture. Promotional work falls outside professional conceptualisations of PR and therefore celebrity has been neglected within the discipline; the limited scholarship focuses on the celebrity-in-crisis (see, for example, Ames [2011] and Waymer, VanSlette & Cherry [2015). Yet, celebrity profiles are developed and maintained through promotional work, including branding, integrated marketing, sponsorship, media relations, publicity, endorsement and promotions (Redmond, 2014) and the internet offers opportunities for self-promotion through increases in user-generated content and interactions with fans (Marwick & boyd, 2011). The findings offer new insights into PR and its cultural intermediary role in the production and consumption of celebrity.

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Judy Motion: ***Promotional food cultures: Fighting fat, fashioning fads and biting satire***

Our everyday interactions with food have been stylized, popularized and transformed. Public relations interventions in popular culture deliberately associated food with particular expressions of identity and social positioning in order to support the diet industry, promote celebrity chefs and bloggers, and generally sell what may be loosely termed "food." At the centre of such promotional efforts are a series of false promises – body beautiful, health and well-being, culinary expertise and a happy life – that create a create promotional food cultures with a range of desires that are both socially and environmentally irresponsible. The paper will explore how we make sense of the various competing truth claims about food and how it is promoted. In seeking to tease out distinctions between promotional, participatory and popular food cultures, the analysis will concentrate on online representations of these cultures and include critiques of popular diet trends, celebrity bloggers, and satirists. It will be argued that truth claims are more likely to reside within parody and satire than various promotional food cultures. The paper concludes with a discussion of how responsibility, social and environmental justice may be reconfigured within these promotional cultures to reclaim popular culture as a participatory site for social and environmental concerns.

Johanna Fawkes: ***Behind the mask***

While many try and distance themselves from the promotional aspects of PR, it cannot be escaped that the CIPR definition of public relations centres on "reputation, what you do and what people say you do." Kevin Moloney coined the term "the persuasive sphere" (2006) to describe the shift from an idealised Habermasian public sphere to a more ideologically driven domain of markets and consumers. In parallel, there has been a flourishing of literature on the promotional aspects of our culture, from Wernick's (1991) *Promotional Culture* to Marshall's (2014) work on *Celebrity and*

Power. However, they tend not to examine the work of PR in this cultural shift, despite the correlation between the growth of PR as a sector and the global explosion of free market capitalism, in which the world's population is characterised more as consumers than citizens (Bauman, 2008). At the same time, appearance has become the dominant mode of relationship, as Finkelstein (2007) notes, building on earlier observations by Goffman (1959). We are all in the entertainment industry now, rehearsing our lines, never off stage, caught in the "attention economy" (Fairchild, 2007). This paper considers the Shadow aspects of this obsession (delineated in fiction and film such as Hawthorne's *The Day of The Locust*; *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?; Network; Broadcast News*; and even aspects of *The Hunger Games)*. This emphasis on presentation comes at the expense of reflection, I argue, citing the work of Carl Jung. Given that reflection is an essential pre-requisite for ethical maturity, my question is (*pace* Bauman, 2008), *Does Ethics have a chance in a world of performers*?

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Philip Young: *Entertaining fictions: Novel portrayals of PR since 1995*

The most authoritative investigation into the portrayal of public relations in popular culture remains Karen Miller's 1999 paper *Public Relations in Film and Fiction: 1930 to 1995*. The discipline has evolved over the last 20 years – there is no mention of the internet in Miller's paper – and an understanding of promotional culture (Wernick, 1991) has become more important to the discipline. However, this nexus remains underexplored by scholars who lament the failure of fictional portrayals to promote the industry as professional and strategic and represent the "reality" of the industry. How have UK novels published since 1995 challenged or confirmed Miller's categorization of PR personality archetypes (*ditzy, obsequious, cynical, manipulative, money-minded, isolated, accomplished, unfulfilled*), and her analysis of PR practice and techniques? More importantly, how should any changes inform discussion of her suggestion that what troubles observers is the effectiveness with which practitioners wield the tools of opinion management." Interestingly, Miller argues that the best way to redeem the image of PR would be to emphasise its limitations, narrowing the opportunity for authors to portray a "somewhat mysterious occupation, populated by unscrupulous practitioners with superiority complexes whose main goals appear to be getting their clients mentioned in the news media, duping the public and their clients, and gaining power." This framing, combined with Miller's observations on what she terms the "moral life of the practitioner," offers a useful lens through which to examine "real life" ethical framings.

BOUNDARY RIDERS: PR AS MUSIC INDUSTRY GO-BETWEENS

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This paper explores theory on boundary spanners and emotional labour within the promotional culture of the music industry. The boundary spanning concept of practitioners being simultaneously members of their organisation and of multiple external groups has been widely incorporated into PR theory. At the most basic level PR practitioners become expert observers of communities that are identified as significant in influencing the achievement of an organisation's goals. This entails monitoring and understanding of trends and opinions within each community. But frequently, this involves active participation in, or even affirmative identification with, these communities. Indeed, boundary spanners may potentially develop attitudes more in harmony with external communities than those of senior management. In response organisations attempt to prevent too much empowerment of attitudes that run counter to their commercial objectives (Aldrich and Herker 1977). The driver of these tensions is the permanent existence of dissensus between the organisation and its stakeholders. Hirsch (1972) famously applied boundary spanning to his studies of cultural industry systems. Organisations in the music industry are distinctive for the level of goal dissensus, not least the tension between artistic and commercial logics, and its dependence on media-gatekeepers for linking to audiences. A routine negotiation of conflicting logics requires the performance of emotional labour from practitioners. Requiring the worker 'to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others' (Hochschild, 1983:7). Feelings, as Hochschild argues, are themselves are subject to "management" in both private and public contexts. This paper contributes to this body of work by exploring how PR practitioners manage their contradictory feelings and positions in the boundary spanning between business, art and media. The paper will present emerging findings from interpretive interviews with music industry PR practitioners that explore and test these themes.

Key Words: Boundary Spanning, Emotional Labour, Music, Promotional Culture

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PUBLIC RELATIONS, POSTMODERNISM AND ETHICAL DISCUSSIONS: AN EXAMPLE OF A PSEUDO-EVENT IN TURKEY (PINKORBLACK NIGHT)

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The years' beginning with 1970's named differently by different thinkers. Some define this period "postmodern" and they thought this era is a break from the previous era (Lyotard, 2001; Baudrillard, 2008); some advocate this era is the follow up of the previous period and name it "late modern" (Giddens, 2005) and some call it "flexible capitalism" (Sennet, 2008). They all name it differently; however all of them accept that there is a political, economic, cultural and social change after 1970's. With the change in culture, art, lifestyle of individuals, organizations, the way of management; it is an obligation to rethink and discuss most of the fields and concepts. One of these fields is "public relations". The most popular definition of public relations is "the management function of creating and maintaining goodwill of an organization's various publics". The main concepts which are "public", "organization" and "management" in this definition have transformed in the postmodern world. Therefore, we have to rethink "public relations" field and implementations.

In the postmodern era, public relations become a mean for enchantment[1] and it became a tool for seduction and satisfaction. It forms images which became more important than reality and blurs the line between reality and image. Therefore public relations ethics, which is one of the main problems of the field since its first appearance, in postmodern world should be an important topic to discuss.

Pseudo-events[2] became an important tool of public relations because organizations want to be more visible in this era in which images became more important than realities. Because of that reason, in this article firstly public relations in the postmodern world will be examined. Secondly, the ethical discussions and postmodern public relations' implementations will be discussed. Finally, an example of a pseudo-event named *PinkorBlack* Night which was conducted by *Magnum (Unilever)* will be analyzed and the ethical problems about this evet will be discussed.

Key Words: Postmodernism, Public Relations, Ethics, Psudo-Event

[1] "Enchantment" concept has borrowed from Ritzer. In his book named "Enchanting a Disenchanted World", he advocates that modernism break the spell in consumption relations, so the system needed to find new enchantment means. In postmodern world, system use chain stores, shopping malls, outlets, advertising and public relations to re-enchant consumption relations.

[2] It's an event or activity that exists for only purpose of media publicity (Boorstin, 1985).

Is the AFL Commission a propaganda machine?

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Brand has a very important part to play in professional sport, as it engages with multiple-consumer contexts. The Australian Football League (AFL) Commission has developed a very strong brand in Australia. It is the leading sport in terms of attendance and viewing, generates the highest annual revenue and has the largest mark-share of any sport in Australia. The AFL prides itself on its social conscience and community contributions. To protect its reputation, the AFL has an elaborate public relations team incorporating media and communication professionals who engage with the Australian public. But does the information being publicly released by the AFL amount to biased propaganda?

Propaganda is commonly defined as less about producing public goodwill and understanding within its audience and more about manipulating public opinion in favour of ideas, values and policies advantageous to those employing the propaganda. This paper defines propaganda against the principles and practices of Joseph Goebbels, arguably the most infamous exponent of using propaganda to persuade the majority of the public to adopt certain beliefs and values. The paper identifies the characteristics common to effective propaganda practices through public communication.

The paper then reviews the media commentary released by the AFL over 2015 and analyses the content in order to determine if the AFL is engaging in deliberate and biased propaganda in order to protect its brand and reputation.

Key Words: Propaganda, Branding, Professional Sport, Media

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INNOVATION (OR NOT) IN PUBLIC RELATIONS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF INNOVATION IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

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While innovations are ever present in our society, an online search of news websites and academic resources revealed that innovation is not common in the PR vocabulary. Innovation in academic research is vital to keeping a field fresh and, in practice, innovations play a central role as can be seen through the use of social media. There needs to be a link between public relations and innovation. The first step in this effort is to conduct a systematic review of the literature to see what is currently being talked about in this regard.

This paper examines innovation in the field of public relations as a driver of theory and practice. This paper focuses its efforts based on the following research questions:

1. *What is the role of innovation in public relations?*
2. *What are the emerging themes in innovation and public relations research?*
3. *How can innovation be conceptualized in connection with public relations?*

To establish a corpus of research on the role of innovation in PR, articles were selected from the top PR journals following an initial online search.

The findings illustrate that the literature on innovation in PR has been scarce. Three distinct categories as to how innovation is used in public relations was discovered. First, innovation in PR is generative of educational and research development. Second, innovation is viewed as a communication tool that is driven by the constant development in new media use. Lastly, innovation can be nurtured and flourished through pedagogy and learning that transfers from academia into practice.

Without innovation, a field would remain stagnate. This is why it is important for innovation to be incorporated into public relations. Through this systematic literature review, it is clear that there is not much innovation research being conducted in the field of public relations.

Key Words: public relations, innovation, systematic literature review

POST-CRISIS WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS: A NEW APPROACH ON THE DISCUSSION OF PR

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This paper analyzes the post-crisis period that occurs within organizations. We aim to explore the existing time period between the end of a crisis and the resumption of normal (non-crisis) within this universe, which we will name post-crisis. Just as in medicine a patient in recovery needs specific care in his postoperative, in organizations there are steps to be taken in the correspondent period. Because it is an under-depth approach, this paper intends to fill the gap in the literature by exploring a new theory in the subject of organizational crisis, one of the aspects of PR. In addition, dealing with aspects such as the reputation of an organization, this discussion becomes relevant since it suggests new approaches.

We will focus on understanding what to do after the crisis ends; if you can take advantage of the situation that it hits organization and what results from this new scenario. Conclusive clues indicate that there are opportunities arising from and after the crisis and to take advantage of them, there should have periodical radiographs mapping threats, opportunities, strengths and weaknesses.

This research will be guided by a qualitative methodology following the model proposed by Maxwell (2005). Given that the post-crisis period is perceived in different ways by each of the stakeholders, we will explore possible indicators that may apply for all. Thus, this paper will use as data collection the analysis of social media as a thermometer to measure the period between the end of a crisis and the beginning of the post-crisis. During a specified period, we will map news of an organization in crisis so we can get clues of its progress. This means this tool can work as an opportunity to help how to understand when and how it characterizes a period of post-crisis, contributing to PR.

Key Words: Post-crisis; PR; Organization; Reputation

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Institutionalization and Professionalization of Public Relations in Nigeria. Testing the Activity theory framework

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Purpose/Aim - The overall aim of the research project on which this paper is based is a study of the tensions arising from the contradicting Public Relations (PR) understanding and practices of Nigerian organizations, Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) and PR educators. The findings of my pilot study showed that these tensions are due to (1) organizations perceived practitioner incompetence, (2) predominant one way communication PR practices, (3) inter-profession jurisdictional battles and (4) inconsistent PR education scope and curricula. More specifically, this paper will demonstrate how Engestrom's (2006) Activity theory (AT) framework can be applied to the study of contradicting PR understanding and practices.

Theoretical framework - The complex nature of this study necessitates a complex theoretical framework comprising PR perspectives, the sociology of professions and neo-institutional theory.

Research Design – Yin's (2014) critical-single case study with an embedded design that includes the AT framework is applied to critically analyze the above mentioned tensions and their implications for each of the interconnected actors and the PR environment they share.

Contribution/originality –The study contributes an alternative bottom-up approach to contextual PR scholarship. This extends and enriches the top-down specific application components of Sriramesh and Vercic's (2009) Global PR theory. Practically, the study findings orientate NIPR and Nigerian PR educators about contemporary organizational demands that should be adapted to PR education and professional certification respectively.

Key words – Activity theory, Contextual PR, Institutionalization, Professionalization

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SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHIC

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Social responsibility is one of the most fundamental responsibilities for corporations, associations, governments and municipalities. Their success is about in not only their economic profits but also their abilities of using economic gains for social objectives. Social responsibility aims to provide better image for corporations. However some corporations ignore ethical principles while they carry out social responsibility projects. These projects contain serious problems about common values such as verity, probity, sincerity and humanity, whereas these values are the most basic part of social responsibility.

"Corporate social responsibility practices show that multinational companies accept to negotiate seemingly and tend to be transparent to neutralize the reactions coming from the adverse consequences of their investments and commercial activities. In addition, they create a sense of giving back to the community that is won. (Tezcan, 2002)" This approach requires a multidimensional ethical assessment of corporate social responsibility. Therefore, in this study, problematical sides of corporate social responsibility analyzed. In this study logical answers of some questions such as "what is corporate social responsipility?, who do social responsibility activities and what is the aim of these activities? Which ethical problems are encountered in the implementation process?". In the light of this context, this article aims to discuss ethical side of social responsibility projects by using an example from Turkey. "Football School Project" of ***Ülker Company*** which is a big food brand in Turkey was selected as the example and analyzed critically. The Project was made for children who belongs to low socio-economic class. In the Project, the children were gone to camp. The children played football, did sport, entertained and had fantastic days in the camp. We argued what did the children do after they came, could they conform again their life before camp in this study**.**

The case study was used to systematize and interpret research data. Some focus points of the, research were sustainability transparancy, humanity and respect for nature. It was analized whether "Football School Project" took into account these points or not.

Key words: social responsibility, corporate social responsibility, ethic, ethical problem

The Role of Social Media in Emotional Support During Times of Crisis

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Social media allow publics to connect and communicate, often for emotional support and relational interaction (Correa, Hinsley & Gil de Zúñiga, 2010). Despite the relational undertones of social media usage, only minimal research has examined emotional support seeking through social media networks (Correa et al, 2010). Quan-Haase and Young (2010) found that social media sites fulfilled communication and socialization means, which can lead to social support and Liang, et al. (2011) found that emotional support may be embedded in online communities, which “bring social values to their users” and serve to “enhance an individual’s well-being” (Liang, et al., 2011)

While emotional support seeking may be implicit in social media networks, scholars have yet to explore the phenomenon fully online, particularly in the context of crisis response. Research shows that publics seek meaning and emotional support following a crisis. This study explores social media usage following the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. We apply social support theory, which focuses on using an individual’s peers to care about the individual’s welfare (Liang, Ho, Li & Turban, 2011), through a content analysis of Tweets following the attacks. We collected all tweets mentioning #Paris, #ParisAttacks, and #PrayforParis for 12 hours following the attacks, gathering a total of 60,000 tweets. Though our findings are ongoing, preliminary results suggest that individuals use social media to offer support to an unidentified mass rather than seek interpersonal reassurance. Applying social support theory suggests that offering condolences and expressing solidarity with France may be a way individuals seek to “to build close relationships with others and enhance the individual’s well-being” (Liang et al, 2011) indirectly.

Key Words: emotional support, social media, social support, #ParisAttacks

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Predicting the Strength of Online News Frames in Transport Domain

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Framing theory is one of the most significant approaches for understanding media and their potential impact on media publics. Since public relations profession is taking seriously media related activities, the question of publicity effects still remains open. This paper is using specific research design, which could be applied in public relations practice for observing correlations between certain news frames and individual frames. This approach is based on typology of news frames (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) that are being attributed by the author as negative, positive and neutral. Furthermore, the author is using the method of content analysis (and two trained coders) for analyzing online news reports and belonging user comments (identified as negative, positive and neutral) regarding three Croatian transport organizations. The paper is observing news reports on transport because of its variability - frequent crisis situations including weather conditions, traffic accidents and delays. The user comments and reviews manifested as individual frames can make a significant part of online image. The author identifies types of media frames which enable better prediction of individual sentiment through the correlation. The results give an overview of the most frequently used types of news frames concerning transport domain. The media is keen to report through the attribution of responsibility frame, following economic frame and conflict frame, but on the other hand they are neglecting human interest frame and morality frame. These results show that specific types of news frames enable better prediction of user sentiment. The economic frame and human interest frame therefore represent the most predictable types of frames in the case of transport reports.

Key Words: framing theory, user comments, online news, transport

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THE TRANSPARENT AND COMMUNICATIVE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER- AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE AND DIALOGIC APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

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The transparent and communicative Chief Executive Officer- an interdisciplinary approach to developing a framework for a more inclusive and dialogic approach to leadership communication.

The Chief Executive Officer has traditionally been seen as the holder of ultimate power within an organisation (Davies, Chun & Kamis, 2010; Dowling, 2006; Bass, 1990; Agle, Mitchel and Sonnenfield, 1999; Maclean, Harvey and Chia, 2010). However, in today's more transparent, dynamic and open organisational environments, the reality is that CEOs need to have a new set of communication skills and behaviours to handle the strategic responses required to manage theirs and their organisation's reputation, especially with key external stakeholders such as investors, analysts, the media and governments.

This paper argues for an interdisciplinary approach to leadership communication following McKie and Munshi's (2009) comments for the need for "ongoing innovation and considerable renovation to adjust to fast-changing contexts, p.6." in the communication world. Tourish (2008) has argued for a more dialogic and communicated-oriented approach by leaders. The approach taken in this paper reflects recent Australian research that leaders need to understand the perceptions held of them by external stakeholders who can damage or enhance a reputation. The old-style command and control approach to leadership is increasingly becoming unworkable due to the greater transparency being sought from leaders by both internal (employee) and external (media, investors, analysts) stakeholders. Tourish (2008, p.2) is critical of the so-called transformative approach to leadership saying it provides too much power to a CEO and he quotes Fairhurst (2007) who challenges traditional views of leaders as visionaries and action figures and states that leadership is "co-constructed (i.e. between leaders and followers), and discursive.

Alexander's 2014 PhD research identified for the first time the communication attributes and behaviours that external stakeholders are seeking from CEOs The research identified leadership communication attributes as transparency, trustworthiness, credibility, consistency and effectively managing relationships. Achieving these outcomes will require more collaboration between business and communication academics and a new curriculum for MBA courses that will ensure future CEOs can be more cognisant of the new communicative skills stakeholders are seeking.

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Different Perceptions of Leadership between Public and Public Relations Professionals: Results of the CommGap Study in Spain

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Communication professionals build the perceptions of leaders around the world. But are they effective leaders? How does their understanding of leadership differ from that of members of the general public? Understanding how the interpretation of leadership is constructed in diverse cultures differently by members of the general public and communication professionals is an important step in increasing the effectivity of communication professionals (Berger & Meng, 2010; Moreno, Navarro & Humanes, 2014).

This study examines perceptions of leadership characteristics for communication professionals and the general public in Spain and compares the results with the European context. Specifically, it analyses the attributes of leading organizations and the communication activities that form perceptions of company leaders. Further, the present study analyzes the importance of effective communication to great leadership as well as the characteristics and behaviors of effective leaders. The current research employs data with an online survey of 500 members of the general public, in addition to 136 responses of communication professionals that participated in the European Communication Monitor survey (Zerfass, Tench, Verčič, Verhoeven, & Moreno, 2014).

For both publics (75%) and PR practitioners (95%) in Spain, communicating in an open and transparent way is the most important characteristic of effective leaders. The biggest gap between the beliefs of public and professionals involves the handling of controversial issues or crises calmly and confidently, which is valued much higher by citizens. TV advertising is the most important channel used by the Spanish population when forming its view on organizational leadership (39%), while the European general public prefers in-person speeches/appearances (52%) and TV interviews (45%). Opinions about supportive attributes for leadership differ widely between the public and PR professionals. Customer service is significantly underestimated by communication practitioners, whereas innovation and quality of management is highly overestimated.

The implications of these findings allow us to understand how PR professionals have limited knowledge of the expectations of publics in their countries with regards to key issues like

demonstrating leadership. Major perceptional gaps indicate that many opportunities are not utilized and resources could be directed more inefficiently.

Key Words: Leadership, CommGap, Public Relations, Perceptions

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DETERMINANTS OF SUCCESS IN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION OF SPANISH COMPANIES. INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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Today's organizations are facing new challenges arising from an increasingly competitive and complex environment. In this new scenario, internal communication has become a key tool to strengthen the sense of commitment of the employees, increase their motivation and performance and, ultimately, increase the profitability of the company (Hortas, 2014; Meng y Berger, 2012). Social media has deeply penetrated workplace, revolutionizing the habits of corporate communication at internal level, thanks to its ability to create and strengthen ties between employees, gather and share information, foster teamwork, support a shared vision, build trust, build customer loyalty, establishing long-term relationships, and even to facilitate the role of employees as ambassadors of your own company (Cao, Vogel, Guo, Liu y Gu, 2012; Skeels y Grudin, 2009; Van Zoonen et al., 2014; Wattal, Racherla y Mandviwalla, 2010). But, to what extent are Spanish organizations taking advantage of social media benefits?

This paper aims to analyze the relationship between efficient internal communication and the use of social media tools in communicating with employees, analyzing three factors related to the communication process: a) communication practitioners, b) social media channels used and, c) messages and activities of internal communication conducted through social media. The research is based on the completed responses of 164 Spanish communication practitioners working in organizations of varying sectors and sizes.

The results reveal that Spanish companies with a greater success in internal communication are more adapted to the digital era. 60% of organizations successfully in internal communication use social media channels and spend more time managing internal digital platforms (35%) than those ones who communicate less effectively. The contribution of communication practitioners to the strategy making process is higher in companies that communicate successfully with their employees (72%) that among those less successful, where only 10% of professionals are involved in decision-making. **Developing public relations: entertainment, ethics, innovation, teaching, and territories** Barcelona, 28 and 29 June 2016.

Key Words: internal communication, social media, employee relations, company success

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BUILDING GOODWILL OR ILL-WILL? ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SPONSORS' RESPECTING NATIONAL SPORTS PUBLICS

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In the public relations literature sponsorship has been acknowledged as an important strategy for programs oriented toward community relations as it allows organisations "to gain visibility and respect among their key publics" (Smith, 2013, p. 121). Sometimes however a sponsor can become overconfident, arrogant and disrespectful by taking for granted the fans of the sport team they sponsor. This study analyses the effects of such a public relations mistake by the foreign sponsor of a national sports team. The study specifically looked at the New Zealand public's response towards Adidas (sponsor of the New Zealand All Blacks) as a result of the 2011 All Blacks Rugby World Cup jersey pricing crisis with a view to understand the role that (dis)respect may have played in the response. Using an online survey we analysed the feelings, beliefs and attitudes that members of the New Zealand public held towards Adidas during the crisis and one year after the crisis. Thus this study helps understand whether damage can be done to a sponsorship relationship when a sponsor does not respect the sponsored organisation's fans, especially when national identity feelings are involved. Analysis showed that one year after the crisis, the New Zealand public still felt disrespected by what they viewed as the sponsor's corporate tactics of discrimination and greed. They felt the sponsor ignored the New Zealand public and failed to take its needs into consideration, all factors that are prominent causes of disrespect. Overall this study shows that fans value respect from a sponsor and thus that respect is a mainstay in sponsorship and public relations.

Key Words: Sponsorship, public relations, respect, national identity.

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TEACHING MILLENNIALS SOCIAL MEDIA ONLINE AND/OR IRL*: THE CHALLENGE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PEDAGOGY

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The social media (r)evolution is now more than 10 years old but tertiary educators are continuing to grapple with its ramifications felt in and beyond the classroom. While social media and its role in tertiary education have been explored in disciplines as diverse as the sciences, library studies and education, research into its use remain patchy and vary across studies. Meanwhile, so-called 'digital native' millennial students, with their social media distractions and devotions, demand more from their university lecturers - both online and in face-to-face - in terms of engaging education/entertainment (edutainment). These demands coincide with student 'satisfaction' surveys being used as key performance indicators for academics seeking promotion or tenure. Within the discipline of public relations, surprisingly little empirical or conceptual research has been conducted into the challenges and opportunities for pedagogy presented by the changing media landscape and preferred communication platforms. However, academic and practitioner literature within public relations refer to skills needed related to social media, so it is an important area of research for public relations pedagogy. Simultaneously, serious concerns have been reported about the readiness of graduates once they enter the workforce. If public relations is to survive as a teachable discipline it needs to innovate, reinvent, revise and re-energise (or perhaps completely transform) its offerings. Given these concerns, this paper looks at initial findings from a cross-institutional, longitudinal study of public relations students' engagement with digital media, both as subject content and teaching platforms. Whilst the millennial generation is often assumed to consist of digital natives, the authors argue that there is a distinct difference between using technology, understanding technology, and applying it appropriately in a professional context. This study aims to develop a comprehensive pedagogical best practice framework to teach digital media concepts in real time.

Key Words: Social media, pedagogy, public relations, digital native

TEACHING TOP GUN TO NARRATE THE ORGANISATION

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The Public Relations literature has long touted the need for the discipline to extend its reach into the C-Suite and to become part of the management of organisations. Studies such from the European Communication Monitor and USC Annenberg likewise report on the reporting structure of the public relations function to the C-Suite. While the C-Suite can set the tone for how disciplines are integrated into the organisation, little attention has been paid to how other functions within the organisation use and understand the role of public relations. This is an important question as the work of public relations in narrating the organisation becomes decentralised. In large organisations, a range of organisational representatives engage with stakeholders, deal with social media, and other tasks in telling the organisation's story that previously were able to be more tightly controlled by the public relations role.

This paper reports on the teaching program developed for senior level defence personnel who were required to deal with a range of local stakeholders within the context of an international air force program. In this case, local activists, employees and media coverage had the potential to impact international relations and formal public relations efforts at Nation leader level, and billions of public funds and political support were at stake. The program engages local level leaders with military and engineering backgrounds in issues management and stakeholder and employee engagement as a means to ongoing narration of the organisation and the program at hand.

Key Words: Public Relations; Teaching; Issues Management

The concept of Brand Patrimony… or thus, the value of brands beyond equity

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The investigation at stake, examines the approach to brand value from a top-management perspective, asserting that a brand is not merely a commercial value portrayed by a product placed in a market; even less so, a public relations rhetoric avowing a *political correctness,* but rather a full-length ascribed patrimonial asset that conveys an organization's cultural response to the societal issues within its activity-bound.

In such, other relevant attributions of brand value, asserted by any given stakeholder, likewise the reborn social actor which is now, the consumer, are in need to be accounted for. In this perspective, an overall communications vision of the brand is made pertinent. And whereas marketing continues to be a –if not, the- key strategic element of any successful business -fostering assertive (product) brand image-, it becomes now imperative that such functions operate in correspondence to overall (corporate) brand identity; reassured necessarily by organization's managerial leadership. In all, urging to treat the brand as a central area of top-management. And that is not to claim the participation of communications managers in executive boards –which as-well is to become more visible-, but to actually consider the brand as an intangible in-management attribute that is portrayed across the entire organization's chain of production and activity.

In other words, maintaining that day-to-day business operates in consideration that the factual short-term brand proposition of the product is supported through a wider long-term vision of brand expectation fulfillment, carried through and across the organization. And therefore, suggesting that the offered ability of the brand in a given moment, is *opportunity* (and not opportunistic) and a response to the capability of determining current and future innovative and corporate responsible *possibilities*.

As a final concluding contribution of the investigation, is the affirmation that under such dimensional *panorama*, the brand asset translates into patrimony (overall value), beyond –and not excluding- (financial) equity. Hence, the resulting defined concept expands the attributions of the brand**,** to signify and acknowledge **corporate culture responsibility ***. And in such, upgrade the brand to become a significant element of business management, and not just of marketing. And with a final-cut allegation and alert: that brand patrimony is to be considered a future knowledge and experimental (ethics-values) capability and endowment, much more than a past heritage (morale-values) transmission.

END THE PHONEY WAR OR WHY TURKEYS DON'T VOTE FOR CHRISTMAS. A PROVOCATION ON TERRITORIES – WHO DO WE SERVE?

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Globally, communications focused professional bodies and higher education institutions face unprecedented times of economic austerity and technological innovation. In the UK, for example, the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) and the Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA), as well as communications education specialists such as Leeds Beckett University are engaged in organisational narratives around the state of practice and its implications. This paper serves as a structured series of questions and provocations for both professionals and academics around perceptions of the state of professional practice and our responses as educators and researchers.

The key headline finding from the CIPR 'State of the Profession' 2016 survey states that, 'No ease up on PR and marketing convergence. Up by 3% from 2015, 76% of PR professionals say that they're working more closely with dedicated social and digital, marketing, advertising and sales teams when compared with two years ago' (CIPR, 2016).

Even, it appears, the enlightened vested interest of professional bodies such as the UK's CIPR are now openly acknowledging the convergence of PR and Marketing disciplines in practice. The rapid emergence of bespoke training in interdisciplinary communications, a wealth of anecdotal feedback from Alumni, returning placement students and employers builds a challenging series of questions around the issue of territories.

As membership numbers for the professional bodies in the UK in marketing and PR flat line or even diminish(CIM, 2015), the organisations and their members themselves are developing a growing discourse over these 'territories'.

This paper therefore explores whose 'territories' academics and practitioners are fighting over and why, and suggests some initial analysis around a suppressed discourse. It seeks to critique and challenge some of the assumptions around the real impact of framing discourse around territories, survival and a perceived threat of social media to business as usual.

Key Words: Interdisciplinary communications, territories, PR and marketing convergence

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EXPLORING THE UNIVERSITY TRAINING OF COMMUNICATION DIRECTORS IN SPAIN. AN ANALYSIS FROM A PUBLIC RELATIONS PERSPECTIVE

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This study aims to determine whether the university training is prevalent among Spanish communications professionals and whether it is at the level of degree, certificate of advanced study or reaches even the third level (PhD and/or the Diploma of Advanced Studies), as well as see if the different types of college studies taken are linked to communication and, specifically, to public relations. Members of the Association of Communication Directors-Dircom were chosen as sample, whose curricula appeared inscribed in its last directory in 2015. Results indicate that subjects of the sample were mostly academic, and that previous communication training received was prevalent in the four formative variables analyzed. Consistent with the revised international literature, it's noted that, however, most of subjects had completed degrees in Journalism (21.56%), ranking well below those who did Public Relations (6.67%), which could be the source of that knowledge and skills acquired by Spanish professionals are still insufficient for the proper practice of the function, which keeps perpetuating the first press-agent model, without allowing an evolution to more mature levels of *praxis*, with more managerial and strategic orientations. The quality of previous university training received by Spanish practitioners is particularly relevant right now, since higher education within EHEA, conceived as a "satisfactor" of labor-market needs, has not been yet materialized, and because the Dircom association has recently joined the project of international professional accreditation promoted by the GA-Global Alliance.

Key Words: Competences, Degree, Director of Communication *(dircom)*, Public Relations (PR).

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Justificatory Regimes and Public Relations Ethics

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In public relations ethics, there has been an ongoing controversy about whether the profession is by its very nature unethical. Typically, this controversy hinges on the contrast between "objectivity" values associated with journalism and "advocacy" values associated with public relations, advertising, and other persuasive professions. Some scholars argue that public relations is fundamentally ethically compromised because practitioners' ultimate duty is to advocate for clients' interests. But this argument fails to acknowledge the aspirational purpose of ethics. Others defend the profession by arguing that it can aspire to higher ethical principles. Their arguments, however, tend to rank advocacy values such as enhancing clients' visibility, reputation, and profits below objectivity values such as speaking the truth, communicating with transparency, and serving the general public good. Our paper will reconsider this controversy through the meta-ethical framework developed by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot in their book *On Justification*. This framework emphasizes how societies and individuals must always face choices and conflicts among rival sets of ethical principles, which the authors call "justificatory regimes." By acknowledging people's need to justify their actions differently from one situation to another, Boltanski and Thévenot reveal several disadvantages of ethical theories that attempt to elevate only one set of values above all others. We argue that their framework can provide public relations ethics with a perspective in which the "civic" regime of objectivity and the "reputational" regime of advocacy need not be viewed as having to cancel each other out. Instead, if we view them as only two among several justificatory regimes relevant to public relations, and if we consider the various ways people can resolve conflicts among these regimes, we will have a more adequately complex view of the ethical choices available to public relations practitioners.

Key Words: ethics, objectivity, advocacy, justificatory regimes

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Learning from the 'nobodies': How PR practitioners need to innovate in their exchange with influencers

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With the rise of social media, and social media influencers, public relations practitioners have had to play catch up. Blogging and other social media communities have developed online there has been an increase in the 'prosumer' and online influencer. Prosumer, a term originally developed by the futurist Toffler, describes a consumer who has become a producer. While some citizens/consumers are becoming bloggers/Instagrammers/Youtubers (prosumers), others are now turning to blog sites and other social media for advice, eschewing traditional media and favouring the wisdom of crowds and individuals over typically one-way corporate/organisational communications. Major multinationals and the PR people and marketers who work for them have started to recognise the commercial importance of these new influencers and have had to innovate their practice in order to gain benefit from influencer interaction. This brave new world appears to frighten some public relations practitioners, who have referred to the 'nobodies' becoming 'somebodies' and the 'loonies taking over the asylum'.

This paper provides an insight into one group of influencers – the mum bloggers of Australia's 'digital parent community'. Using the lens of dialogue and stakeholder theory, the paper uses the research methodology of an online survey and netnography (online ethnography). Rich insight is provided into the community's collective wisdom, the community members' motivations for producing content; their attitude towards brand representatives (including PR practitioners) and their desire for recompense for writing about organisations' products and services.

The research reveals the power of the blogging community for its participants – and readers – and raises questions for public relations scholars and practitioners alike. Are practitioners capable of innovating (ethically) to meet the challenges and changes brought about by the rising power of bloggers? Or will it be business as usual with the same ethical issues arising as have done with past, traditional and perhaps less empowered publics?

Key Words: Social media, influencers, bloggers, public relations, prosumers.

On the Promise of Preparedness for PR Practice

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This paper highlights how a majority of UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) offering undergraduate Public Relations (PR) courses make claims about the future career prospects of students attending. A common 'promise' is that the course will 'prepare' students for PR practice.

The claim may be viewed as part of the 'discourse of employability' (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006) that surrounds Higher Education (HE) in the UK and many other parts of the world today. Indeed the genesis of vocationally focused courses such as PR may be seen in the context of an expansion of HE that accepted the function of student 'socialisation' into professional fields (Eraut, 1994).

PR education in the UK has developed under the watchful eye of industry (L'Etang, 2002, 2004; Rawel, 2002) and in the US the Commission on Public Relations Education (CPRE, 1975, 1999, 2006). A recent CPRE summit focused on 'how best to prepare students for a career in public relations' (CPRE, 2015, p. 4) and produced a list of characteristics, skills and knowledge to which educators and students might aspire (CPRE, 2015, p. 7-9).

This conceptual paper therefore addresses the question of PR education's proclivity to promise future 'preparedness'. What does it mean to be prepared and how might this differ to characteristics, skills and knowledge? How might PR educators conduct a method of preparation?

The paper draws on the concept of 'signature pedagogies' (Shulman, 2005) from the teaching and learning literature to inform PR's pedagogies of preparation.

Key Words: Pedagogy, practice, preparedness, professional formation.

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ROOTING OUT THE GENDER IMBALANCE IN PR

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Women dominate the PR profession yet the men dominate the top jobs in the industry (CIPR, 2015). With this imbalance in the profession it is perhaps worth trying to understand what the challenges to female progression really are. Revelations of what male PRs think of their female counterparts could be a useful starting point.

A study reveals that males consider female PRs as neurotic, hysterical, emotional and frightened. However males do also see the lack of other males in the PR profession as a more of a threat than an opportunity (Pompper and Jung, 2013). Is it any wonder therefore that males tend to mentor and nurture male colleagues to be promoted to the top jobs who they see as 'in-group' protégés compared to 'out-group' female protégés (McDonald and Westphal, 2013). So with females considered to be a 'safe pair of hands' and 'more technically skilled' than males this paper considers what females can do, individually and collectively as a profession, to overcome the challenges to gender equality in the PR profession.

It is widely known that females tend to need more psychosocial support (Allen and Eby, 2004; Michael and Hunt, 1983; Shapiro, 1978) than their male counterparts in a work environment. However males prefer to deliver strictly career advice to their protégés who are likely to earn more per year than protégés of other mentors (Underhill, 2006). The PR industry therefore has a challenge to embrace mentoring, recognised as a 'critical on-the-job training development tool for career success for both men and women' (Hunt and Michael, 1983, p.483) and 'absolutely essential for women' (Kanter, 1977; Rodenhauser, 2000, p.18) to develop women and create more female role models and mentors who can help females aspire to and to reach the jobs in PR.

Key Words: Mentoring, gender, protégé, career

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ACTIVE, ORGANIZED AND AWARE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHARED COGNITIONS WITHIN ONLINE, INTEREST-BASED PUBLICS

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This study uses the method of online social network analysis to track the communication patterns among interest-based communities by analyzing social media chatter on Twitter and hyperlinking between websites. By examining the communication patterns and issue development within online communities, this study found that online publics develop communication patterns that prime them for action around issues of shared concern.

The situational theory of publics, a key component of Excellence Theory of public relations, describes publics as coming into being in response to issues of import to a particular group (Dewey, 1927). Active publics, which are categorized as groups of people who recognize an issue exists and engage in action to respond to an issue, develop shared cognitions among group members related to issues of shared import (Grunig, 1997).

The evolution of web-based communication has opened unprecedented opportunities for people to connect around psychographic characteristics. The establishment of clear communication configurations within online, interest-based communities may necessitate the addition of a fourth category of public to the situational theory of publics. Dubbed "organized publics," this category refers to groups who frequently and consistently communicate on issues of shared interest or concern. Although not actually taking action regarding an issue, organized publics use social media tools to establish lines of communication and identify community leaders, which prepares the group for advocacy related to a shared interest.

Key Words: Publics, Social Network Analysis, Social Media

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THE ANIMAL USE IN VISUAL CAMPAIGN FOR FASHION LUXURY BRANDS

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As consumers, we are barraged by images associated with fashion brands, and perceive them not only as eyecatching visual elements, but also as symbols with denotative and associative value.

The process of viewing fashion brand images is essentially a constructive one, where consumers transform simple images into symbolic and innovative content, by drawing upon personal experience to place what they see into a societal frame of reference.

The use of animals in advertising stands out among these images, because it transmits vàlues essential to the brand identity, as well as distinctive elements that allow for differentiation, demarcation, innovation and proper brand positioning. As a consequence, and in accordance with the values attributed to it by consumers, it transfers its power in a competitive market. This essay attempts to define the power relationship between humans, animals and the fashion brands.

From the fashion image to the world of public relations, careful study demonstrates new ways of viewing the items that brands use, according to the communications model "The Sender, Receiver and Message." Personal values are conveyed through the visual presentation of fashion brands, in this case through the use of photography. This is most evident in advertising images where humans appear with animals, and depending on the type of animal used, the brands position themselves in such a way as to differentiate themselves from one another. The transformative nature of these images allows brands to get their message across in subtle and innovative ways.

As yet, specific analyses of this type have not been carried out, which makes my proposal not only innovative, but very important to expanding knowledge in this field and applying it to marketing, public relations and communication.

Key Words: Visual Image, Fashion, Brand, Animal and Human.

THE NEW, TOUGHER LOBBYING ENVIRONMENT IN BRUSSELS WITH THE JUNCKER COMMISSION

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The European Commission and the European Parliament share a public register of lobbyists since 2011, called the EU Transparency Register. The conditions for interest groups, consultancies and non-profits have been gradually tightening, yet the registry remains voluntary.

Jean-Claude Juncker, Commission President since November 2014, has implemented a practice prohibiting its 28 Commissioners and their cabinet members, Directors-General and Directors to meet with unregistered lobbyists.

The First Commission Vice-President, Frans Timmermans, who is in charge of coordinating transparency promised in 2014 that the EU Transparency Register would be compulsory in 2017, but has failed to follow up.

Amidst some calls by prominent NGOs like Transparency International for a compulsory register of lobbyists before European Union institutions and more controls, some European Union officials find the current level of transparency exaggerated and believe it is causing and excessive bureaucratic burden. Also, some EU high officials complain it takes away from them ability to maneuver as freely as national governments.

My paper explores what has changed effectively in the EU lobbying regime with the last Commission, theoretically and in practical terms. The paper sets out to answer the following questions:

-What are the perceived advantages of registering as an interest group and/or as individual lobbyist in the EU Transparency Register? And the disadvantages?

-What is the everyday lobbying reality of a non-registered lobbying firm compared to one which is registered?

-In which ways are Commission officials contrary to a stringent transparency policy influencing/boycotting it?

-Why has the Commission changed course on making the EU Transparency Register compulsory, at least for now?

All these are relevant questions and I believe a first-hand overview of how interest groups, consultancies, civil society and individual lobbyists operate in trying to influence EU policy can be useful.

A VIEW FROM WITHIN: COMMUNICATION PRACTITIONERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SPIRITUALITY AND ETHICS IN THE CONTEXT OF CSR AND CSR COMMUNICATION

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While in recent years more attention has been given to spirituality and its implications for individual and organizational values that people associate with socially responsible and ethical practices within organizations (Bubna-Litic, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2010), there is sparse empirical research on how the relationship between spirituality, ethics, and CSR is perceived among communication practitioners. Little is known about the congruence of spiritual, ethical, and CSR values, and how such values may shape organizational discourse – and organizational culture – respectively. Yet questions of how communication practitioners perceive and make sense of CSR, and how different values (e.g., those that are informed by religious tenets and/or spirituality) play role in constructing CSR discourses, are critical for public relations research and practice because practitioners often play important roles by not only managing CSR programs (Kim & Reber, 2009), but also by leading formal and informal conversations on CSR within and outside their organization.

This study delves deeper into the meanings and values that communication practitioners associate with CSR by focusing on their sense making of CSR, particularly in regard to spirituality and ethics as potential drivers of CSR. The two overarching questions are: (1) How do communication practitioners perceive a link between CSR and spirituality (driven by religion or otherwise) and ethics?; and (2) What are the perceptions of communication practitioners vis-a-vis this link and its manifestation within their organization and in their own work?

Findings from semi-structured interviews with communication practitioners in Slovenia suggest that individuals have different understanding of this link, which points to the complexity of the concepts of spirituality, ethics, and CSR (Dahlsrud, 2008; Moon, 2014; Ammerman, 2013; Ramasubramanian, 2014). Our data also revealed that rather than spirituality, practitioners perceive their interpersonal relationships, philosophical texts, personal values, and ethics as one of the major drivers of CSR and how they conduct themselves at work. Lack of time, the nature of their work, and individuals' own orientations seem to be one of the main reasons why some practitioners believe that there might be a lack of spirituality in their everyday work. Based on these findings, we explore how the perceived link may be manifested in other issues raised by practitioners, such as the dynamics (e.g., balance and tensions) between local versus global engagement in CSR, economic versus social dimensions of CSR, and communicating versus not communicating CSR.

This study makes important theoretical and practical contributions in expanding our body of knowledge of the interplay between various dimensions (Carroll, 1991) and values that come into play in making sense of CSR, taking into account both spirituality and ethics as a potential drivers of CSR, and how that may affect the way practitioners engage in CSR and CSR communication.

Keywords: CSR; public relations; spirituality; ethics.

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Developing a PR Action Research project to apply the Reflective Communication Scrum (RSC) method

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This paper will report on the design of an action research public relations project that is using van Ruler's (2014, 2015) Reflective Communication Scrum (RSC) method. Scrum as a method is used in many areas but only recently in public relations. The researchers are working with a dynamic client in Newcastle, Australia called Eighteen04. This organization provides co-working spaces and support to clean energy technology startup companies. It is aiming to be the Asia-Pacific hub for clean energy technology startup companies, and to further position Newcastle as the key non-capital city for startup ventures in Australia.

The Reflective Communication Scrum (RSC) method appears to be a good fit for 1804's public relations needs as it accommodates unforeseen dynamics and obstacles in the method. The project will use the "RCS building blocks" (van Ruler, 2014, pp. 26-27). Both researchers, client personnel and startup company founders will be involved as needed in the project Scrum team as required as this team needs to be self steering, and multidisciplinary. Eighteen04 has nominated one of their co-founders as the Project Owner who has agreed to be actively involved in and committed to the project. This means participating in planning and evaluation meetings and deciding on project priorities.

At this stage, Melanie James is envisaged taking on the role of the "Scrum master", Samuel Rooke will be the key Scrum member contributing to strategy developments and undertaking public relations activities. The aim is to get things done in the shortest possible time. We are planning on having Scrum meetings to determine what needs to be done and evaluate what's next; then we would have a Sprint period where we undertake agreed actions; then we Scrum again. The sprint periods are anything between 1-4 weeks. By the time of the presentation, the researchers expect to be able to report on project design and initial implementation and results.

Key Words: Public Relations, Reflective Communication Scrum, Agile, Communication

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EXPLORING EQUITY: DYNAMIC TENSIONS AND EMERGENT TERRITORIES IN INVESTOR RELATIONS

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Public relations has a history as part of the field of investor relations; investor relations also has other historical affiliations. As the financial landscape extends into new territories, both PR and IR face disruption. In this paper we use equity crowd funding (ECF) as an arena in which to look at democratic potential in this fast-changing context. We argue that, as with many other digital developments, ECF increases opportunities in democratic directions without achieving the kinds of equality advanced by its advocates. In short, we contend that while traditional economic advantages held offline can be reduced, they are far from being negated and argue this case through an examination of ECF.

Crowd power remains a key feature in enabling more democratic participation in different social arenas. The growth of accessible, affordable, and widely available media has increased the range and quantity of participation in public political discourses through, for example, blogging and citizen journalism. Crowd power in crowdfunding, while it retains potential for increasing democracy and equity in finance, is not yet so evident. Analysing aspects of five leading equity crowdfunding platforms, the paper finds that risk management in the crowdfunding space is the site of a number of continuous struggles that impact on their democratic potential. The strains between communicating/managing investment risks and benefits sit alongside a daunting list of dynamic tensions that include: balancing strict mandatory legal obligations at the same time as making this new type of investment appealing to less financially experienced and/or literate investors; maintaining intellectual property information while trying to involve a wider public; and standardising information for all businesses while also promoting them to attract investment.

We focus our contentions through differences in the two main groups ECF platforms are designed to serve. The first group is businesses seeking funds, while the second is the funding crowd itself (an aggregate of investors – including mainly individual or small investors – who seek opportunities to grow their, often small and perhaps never previously invested, capital). We identify the former as attempting to portray themselves in the most favourable way and the latter as the ones ultimately investing their money and bearing the brunt of the financial risk. While both have mutual interests, we find the platforms' systemic biases favour a larger and/or safer return to some of the former and limit collaboration among ECF investors and between ECF investors and businesses to the detriment of the latter. This is only partly because the risks are compounded for the second group who are not

too big to fail, nor so financially well-informed. In addition, in the current systems, consideration of risk is presented, if at all, as a peripheral issue for crowd investors. Accordingly while ECF platforms open investment opportunities, which, prior to ECF, were neither so available nor so open, we foreground two areas of concern: 1) in the ECF concentration – by both platforms and ECF investors (and intending ECF investors) – on the platform communications, directs attention from the investors' exposure to risk as well as the possibility of negotiating the kinds of more favourable deals available offline to venture capitalists; and 2) that the subsequent losses of ECF investors, might, in turn, cause long-term consequences to the stability and credibility of ECF as an emergent form of alternative finance. We conclude with suggestions about how to reduce the skewed risks, to further harness the equalising potential in ECF, and thus to better secure its future.