

Proceedings of BledCom 2016

Engaging people in a disengaged world

Editors: Dejan Verčič, Ana Tkalac Verčič and Krishnamurthy Sriramesh

BledCom 2016
23rd International Public Relations Research Symposium
1-2 July 2016, Bled, Slovenia
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ENGAGING PEOPLE IN A DISENGAGED WORLD
PROCEEDINGS OF THE 23RD INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC
RELATIONS RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM BLEDCOM



University of Ljubljana
Faculty of Social Sciences

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1 – 2 July, 2016

EDITORS:

Dejan Verčič

Ana Tkalac Verčič

Krishnamurthy Sriramesh

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1. Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

In 2008, Richard Edelman, president and CEO of Edelman, the largest independent public relations agency in the world, stated that public engagement is the future of public relations. Eight years later, how much of that future has come to life?

Whether as communication management, corporate communication, or strategic communication, public relations is in a phase of renaissance: jobs, budgets, markets and educational programs are growing. But with what societal effect? Are humans today not merely more, but better connected? Are they meaningfully engaged with each other for improved life? What role has, and can, public relations play in such engagement?

The internet has been credited with “enabling conversations among human beings that were simply not possible in the era of mass media” as evidenced in The Cluetrain Manifesto (<http://www.cluetrain.com/>). How much of that optimism has been materialized?

The following were some of the topics that were subsumed in BledCom’s 2016 theme: “the engaged”, public engagement, employee engagement, community engagement, media engagement, stakeholder engagement, digital engagement, conversation economy, consumer engagement, engagement marketing, activists and engagement, and all forms of disengagement.

Prof Dejan Verčič, PhD (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Prof Ana Tkalac Verčič, PhD (University of Zagreb, Croatia)

Prof Krishnamurthy Sriramesh, PhD (Purdue University, USA)



2. Editors



Dejan Verčič

Prof. Dr. Dejan Verčič is a Slovenian public relations theorist and researcher. He is a Professor and Head of Centre for Marketing and Public Relations at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. He holds a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). In academic year 2013/2014, he was a Fulbright scholar at the San Diego State University, USA. Dejan Verčič has published 11 books. He has written more than 300 articles, book chapters, monographs, reviews, and conference papers. His recent books are Culture and Public Relations (2012), The Global Public Relations Handbook: Theory, Research, and Practice (2003, 2009), Public Relations Metrics: Research and Evaluation (2008). In 2000 and in 2010 he received special awards by the Public Relations Society of Slovenia, and in 2001 he was awarded the Alan Campbell-Johnson Medal for outstanding service to international public relations by the UK Chartered Institute of Public Relations (of which he is a Fellow).



Krishnamurthy Sriramesh

Prof. Dr. Krishnamurthy Sriramesh is a Professor and University Faculty Scholar at Purdue University, USA. He is recognized for his scholarship on global public relations. For two decades he has advocated the need to reduce ethnocentricity in the public relations body of knowledge. To that end, he has edited several books on global public relations including a book on Public Relations in Asia that remains the only book on the subject. His research interests also extend to public relations for development, corporate social responsibility and public relations, and the use of new media for public relations. His rich teaching experiences include teaching at 10 universities in four continents and won several teaching awards including the Charles W. Redding Excellence in Teaching Award (Purdue University) and Teacher of the Year Award (University of Florida). He has won several awards for research including the Faculty Research Award and the Golden Gator Award at the University of Florida and top-three papers at six international conferences. In 2004, he won the prestigious Pathfinder Award from the Institute for Public Relations (USA) for "original scholarly research contributing to the public relations body of knowledge." He also serves on the Editorial Board of several academic journals.



Ana Tkalac Verčič

Prof. Dr. Ana Tkalac Verčič is a Full Professor of Marketing communications and Public Relations at the University of Zagreb, Croatia, and visiting professor at the University of Lugano (Switzerland). She has authored, co-authored and edited numerous books including Public Relations Metrics: Research and Evaluation (with B. van Ruler and D. Verčič; Routledge 2008). Ana Tkalac Verčič is also a member of the editorial committee of the „International Journal of Strategic Communication“, and a regional editor of „Public Relations Review“. She has participated in numerous professional projects such as “Development of strategy for building the image of the Republic of Croatia”, “Improving the capacity of the civil society”. She was the head researcher on the project named “The development of the model of measurement and management of reputation of the University of Zagreb”. She is the head of the CIPR program Croatia, a lifelong learning program in public relations conducted according to the program of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations. She is a member of the Croatian Psychological Association, International Advertising Association, International Communication Association and the Croatian Association for Public Relations (where she is currently the head of the certification body). She has been the member of the International Communication Association committee for the best master’s and doctoral dissertation in the area of publicrelations. She is a former Fulbright scholar.

3. BLEDCOM 2016 PROGRAM

FRIDAY, 1 JULY 2016

7.00-7.30	YOGA – PRANAYAMA
8.00-9.00	REGISTRATION
9.00-9.30	OPENING REMARKS PROGRAM COMMITTEE Dejan Verčič , University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) Ana Tkalac Verčič , University of Zagreb (Croatia) Krishnamurthy Sriramesh , Purdue University (USA)
9.30-10.00	WELCOME ADDRESS Prof. Dr. Maja Makovec Brenčič , Minister of Education, Science and Sport (Slovenia)
10.00-10.30	KEYNOTE Stephen Waddington , Partner and Chief Engagement Officer, Ketchum (UK) <i>What is a Chief Engagement Office and what does it do?</i> Partner: Zavarovalnica Triglav
	
10.30-11.00	COFFEE BREAK
11.00-12.00	PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 1A Chair: <i>Ralph Tench</i> Putting Engagement in its PROper place: State of the Field Author: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ganga S. Dhanesh</i>, National University of Singapore (Singapore) Social media: the dialogue myth? How organizations use social media for stakeholder dialogue and stakeholder engagement Authors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wim J.L. Elving</i>, University of Amsterdam / ASCoR (Netherlands) • <i>R.M. Postma</i>, University of Amsterdam / ASCoR (Netherlands) Micro narratives as internal communication strategy for engaging people Authors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Emiliana Pomarico Ribeiro</i>, University of São Paulo (Brasil) • <i>Paulo Nassar</i>, University of São Paulo (Brasil) What "engagement" means to European communication managers? Authors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dejan Verčič</i>, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) • <i>Ralph Tench</i>, Leeds Beckett University (UK)
11.00-12.00	PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 1B Chair: <i>Don Wright</i> A Co-creation Network for Knowledge and Innovation Promoting Safety and Security in the Arctic Author: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Harri Ruoslahti</i>, Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Finland) A Viral Opportunity? Viral Videos And Public Relations - Seed Virality Into PR Video Campaigns Authors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rosa (Weijia) Li</i>, Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands) • <i>Ju-Sung Lee</i>, Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands) Factors Influencing Consumer Engagement in Mobile SNS: A Study of WeChat in China Author: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regina Chen Yi-Ru</i>, Hong Kong Baptist University (Hong Kong/China)

12.00-13.00 PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 2AChair: *Don Stacks***Engaging employees through internal communication**

Authors:

- *Ana Kkalac Veržić*, University of Zagreb (Croatia)
- *Nina Pološki Vokić*, University of Zagreb (Croatia)

Engaging employees in (at least partly) disengaged companies. Results of a 2016 interview survey within 550 German corporations on the growing importance of digital engagement via internal social media

Authors:

- *Sievert Holger*, Macromedia University (Germany)
- *Christina Scholz*, Macromedia University (Germany)

Mobilising and engaging South African students: The #feesmustfall campaign

Authors:

- *Ronel Rensburg*, University of Pretoria (South Africa)
- *Olebogeng Selebi*, University of Pretoria (South Africa)

When work style meets lifestyle - energizing corporate environments through developing communities of practices for parents.

Author:

- *Monika Sořita*, COMM.on (Poland)

12.00-13.00 PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 2BChair: *Ronel Rensburg***What is engagement?**

Author:

- *Andrej Drapal*, Consensus (Slovenia)

Public relations and social businesses: Building engagement?

Author:

- *Ruth Avidar*, The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College (Israel)

Exploring shifts in public relations discipline: From organisational functionalism to sociological, critical and cultural perspectives on public engagement

Author:

- *Alenka Jelen-Sanchez*, University of Stirling (UK)

Engaging publics: the way forward? PR mechanisms in urban planning

Authors:

- *Mario Ianniello*, Udine University (Italy)
- *Silvia Iacuzzi*, Udine University (Italy)
- *Luca Brusati*, Udine University (Italy)
- *Paolo Fedele*, Udine University (Italy)

13.00-14.30 LUNCH BREAK**14.30-15.30 PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 3A**Chair: *Holger Sievert***Online communities for employee engagement and democracy in the workplace. The case of IBM**

Author:

- *Roxana Maiorescu*, Emerson College (USA)

Rescuers of Memory and Moral Conscience: Activism and Engagement in Lithuanian History of the Holocaust

Author:

- *Denise P. Ferguson*, Pepperdine University (USA)

Engaging Employees in CSR. Engagement types and engagement strategies in employee communication

Author:

- *Lars Rademacher*, Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences

Employee-Organization Relationships and Social Stake: Examining Factors in Employee Engagement on Social Media

Authors:

- *Neva Štumberger*, Purdue University (USA)
- *Brian G. Smith*, Purdue University (USA)
- *Amanda J. Dugan*, Purdue University (USA)
- *Justin M. Guild*, Purdue University (USA)

14.30-15.30 PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 3BChair: *Wim Elving***Creating An Authentic and Engaged Learning Community via Twitter: Insights from a Cross-Institutional Twitter Activity**

Authors:

- *Ai Zhang*, Stockton University (USA)
- *Kyung-Hyan Yoo*, William Paterson University of New Jersey (USA)

Trends in education of communication professionals: the perspective of educators and employers

Authors:

- *Lana Ciboci*, Edward Bernays (Croatia)
- *Damir Jugo*, Edward Bernays (Croatia)
- *Maro Alavanja*, Edward Bernays (Croatia)

Self-censorship in an engaged world: when the digital environment abjures self-expression

Author:

- *Ronel Rensburg*, University of Pretoria (South Africa)

15.30-16.30 PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 4AChair: *Jon White***Towards successful citizen engagement: A meta-analysis of the empirical evidence**

Authors:

- *Luca Brusati*, Udine University (Italy)
- *Paolo Fedele*, Udine University (Italy)
- *Silvia Iacuzzi*, Udine University (Italy)
- *Mario Ianniello*, Udine University (Italy)

Grabbing attention in the eight-second gap: of gold fish and public relations

Author:

- *Christopher Galloway*, Massey University (New Zealand)

Employee voice: An antecedent to organisational engagement?

Authors:

- *Kevin Ruck*, University of Central Lancashire (UK)
- *Mary Welch*, University of Central Lancashire (UK)

Online (Dis)engagement: Content Analysis of a Company's Newsfeed Against the Backdrop of an Organizational Ethnography

Author:

- *Mark Verheyden*, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium)

15.30-16.30 PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 4BChair: *Julia Jahansoozi***Green community engagement - do organisations actually listen?**

Authors:

- *Andrea Cassin*, The University of Newcastle (Australia)
- *Melanie James*, The University of Newcastle (Australia)

Corporate Answers before a Transnational Crisis in Public Relations: Chiquita Brands Crisis Originated in Colombia

Author:

- *Andres Felipe Giraldo Dávila*, Universidad de Medellín (Colombia)

Engaging people through local initiatives: a discourse analysis on sustainable energy

Authors:

- *Joana Duarte*, Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands)
- *Irene Kelder*, Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands)
- *Marije Zegwaard*, Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands)
- *Annette Klarenbeek*, Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands)

More than enough is too much! Community and Stakeholder Engagement in Water Management Projects in Central Europe

Authors:

- *Daniel Polzer*, Alpen-Adria Universität (Austria)
- *Franziska Weder*, Alpen-Adria Universität (Austria)

16.30-16.45 COFFEE BREAK
16.45-17.30 MEET THE EDITORS

Panelists:

- **Bey-Ling Sha**, director and professor, School of Journalism and Media Studies, San Diego University (USA) & **Editor-in-Chief for Journal of Public Relations Research**
- **Jesper Falkheimer**, rector and professor, Campus Helsingborg, Lund University (Sweden) & **Editor-in-Chief for Journal of Communication Management**

19.00 Dinner at Vila Podvin (departure at 18.30)
22.00 O Canada – A Toast in Celebration

SATURDAY, 2 JULY 2016

7.00-7.30 YOGA – PRANAYAMA
9.00-10.00 PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 5A

Chair: *Alenka Jelen-Sanchez*

The usage of Enterprise Social Networks in Engaging Employees
Authors:

- *Dunja Vujčić*, University of Novi Sad (Serbia)
- *Danijela Lalić*, University of Novi Sad (Serbia)
- *Danica Radovanović*, University of Novi Sad (Serbia)

Emotional engagement strategies in PR firms: senior level perspectives of professional relationships
Author:

- *Liz Yeomans*, Leeds Beckett University (UK)

A positive communication climate - more than just another job resource to improve employee engagement
Authors:

- *Annerie Reyneke*, University of Pretoria (South Africa)
- *Estelle de Beer*, University of Pretoria (South Africa)

Stakeholder Networks as Scopes of Responsibility: A Long-Term Study on the Individual Engagement of CEOs and Managers in Austria (1995-2012)
Authors:

- *Isabell Koinig*, Alpen-Adria-Universität (Austria)
- *Franziska Weder*, Alpen-Adria-Universität (Austria)
- *Matthias Karmasin*, Alpen-Adria-Universität (Austria)

9.00-10.00 PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 5B

Chair: *Roxana Măiorescu*

Engagement as sensemaking
Authors:

- *Judy Motion*, University of New South Wales (Australia)
- *Matthew Kearnes*, University of New South Wales (Australia)

Saving the Walbran: An exploration of the engagement approaches of activists, publics and stakeholders.
Author:

- *Jahansoozi Julia*, Royal Roads University (Canada)

Challenges of Branding in Post-Conflict Countries – The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Authors:

- *Hrvoje Jakopović*, University of Zagreb (Croatia)
- *Božo Skoka*, University of Zagreb (Croatia)

Flipping the coin in public relations research: Social media crisis of “Tonus” bread as the case of “organization relations”
Authors:

- *Ana Milojević*, University of Belgrade (Serbia)
- *Aleksandra Krstić*, University of Belgrade (Serbia)

10.00-10.45 PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 6A

Chair: *Mary Welch*

Messages of Menace: The Recruitment Propaganda of Islamic State
Author:

- *Gareth Thompson*, University of the Arts London (UK)

Mobilization in times of crisis: A discursive psychological analysis of mobilizing strategies in Facebook discourse on earthquakes caused by natural gas extraction in the Netherlands
Authors:

- *Maartje Harmelink*, Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands)
- *Baukje Stinesen*, Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands)
- *Petra Sneijder*, Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands)
- *Annette Klarenbeek*, Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands)

10.00-10.45 PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 6B

Chair: *Betteke van Ruler*

Communicating Corporate Social Performance: A Research on Twitter
Authors:

- *Ebru Uzunoglu*, Izmir University of Economics (Turkey)
- *Selin Türkel*, Izmir University of Economics (Turkey)
- *Burcu Yaman*, Izmir University of Economics (Turkey)

The Dark Side of Engagement: Social Media Power in Confronting an Organization Directly During a Crisis
Authors:

- *Smith Brian G.*, Purdue University (USA)
- *Doug Pruim*, Purdue University (USA)
- *Bjorn Jensen*, Purdue University (USA)

CSR Communication in the Energy Sector: Message Positioning and Ambiguity in Corporate Messages
Authors:

- *Koinig Isabell*, Alpen-Adria Universität (Austria)
- *Denise Voci*, Alpen-Adria Universität (Austria)
- *Franziska Weder*, Alpen-Adria Universität (Austria)

10.45-11.00 COFFEE BREAK

11.00-11.30 PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 7A

Chair: *Regina Chen*

Strategic standardization in public relations/corporate communication research: why it matters and where we are
Author:

- *Don W. Stacks*, University of Miami (USA)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for identity management: Framing CSR as a tool for managing the CSR-luxury paradox online
Authors:

- *Ganga Dhanesh*, National University of Singapore (Singapore)
- *Jia Yun Wong*

11.00-11.30 PARALLEL PAPER SESSION 7B

Chair: *Kevin Ruck*

An 11-year longitudinal analysis study tracking social and digital media use in public relations practice
Author:

- *Don K. Wright*, Boston University (USA)

“Wake up and smell the...”: A discourse analysis on bio digestion in The Netherlands
Authors:

- *Joana Duarte*, Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands)
- *Maartje Harmelink*, Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands)
- *Annette Klarenbeek*, Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands)

12.00-13.30 LUNCH BREAK

13.30-14.30 PLENARY PANEL

Brane Gruban, Dialogos Strateške komunikacije (Slovenia)
The role of engagement in the Slovenian Workplace: Ten years after

Tamara Barič, Telekom Austria Group and
Ana Kaloperović, Vip mobile, member of Telekom Austria Group
(Serbia)
One company, two markets - united culture.

14.30-15.00 PLENARY SESSION

Betteke van Ruler, University of Amsterdam & Van Ruler Academy
Poor relations: PR & Communication theory

Mark Dillen, Dillen Associates, LLC (USA)
Global engagement: How can the West use social media to defeat ISIL

15.00-15.15 COFFEE BREAK

15.15-16.15 PANEL**Towards a Community of Practice: Engaging academics and practitioners for practice development**

Session led by:

- *Stephen Waddington*, Chief Engagement Officer, Ketchum (UK)

Facilitators:

- *Sarah Hall*, Future Proof (UK)
- *Jon White*, Visiting Professor, Henley Business School (UK)

16.15-16.45 BLEDCOM FAREWELL SESSION

Dejan Verčič, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)
Ana Tkalac Verčič, University of Zagreb (Croatia)
Krishnamurthy Sriramesh, Purdue University (USA)

19.00 Dinner at Lectar (departure at 18.30)

4. Abstracts

Public relations and social businesses: Building engagement?

Ruth Avidar, The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College (Israel)

Introduction and purpose of the study

Public relations is usually practiced within three clearly defined organizational settings: the public (governmental), private and nonprofit sectors. Over the past few decades, the boundaries between the three sectors have been blurring, and new types of organizations and initiatives, which combine environmental aims with business approaches, have emerged. This study focuses on social businesses, which are self-sustainable businesses that address social goals, and the challenge that they present to public relations practitioners.

Unlike public relations for other sectors, public relations for social businesses requires raising awareness to the attractiveness of a business (and its products or services), and also to its social goals. According to Benziman (2009), identifying a business as a social business might damage the reputation of its products and services since they are perceived as low quality products that were manufactured by underserved or distressed communities. For example, practitioners who try to attract clients to a coffee shop by emphasizing its excellent location and low prices also have to communicate that all workers are mentally ill or ex-prisoners.

Literature review

Because social businesses are a relatively new type of organization, the Diffusion of Innovation theory (Rogers, 1962) was used to explore whether and to what extent social businesses have succeeded in passing the first two stages of the diffusion process (knowledge and persuasion), if they have successfully communicated their complex identities to their publics, and engaged with them.

In recent years engagement became a buzzword in public relations research and practice. The idea that organizations and publics can and should engage with each other in 'real conversations' seems to be a natural development of the relational approach, that emphasized the building, management, and maintenance of organization-public relationship (OPR) (Botan, 1992; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Taylor, Kent, & White, 2001) and the dialogic communication approach that added to OPR building the notion of dialogue and 'dialogic communication' (Botan, 1997; Kent & Taylor, 1998, 2002). According to Taylor and Kent (2014, p. 384) "engagement is part of dialogue and through engagement, organizations and publics can make decisions that create social capital." They also suggest that dialogic engagement has many advantages for organizations and stakeholders because it improves understanding among participants, assists in making decisions that benefit all parties involved, and encourages a fully functioning society whose decision making is based on information.

Methodology

The data for this study were collected using two research methods. The first was a survey containing a representative sample of 202 Israeli adults aged 18-65 that were recruited from an online panel of Israelis (employing two screening questions to 962 respondents). The survey contained 25 questions that referred to participants' profiles, media exposure, personal involvement and perceptions of social businesses. The second part of the study utilized a monitoring system that analyzed the volume of online 'conversations' about social businesses in various social media platforms (such as forum posts, blogs, Twitter and Facebook).

Results and conclusions

Findings suggest that social businesses, as a relatively new type of organization, are still in their first stages of adoption, and thus embraced mainly by Innovators and Early Adopters, but not by the majority. The majority (79.1%) in the middle categories still does not know what a social business is and has not reached even the first stage of knowledge-awareness. In addition, participants contended that their exposure to social businesses online (52%) was higher than their exposure to social businesses in 'traditional' media (36%), and most respondents had a favorable attitude towards both the 'business-like' characteristics of social businesses (i.e., high quality products and services, low prices) and their contribution to society.

The lack of awareness to social businesses among the 'average citizen' is both a finding and a limitation of this study, since many potential respondents did not know what a social business is, did not engage with social businesses and did not have any perception of them. A future research might compare among adopters of social businesses and the average citizen. This comparison might reveal whether people who use a specific product or a service given by social businesses know about social businesses more and perceive them differently than the average citizen who obtains his knowledge about social businesses mainly from the media and close ties.

Practical and social implications

Based on these findings, suggestions were made to public relations practitioners how to further promote social businesses, reach out to other potential adopters, engage, and build a strong reputation.

Keywords: Social Business; Fourth Sector; Engagement; Diffusion of Innovations; Dialogue

Towards successful citizen engagement: A meta-analysis of the empirical evidence

Luca Brusati, Udine University (Italy)

Paolo Fedele, Udine University (Italy)

Silvia Iacuzzi, Udine University (Italy)

Mario Ianniello, Udine University (Italy)

Introduction and purpose of the study (and research question if there is one)

Citizen engagement as a system for communication between public authorities and the representatives of the local community is a well-established practice. This paper analyses examples of participation processes reported in the English-language scholarly literature, in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the obstacles to the implementation of this practice, as well as of the techniques and processes that characterise successful public inclusion. The main research question was "What have been the main obstacles to successful engagement and how have they been tackled in real engagement processes?"

Literature review

Branded under many different names (participatory democracy, deliberative engagement, stakeholder inclusion, inclusive decision-making, collaborative governance, etc.), public engagement entails the same basic principle: involving citizens, social organizations and, broadly speaking, relevant stakeholders in policy-making since the early stages of the policy cycle. Beierle (1999) identified six goals for participation: educating the public; incorporating public values, assumptions, and preferences into decision making; increasing the substantive quality of decisions; fostering trust in institutions; reducing conflict; and making decisions cost-effectively. But its overall purpose remains to enhance the quality and legitimacy of policy decisions, thus overcoming the problems that the traditional processes and institutions of representative democracy face when dealing with "wicked" problems, multi-faceted issues and fragmented policy environments (Fazi and Smith, 2006, pp. 12-15).

The popularity of citizen engagement does not entail that questions about its true potential and limitations have been effectively sorted out. Participation is often time consuming and expensive, it may backfire creating hostility, it may be pointless if results are ignored, it may be heavily influenced by "loud" interest groups or it may imply a critical loss of decision-making control by authorities who are then unable to implement what is decided (Irvin 2004).

Methodology

Since a shared definition of citizen engagement has not yet been agreed upon, for the purposes of our literature review examples from every arrangement under the broad umbrella of processes of collaborative participation have been taken into consideration, suggesting theoretical categories able to group techniques, processes and examples under readable and logically consistent clusters.

In order to ensure a transparent and complete reporting, this paper uses a PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) approach which helps improve the reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Moher et al., 2009). Hence, by using the meta-search engines EBSCO-HOST and Web of Science we browsed the databases Business Source Complete, EconLit, Regional Business News, Science Citation Index Expanded, Social Sciences Citation Index, Arts & Humanities Citation Index, Conference Proceedings Citation Index – Science and Conference Proceedings Citation Index - Social Science & Humanities. We then proceeded incrementally by selecting only those articles that could contribute to highlight conceptual categories to which participatory tools themselves would refer. Based on this criterion, the articles that were deemed relevant for the purpose of this literature review were consequently analysed in detail. In order to single out good practices, we analysed first the hurdles most frequently mentioned in the literature when describing participatory processes. Then we summarised the techniques and processes adopted to overcome the obstacles, or at least reduce their impact.

Results and conclusions

The paper presents an overview of the key findings emerging from the literature review. In our analysis we chose purposefully to remain as close as possible to the source articles in order to make references easier. The emerging patterns and recurrent themes that contributed to successful participation were clustered around three categories: contextual factors such as information deficit and asymmetries as well as officials' attitude; organizational arrangements, in particular community representation and process design; and result-related issues, i.e. the overall outcome of the engagement process itself. While the empirical evidence available in the literature is limited to English speaking countries, our analysis highlights that, in general, the most important factors to improve participation are structure and relations. First, a rigorous approach is essential to facilitate stakeholder inclusion and participation, thus improving the chances of a more systematic impact. Secondly, more and more frequent interactions among government, agencies and the public trigger deeper stakeholder engagement.

Practical and social implications

The overall learning point is that short-term and half-hearted engagement processes are unlikely to lead to successful engagement.

Keywords: engagement, participation, literature review, meta-analysis

Green community engagement – do organisations actually listen?

Andrea Cassin, The University of Newcastle (Australia)

Melanie James, The University of Newcastle (Australia)

Introduction and purpose of the study

This study investigates community engagement and consultation practices that are undertaken by organisations to gain consent to proceed with low carbon-emission and/or renewable energy technology projects in Australia. The purpose of this research project is to examine the nature and effectiveness of current community engagement practices. The qualitative study explores how community engagement is being practiced, and which public relations tactics are reported to be more or less effective. This research also explores the relationship between the organisations and the communities, and the role that public relations play in the community engagement process.

Literature review

Community engagement and consultation is a common requirement in Australia, especially for organisations in the renewable and low carbon-emission technologies sector. The repeal of the carbon tax in 2014, and the recent cut of the National Renewable Energy Target have sparked new debates about climate change and renewable energy. Media coverage about community resistance such as the “lock the gate” campaign reinforce community expectations to be involved when organisations implement new projects. How to engage and who to engage with, however, remains unclear as both the term ‘community’ and ‘community engagement’ continue to be rather unspecific fluid concepts in academic literature. Especially the public relations literature has little emphasis on community engagement although public relations practitioners are often called onto manage engagement processes.

Methodology

This qualitative study is based on 15 in-depth interviews with community engagement experts that were conducted over the phone in 2013. The semi-structured interviews investigate community engagement practices in the renewable energy and low-carbon emissions sector with a focus on the communication between organizations and their communities. How and why do organisations engage with the community? What communication strategies and channels do they use and how well do they work? What role does public relations play in the engagement process? What impact has the community had on relevant projects? And do organisations actually listen to what the community has to say and address their concerns?

Results and conclusions

The research findings suggest that face-to-face communication is the most important communication form, and that relationships play an integral role in the engagement process. Although many organisations expand their engagement efforts beyond the legal requirements, the study indicates that organisations listen

with 'strategic intent'. Despite some examples where communities influence organisational decisions, the research findings suggest that most organisations attempt to control engagement and consultation processes rather than genuinely listen to community concerns.

Practical and social implications

This functional approach of the research findings contrasts with current public relations concepts, which suggest that open, dialogic and collaborative engagement approaches help build long-term relationships with communities. The study sheds some new light on current engagement practices. However, more research into community engagement within a public relations context is needed to better understand the role of communication in community engagement and consultation.

Keywords: Community engagement, public relations, listening, Australia

Factors Influencing Consumer Engagement in Mobile SNS: A Study of WeChat in China

Regina Chen Yi-Ru, Hong Kong Baptist University (Hong Kong/China)

Introduction and purpose of study

Launched in 2011, WeChat is a mobile microblogging and social networking site (SNS) in China. It has attracted more than 600 million individual users and 8.5 million organization users (mostly corporate; Smith, 2015) due to its unique, convenient and diverse functionalities making its platform an integral part of a user's life. WeChat combines the features of instant text/voice messaging, photo and video sharing, one-to-many messaging (group chat), information exchange and socialization and e-payment (WeChat peer-to-peer Wallet), and is a dominant social media platform in China.

Most previous research on social networking sites in China, however, has focused on Weibo and RenRen (e.g. Wang, 2016) and on the comparison between Weibo and Twitter (e.g. Zhang, Tao, & Kim, 2014). Yet, unlike Weibo or Twitter, which are open-source, WeChat is a closed-source SNS that can be used to facilitate one-to-one communication between a corporate public account and its subscriber via personalized content. Moreover, WeChat can only bring values to corporate communication when individual users participate in the corporate public account. This study aims to explore the factors public engagement with corporate WeChat communication by testing a conceptual model (see Figure 1).

Literature review

This study utilizes technology acceptance model (TAM), users and gratification theory, and commitment-trust theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Wu, Chen, & Chung, 2010). The proposed model hypothesizes five antecedent factors of user engagement in WeChat from the user's perspective: account competitive advantage (innovation and market differentiation), content attraction (multi-media presentation, service-centric logics, and content usefulness), information sharing, interaction frequency, and preferential incentive. The antecedent factors lead to the user's satisfaction with the corporate WeChat account that further results in two kinds of user engagement. General participation relates to "browsing information sent by corporations and self-interest-oriented participation" while interactive participation means "frequent participation behaviors of exchanging and communicating with corporations" (Jin, Park, & Li, 2015, p. 3).

Methodology

Random online-surveyed data of 150 Millennials (those born in the period 1980 to 2000; Howe & Strauss, 2000) in mainland China will be analyzed to test the proposed model using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The Millennium generation is of particular interest in this study because people of this generation are the main users of WeChat and are becoming the primary consumer force that corporations need to target.

Results and conclusions

A summary of the hypothesis testing results will be provided.

Practical and social implications

Research results will have theoretical and practical implications for strategic communication on WeChat for effective user engagement. The results will also contribute to the understanding of WeChat as a unique marketing communication channel in China.



Keywords: Consumer Engagement, WeChat, Marketing Communication, China

Trends in education of communication professionals: the perspective of educators and employers

Lana Ciboci, Edward Bernays (Croatia)

Damir Jugo, Edward Bernays (Croatia)

Maro Alavanja, Edward Bernays (Croatia)

Introduction and purpose of the study

The extremely rapid development of technology, which greatly affects trends in the public relations profession, raises the importance of leaders of higher education institutions, as well as teachers, to monitor scientific developments of the profession, market trends, and in particular, the needs of employers who will in the future employ recently educated personnel. This element is even more pronounced during times of global crisis in the communications industry where the number of jobs is decreasing, and criticism of educational institutions, which can be summarized in the claim that educational programs are not adapted to market needs, is increasing. Guided by this situation, in this paper, the authors analyse the interrelationship between the academic community and employers in the communications industry, and compare their views on the issue of knowledge, skills and competences which communication professionals must possess in order to be successful in this profession. The main research question is to what extent the views on the quality of education of future PR professionals differ from the perspective of employers and the academic community.

Literature review

Analysing the trends in the education of communication and public relations experts, it is possible to notice that, over the last 15 years, numerous research projects were carried out and several studies were published on trends in the education of public relations professionals. The Commission on Public Relations Education in particular dealt with this topic, publishing a series of reports from 1999 to 2012. These reports contained guidelines for the development, customization and improvement of educational programs in the field of public relations and communication management. At a time when cooperation between the academic community and the market is a necessity, this situation in the communications industry leads to criticism from PR experts that higher education institutions do not teach their students fundamental knowledge and skills, and that upon completing their studies, employers themselves must set aside at least another year to further educate and train the new employee in order for him or her to be able to carry out assignments, which leads to additional expenses for employers and slows down entry into the profession. As a particular problem, they emphasise the apparent inertia of higher education institutions in the process of aligning contents of study programmes to technological advancements.

Methodology

In this paper, the authors will conduct a survey among senior staff and heads of the study programmes at higher education institutions, and analyse their views on the priorities in the education of students. An equivalent survey of employers in the communications industry (communication agency directors, directors and heads of corporate communications) will be carried out as well. The research will be carried out on 25 members of the academic community, as well as 25 employers. The authors will analyse which knowledge and skills are necessary for students to be able to work independently in the profession in a short time after graduation. Furthermore, the authors will analyse how the current study programmes meet the requirements of the market and how much time employers spend on the further education of their employees after obtaining a degree in public relations.

Results and conclusions

The obtained results will give an insight into the needs of employers and compare the discrepancy between educators and employers. These results will provide a key contribution in the process of improving mutual understanding of the academic community and employers in the communications industry, as well as the adaptation of study programmes at the level of higher education institutions educating future generations of communications professionals.

Practical and social implications

A special value of this research is the establishment of differences in attitudes between the two groups who have a significant impact on future communication professionals in different phases of their professional development. The research results could lead to the reconciliation of different views between the academic community and employers, as well as foster their mutual cooperation and interaction.

Keywords: Public relations, formal education, academic community, employers, competences

Corporative Answers before a Transnational Crisis in Public Relations: Chiquita Brands Crisis Originated in Colombia

Andres Felipe Giraldo Dávila, Universidad de Medellín (Colombia)

Corporative answers are understood as a declaration of an organization about a crisis and several opportunities to confront it. Transnational organization Chiquita Brands, suspected of having sponsored paramilitary groups in Colombia between 1997 and 2004, have experimented a crisis represented in image, reputation; credibility and retired of invest in Colombia.

Chiquita Brands Transnational Organization have shown a chronological answers between March 2007 and June 2008, dates where North America justice signed to multinational of these sponsor. Methodological aspects joined quantative content analysis of press, both American and Colombian newspapers, due to comparative analysis signed aspects of two perspectives where crisis is confronted.

Case study was analyzed from Cross-National Conflict Theory, developed by Molleda & Quinn (2004), Kim & Molleda (2005) and Giraldo, Botero, Molleda and Bravo (2011) where were possible apply some of 13 proposition of this Public Relation theoretical perspective, as well as type of public present around crisis, such a home, host and transnational publics. Besides testing the 13 propositions of the Cross National Conflict Shifting theory and besides describing the scope of corporate responses used, one more variable will be analyzed: It will be measured if the efforts of agenda building performed by Chiquita Brands got reflected in the news coverage of the conflict.

Cross-national conflict shifting (CNCS) is:

“The transfer of incidents or crises faced by a transnational organization (TNO) from one national location where the situation originates to another or multiple world locations where the TNO is headquartered or executes major operations. A reversed CNCS occurs when the conflicting situation happens in the home country where the main office of the TNO functions and then it shifts to other host environments.” (Molleda, 2010, p.2).

Chiquita Brand's transnational crisis is important to further understand the way a conflict shifts from its place of origin (the host country) to the home country of the transnational organization (TNO) involved in the crisis. It also looks at the kind of responses given by the TNO in both countries, the home and the host, and at the kind of agenda building effects generated by the Chiquita Brands official statements. In a globalized world, this knowledge is essential for TNOs to learn how to face cross national conflict shifts and how to serve their multiple publics all around the world.

A national issue can become international in an instant, impacting host, home, and transnational publics. Public relations professionals practicing in more than one country are challenged by conflicts that impact their organizations or clients activities and reputation in more than one location at the same time (Molleda & Quinn 2004, p. 2).

This is the first Cross-National Conflict Shifting study developed by researchers based in the United States and Latin America, with data gathered in U.S database and Colombian news archives, which offered a unique opportunity to use a more complete set of data and an analysis from scholars who bring complementary interpretations to the findings. Studies based on the Cross-National Conflict Shifting theory also contribute to the growing body of knowledge of global public relations.

Putting Engagement in its PRoper place: State of the Field

Ganga S. Dhanesh, National University of Singapore (Singapore)

Introduction

Engagement has been a buzzword in public relations practice for a while. Although the concept originated in practice, it has garnered scholarly attention with a special issue in the Journal of Public Relations Research and now this call from BledCom 2016. Within the academe, research on engagement in public relations has mushroomed across the area of digital engagement, with a few studies on employee engagement and conceptualizations of public/stakeholder engagement.

However, in a majority of studies, the term has been used rather loosely, to imply any form of communicative interaction between publics and organizations. There has not been much theoretical explication of the concept within public relations, except for rare attempts such as those by Taylor and Kent (2014), who situated engagement within the concept of ethical communication and dialogue, specifically within dialogue's dimension of propinquity. Yet research on engagement has been booming, especially with the rising popularity of social media and a mad scramble to digitally 'engage' organizational publics.

The need of the hour is to pause, take stock of the field, create a practice-relevant, theoretically informed model and definition of engagement and chart future directions of research. Accordingly, this conceptual paper reviews the literature on the concept of engagement within the field of public relations, identifies key omissions, proposes a model and definition for engagement and suggests directions for the future.

Literature review

This paper first presents a thorough and extensive review of literature on engagement within public relations, marketing and organizational behavior and reviews the three major strands of work within public relations (1) Digital engagement spanning civic engagement, engagement during crises and use by non-profit organizations (2) Employee engagement and (3) Discussion of public/stakeholder engagement. It then interrogates this literature and raises the following points for consideration:

- The need for a theory based conceptualization of engagement that distinguishes engagement from other similar concepts, extends beyond the communicative dimension and is considered from the perspective of publics and organizations, specifically considering the following two pertinent issues:
- Reluctance on the part of publics to be active as contributors, co-creators, and information sharers and the related aspects of interest, salience, motivation and public engagement/disengagement. Hence, definitions of engagement to consider multiple dimensions of engagement, including cognitive, affective and behavioral and examine the notion of disengagement.
- Reluctance on the part of organizations to engage in 2-way dialogue with connected publics and the need for maintaining control of strategic organizational communication, especially during crises. Hence, definitions of engagement to consider aspects of power asymmetries, the need for organizational control over relational communication and the need to employ situational theories of publics.

A proposed model & definition of engagement

Drawing from the systems approach to public relations, relational communication theory, strategic issues management, and the concepts of dialogue and ethical communication, this study proposes the following model of engagement and definition:

1. Antecedents: Salience of issue to publics and organizations.
2. States: Cognitive (problem recognition, constraint recognition), Affective (emotional connection to the issue) and Behavioral (material or communicative manifestation of thought and emotion, offline or online); The whole self/group – thought, feeling and action - entering into an ethical, purposeful interaction with affected partners; An interaction that appreciates power asymmetries among interactants.
3. Consequences: Meet respective goals of interacting publics and organizations, leading to mutual understanding, adjustment and adaptation.

Proposed Definition: Engagement is a cognitive, affective and behavioral state wherein publics and organizations that share mutual interest in salient topics interact ethically and strategically, with an appreciation of power asymmetries between interactants, aimed at producing mutual adjustment and adaptation.

Suggestions for future research

Publics-centric research

- Need to study disengagement/non-engagement and
- Motivations for engagement/disengagement

Organization-centric research

- Motivations for adopting traditional models of persuasion and avoiding genuine open, transparent interactions with publics
- The rise of content creation for meaningful stakeholder engagement
- A portrait of the ideal boundary spanning social media PR practitioner, considering aspects such as accountability, transparency, timeliness, sensitivity and intercultural competence

Implications

This paper has important theoretical, practical and social implications. Theoretically, it helps to clarify conceptualization of engagement as a multidimensional concept, considering relevant aspects from the perspective of publics and organizations. Being a concept that has its origins in practice, a clearer theoretical understanding of engagement can help practitioners to address matters of engagement in a theoretically informed manner. As for social implications, enabling publics and organizations to understand engagement in a holistic manner can bring benefits to both publics and organizations that can interact, fully aware of power asymmetries, thus enabling the creation of ethical social capital.

Keywords: Engagement, Dialogue, Ethical communication, Publics, Organizations

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for Identity Management: Framing CSR as a Tool for Managing the CSR-Luxury Paradox Online

Ganga S. Dhanesh, National University of Singapore (Singapore)

Jia Yun Wong

Research at the intersections of CSR and communication across domains such as public relations, marketing and organizational behavior has found that CSR can aid the construction of an ethical corporate identity, and help to align actual, communicated and perceived identities, thus establishing and maintaining more enduring and meaningful relationships with stakeholders, a key mission of the public relations function. However, companies face a special challenge when the core values of CSR are in conflict with the core values that represent the central aspects of their identity, such as those in the luxury sector.

Stakeholders rarely regard luxury and CSR as compatible, even viewing them as paradoxical because while CSR entails conservation and caring for the wider human and natural communities, luxury relates to excess and pampering oneself, resulting in what scholars have termed a CSR-luxury paradox. Such a situation offers a rich and productive context to examine how communication practitioners can employ CSR to align conflicting identities.

Accordingly, this paper employed framing analysis to examine CSR as a managerial tool that can align divergent identities of an organization. Specifically, we examined how 43 luxury brands employed framing and reasoning devices on corporate websites to manage a potential clash of identities triggered by the CSR-luxury paradox.

Literature Review

Based on a thorough and extensive review of the literature on corporate identity, CSR communication, the identity-based conceptualization of CSR, the characteristics of luxury, the complexities of the CSR-luxury paradox and framing analysis, drawn from the fields of public relations, marketing, corporate communication, advertising, and organizational behavior, we posited the following research question to guide the study: How do luxury brands frame different aspects of CSR, such as (a) choice of CSR issue, (b) issue importance, (c) commitment, (d) impact, (e) motive and (f) fit, in order to manage the conflict between CSR and luxury in the construction of corporate identity?

Methodology

This study employed qualitative and quantitative content analyses of frames because content analysis has been shown to be an effective method to identify the framing and reasoning devices of each frame. Following an inductive framing analysis to derive emergent frames, a quantitative content analysis of 43 luxury brand websites was conducted using both theoretical and emergent frames to determine the frames used. The sample was drawn from the World Luxury Brand Directory and the 100 most valuable luxury brands from the World Luxury Association.

Results and Conclusions

Findings revealed that luxury brands framed their CSR efforts as going beyond what is required (Discretionary; 88.4%), driven by good hearted motives unconnected with economic imperatives (Altruism; 93%), foregrounded the brand over the social issue (Brand Importance; 97.7%), highlighted their considerable input of resources into CSR efforts (Substantive Input; 83.7%) consistently over a period of time (Enduring Commitment; 81.4%), into programs that had high fit with their core business (Congruence; 95.3%) and conveyed impact of CSR programs through evoking emotions over logic (Abstract Impact; 65.1%). Each finding is supported with a frame matrix displaying text examples and framing and reasoning devices employed to establish the frame.

The discussion section then highlights how luxury brands employed these frames to navigate a potential clash between competing values of luxury and CSR, by highlighting similarities between the core identity of luxury and CSR. Based on the findings of this study and building on emergent work on CSR as a tool for identity management published in *Public Relations Review*, this paper then proposes the concept of value resonance identity management (VRIM), specifically for instances when the core values of CSR are in conflict with the core values that represent actual identities of companies.

Employing sophisticated use of framing and reasoning devices, companies can enable the creation of perceived alignment between apparently paradoxical notions. Such a proposition is not intended to reduce the need to ground ethical communication in action, but only proposes that ethically grounded companies can employ these devices to discursively manage potential clashes between perceptions of conflicting values between CSR and actual identities through accentuating similarity in values. Since the sample comprised high value brands it raises the question of transferability to niche luxury brands. To enhance external validity, further research on a larger range of luxury brands, product categories and countries-of-origin may be conducted.

Practical and Social Implications

Communication practitioners in charge of CSR communication, whether in public relations or corporate marketing, need to frame their CSR efforts in ways that resonate with luxury brands' core values of scarcity and sophistication. A skillful framing of similarities in values between apparently opposing notions can enable practitioners to manage otherwise conflicting identities. Such value resonant framing will also enable socially conscious consumers to manage the perceived CSR-luxury paradox.

Keywords: Corporate identity, CSR communication, Luxury, Identity management

Global engagement: How can the West use social media to defeat ISIL

Mark Dillen, Dillen Associates, LLC (USA)

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

For more than 20 years, the United States and other governments have tried to subvert the appeal of radical Islamic ideology. Traditional messaging techniques — public appeals, directed broadcasting, conventional media relations — have all been tried but have demonstrated little practical value. Psychological Operations (PSY-OPS), developed by the military for use mainly in battlefield situations — have also been used but have had little impact outside of narrow tactical objectives. With the advent of social media, and their use by various radical groups to recruit and gain support, Western countries have tried to gain converts themselves, or at least to neutralize the appeal of radical messaging, with only modest success.

On January 8, the U.S. Government (USG) admitted the need to “revamp” its messaging on this subject and announced the creation of a “Center for Global Engagement,” to be located at the Department of State in Washington, DC. This initiative is to be headed by a senior Defense Department official and will be carried out separately from the public diplomacy programs run by USG civilians at embassies around the world.

This paper reviews the history of efforts to date and suggests approaches that may offer a better prospect of success.

Literature Review

Journalists and foreign affairs analysts have commented on this program since its inception. Government officials have testified to Congress regarding planning and Congressional appropriations documents have outlined the categories of activities to be pursued (e.g., Consolidated Appropriations Act 2016 allocates funds to “editorial content,” “speakers,” “outreach,” “social media analytics,” etc.). However, there has been relatively little analytical review of these efforts in open source literature.

Methodology

This paper will begin by analyzing the impact of the State Department’s “Think Again Turn Away” initiative, which was undertaken by the Department’s Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) in 2010 to use social media as a tool against terrorist groups like al Qaeda and its affiliates. The Department chose Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and YouTube as the social media on which to carry out this campaign and staffed the Center with Americans who wrote posts that ridiculed, satirized and criticized al Qaeda, ISIS and other radical, aggressive groups. How many “likes,” “followers,” “retweets” — and other popularity indicators did they manage to achieve? What kind of response did this initiative elicit on the Arab/Islamic “street?” This paper will also examine a short-lived effort by the Department to have individual staff members of the CSCC engage and respond

to radical messages on influential Web sites and blogs in the region. Presenting this independent review, alongside USG statements on this effort, and scholarly as well as think-tank analysis, the paper will proceed to look at instances where recruiting by ISIS/ISIL/Daesh has been negatively impacted by social media/public media communications. Are there particular third parties including religious and political leaders, whose voice would be effective in redirecting/undermining appeals by radicals? A few sample approaches will be evaluated and proposed. I also propose to interview specialists who have participated in past efforts and those newly selected to lead to the “revamped” office.

Results and Conclusions

The United States and other leading states have thus far failed to find an approach to social media that markedly discourages ISIL’s radicalization of certain disaffected members of the Islamic community. Various specialists and policy makers have accepted that there may be no single “one size fits all” approach, given that ISIL has found adherents in various, disparate nation states and communities. Tactical/military approaches (e.g., cutting off ISIL’s access to funds, communication and transportation) can be pursued and judged on their efficacy; “engagement” that is meant to change “hearts and minds” is much more difficult to judge.

Practical and Social Implications

The struggle by the world’s leading powers to contain and defeat ISIS has turned into one of its hardest challenges, costing countless lives and billions of dollars in military expenditures and creating millions of civilian refugees. Any engagement via social media that would reduce ISIS’ capacity and appeal would be extremely valuable to international security. The results of this analysis will be proposed to appropriate members of the anti-ISIS coalition - state and non-state actors - in order to make a more consistent and convincing appeal to those who might otherwise be influenced by ISIS messaging.

Keywords: ISIS, ISIL, anti-terrorism, messaging

What is engagement?

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The purpose of a study is to critically assess key leading concepts of Bled 2016: “people”, “engagement”, “disengaged world”. While mentioned concepts seems to be self-evident, the purpose of the study is to see whether evolutionary biology and complex system theories can upgrade our understanding.

Assessment rests on work of Richard Dawkins from 1976 to 2002, Susan Blackmore (1999, 2011) Dan Dennett (1991, 1995, 2003, 2005, 2013), John Maynard Smith (1999), Steven Pinker (1997, 2002), Stuart Kauffman (1993, 2000, 2008); Steven Pinker (2002).

Study does not rest on any empirical study, but rational confrontation of concepts.

Results: The world is as much engaged, as it was 100 or 10.000 years ago. Memetics and related sciences can help us understand mechanisms of engagement better and through different perspective.

Practical implications: upgraded clarification of discussed concepts, less unnecessary conceptual mistakes.

Limitations: so far there are no empirical studies done based on proposed body of knowledge on PR issues. One can relate to many such studies in neuroscience and cognitive psychology only. PR research should start to implement results from natural sciences as much as from social.

Keywords: gene, meme, engagement, nature, nurture

Engaging people through local initiatives: a discourse analysis on sustainable energy

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Sustainable energy forms are seen as one viable answer to reduce global warming. Most countries are in fact struggling to reduce greenhouse gases emissions based on the premise that global warming is caused by man-made CO₂ emissions. However, implementation of sustainable energy projects often meets local resistance. The establishment of local renewable energy initiatives can stimulate this transition (Boon & Diepering 2014). This study intends to shed light on the ways in which communication around local energy initiatives takes place, by zooming in on the interaction between citizens and local energy initiatives. It aims at answering the following overarching research question:

How do different stakeholders communicate around successful local initiatives for sustainable energy?

Literature review

There is an urgent need in insuring societal acceptance when adopting forms of sustainable energy. Resistance against new projects can in fact lead to an unexpected end of the project or to a significant increase in its costs (Wuestenhagen, Wolsink & Buerer 2007). In the energy domain a new and powerful trend with a strong dynamics has risen. This concept of upstream social engagement is hard to grasp for local governments and companies and thus often remains untapped. Research results point to the fact that new energy projects are frequently only accepted by citizens when they explicitly stress their trust in the purpose and necessity of energy transition and in the government as upholder of public interest (Whitmarsh et al. 2011).

Research also shows that communication between different stakeholders and particularly the ways in which the different aspects of the energy transition are framed can play a central role in gaining and maintaining public acceptance (Heiskanen et al. 2008). It thus becomes central to identify the ways in which communication around such projects occurs, as understanding the public's concerns helps predict future opinion (Best-Waldhofer, Brunsting & Paukovic 2012). At the moment, authorities wishing to engage in sustainable energy projects lack insight into how citizens develop dominant frames through their interactions with the environment.

Methodology

We have chosen a case study design of a successful local energy initiative called Grunneger Power, located in the Northern of the Netherlands. This region is the main source of the national gas supply since the 60s. However, since in 2012 regular earthquakes caused by the intense gas exploitation started to occur, extensively damaging property and causing a crash in the real-estate market, distrust in the national government and the gas exploitation companies has enormously increased (van der Voort & Vanclay 2015). Grunneger Power's communicative approach has been extremely successful, in particular as a reaction to the growing distrust in the region in the gas extraction.

Drawing on a corpus of online discussions on social media and newspapers, we conducted a discourse analysis from a discursive socio-constructivist perspective (Edwards 1994; Potter 1996) in order to examine examples of active social engagement in which local initiatives and citizens contribute to sustainability by generating their own energy (Devine-Wright 2013). In order to filter out frames with respect to energy transition, we approach the notion of frame from a discursive perspective (Potter 1996). We first systematically identified the recurring frames of the different stakeholders in the debate. In addition, we identified the discursive strategies used to create the different effects within the identified frames. Potter argues that people always, and usually unconsciously, have a goal in conversations (and therefore in language). This interactional goal is to convince others of the 'self-explanatoriness' of a particular reality. Frames then arise in discursive social interaction. So, people do not only construct frames in interaction, they make use of frames to attain their interactional goals as well. Frames typically highlight only certain aspects of a subject and ignore others (Benford and Snow 2000). Approaching frames from a discursive psychological perspective can thus reveal their functions within the conversation between different stakeholders in energy transition processes.

Results and conclusions

Our results stress out the need for local initiatives to develop a discursive strategy that specifically distances itself from centralist approaches by stressing out the local aspect of energy transition, in opposition to national government approaches, as well as the social aspect of jointly improving the environment. The frames found are thus aimed at establishing contrasts in relation to institutions and approaches in which the public has gained distrust, on the one hand, and at constructing new collective identities with a shared vision, on the other.

Practical and social implications

These results shed a light to the ways in which energy transition can be framed in order to increase local acceptance for renewable energy projects. Communication professionals can thus rely on the frames and discursive strategies found in the analysis to foster acceptance of further sustainable energy projects.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, sustainable energy, local initiatives

‘Wake up and smell the...’: A discourse analysis on bio digestion in The Netherlands

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Against the backdrop of the energy sustainability objectives of 2020, a growing number of projects to generate clean energy are being initiated. However, such initiatives often meet resistance of local governments and citizens (Wüstenhagen, et al. 2007). Citizens express their concerns and form opinions in conversations with each other. Therefore, it is central to gain a deeper insight in how these interactions around sustainable energy forms take place. In this article we present a discourse analysis of the interaction around a bio digester in the North of the Netherlands, Hoogkerk. The aim of the analysis was to answer the following research questions: How is the interaction around the bio-digester in Hoogkerk shaped? What interactional dilemmas and discursive strategies are used by the different stakeholders?

Literature review

That energy issues can only be solved with the help of technological innovations, economic management or energy policy has been proven to be a ‘myth’ (Hansen & De Vriend, 2013). Social acceptance of innovations is becoming increasingly important for a successful energy transition. Conditions for social acceptance are: trust of citizens, consumers and prosumers in energy innovations and a receptive attitude towards new values and behavioral standards (Whitmarsh et. al 2011).

Research also shows that this is a fundamentally different way of communicating in the public domain, where communication is developing in relation with others and in relation to the environment (van Ruler 2012). Communication around energy sustainability occurs in the public discourse between governments and stakeholders (Klarenbeek 2013). So, the government is often not the starting point of communication, but rather the dialogue with others: it is about the interaction, the continuous conversation between government and society (van Ruler & Verčič 2005). New knowledge is thus needed about the power and process of conversations (on - and offline) between different societal groups about the most important interactional dilemmas occurring during energy transitions. Klarenbeek (2013) shows that public support can, in fact, increase with the help of discursive insights.

Methodology

Data for this study was gathered by using the social media monitor ‘Coosto’ and online news database Lexis Nexis. We have studied 166 conversations, derived from online news sources,

Facebook and Twitter. These conversations were analyzed from a discursive psychological perspective (Potter 1996). While writing, twittering or blogging, people carry out several discursive activities (Edwards & Potter 2001). Implicitly, and most frequently unconsciously, people are constructing, by means of language, identities for themselves or others, or they are shifting responsibilities. In this way, they respond to so-called ‘interactional dilemmas’, that each speaker has, such as the possibility not to be believed or to be accused of something (for example of complaining)(Potter 1996). To get a better insight into interactional dilemmas in the debate about bio digestion, it is therefore important to study both the linguistic constructions used and the effect they have for the development of the discourse.

In discourse analytical research, identifying dominant patterns in the interaction forms the basis for the analysis of discursive strategies and rhetorical devices (Potter, 1996). For this research we thus searched for dominant patterns in the interaction around bio digestion in the Northern region of The Netherlands.

Results and conclusion

We identified two clear conversational partners: the Suiker Unie (the operator of the bio digester) and the citizens. They realized three dominant patterns. Citizens created urgency for the problems around the bio digester (1) while also undermining the actions of the Suiker Unie (2). The Suiker Unie constructed a professional identity (3). We also identified several interactional dilemmas. Citizens frequently expressed their concerns, but they did not explicitly express their opposition. A possible reason for this could be that their social status is at stake. A bio digester is a renewable energy source. By presenting yourself as an opponent, you actually say that you are against sustainability, which would be socially not accepted. Our analysis also showed that professionalism and credibility (with regard to the operator of the bio digester) are important interactional dilemmas in the debate about bio -digestion.

A limitation of this research is that the results are not completely applicable to other situations. More research to similar cases in the energy domain is needed to see whether the identified patterns and interactional problems are also applicable at those situations.

Practical and social implications

Our analysis provides relevant insights into debates around sustainable energy that are important for creating support and for developing a communication strategy. It shows, for example, that interaction between different parties is crucial for creating support. Moreover, because of the identification of several interactional dilemmas in the debate, communication professionals are more able to connect to the conversation that is being conducted in the outside world.

Keywords: discourse analysis, discursive psychology, sustainability, bio-digestion

Social media: the dialogue myth? How organizations use social media for stakeholder dialogue and stakeholder engagement

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Purpose

The results from a study that we presented two years ago at Bledcom showed that big European organizations did not grab the opportunity for stakeholder dialogue. We found that opportunities for dialogue on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube was lower than 1%. To understand what tactics and strategies organizations employ we decided to conduct a second study in which we conducted interviews to learn about social media strategy and stakeholder dialogue and engagement strategies.

Theoretical Background

Classical PR models, like the PR model of Grunig and Hunt (1984) and CSR models (Morsing & Schultz, 2006) indicate that two way symmetrical and stakeholder involvement are superior models for PR. With social media this should be easier to accomplish, because of the interactivity of social media.

Besides this, stakeholder models are changing drastically. In the past, organizations were placed in the middle of the model, and different stakeholder (groups) were seen as of influence on the organization. Current models are much more like networks in which the organization can earn a place, but that is not a fact. Organizations have to earn their position in the networks of stakeholders, and in that respect have to invest in relationship building and stakeholder dialogue to ultimately get stakeholder engagement.

Method

In the first study we included ten of the biggest and most admired European companies (Fortune 500) where we included one company in each industry, and we studied their Facebook, Twitter and YouTube content (submitted). We contacted these companies for an interview. Unfortunately, not all organizations (5) wanted to cooperate so we decided to extend this study with 5 other organizations from our own network. We asked these companies about their strategies regarding social media, confronted them (if applicable) with our results from the first study and asked them about their strategy regarding stakeholder dialogue and engagement.

Results

A first remarkable results was the unwillingness of five companies to be interviewed. One organization even was very upset that we included them in our first study. The respondents of the participating five original organizations indicated almost all that the developments on social media were changing at a high pace and that their social media had changed drastically since our first study.

All respondents indicated the increasing importance of stakeholder dialogue and stakeholder engagement, but varied in how they applied social media. All organizations see the added value of social media in stakeholder dialogue, shown in this quote: 'we obviously see that social media has become an engagement channel'

Discussion

Getting into dialogue is a way to understand stakeholders and to approach them and to earn trust (Kent & Taylor, 2002). The concept is important for organizations because the ideas and expectations of stakeholders form the base for getting legitimacy (Cornelissen, 2011; Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Getting into dialogue on social media forms a challenge for organizations (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Macnamara, 2010), maybe because of fearing to lose control. The interactive nature of social media makes that the content cannot longer be controlled (Grunig, 2009; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Macnamara, 2010). The lack of control and fear about dialogue outcomes might lead to barriers in getting into dialogue, especially because partners in a dialogue accept that as a result of the dialogue changes might occur (Greenwood, 2007).

Rescuers of Memory and Moral Conscience: Activism and Engagement in Lithuanian History of the Holocaust

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Introduction

Before World War II, Lithuania was home to a large and influential Jewish community, comprising approximately 7 percent of the country's total population—more than 200,000 people. During the Holocaust, more than 95 percent of Jews were killed. Today only about 5,000 Jews remain in Lithuania.

The Lithuanian government's framing of the Holocaust has emphasized Soviet crimes and Lithuanian victims of the Soviet occupation, often failing to acknowledge the scale of the Holocaust in Lithuania and the role of Lithuanians in the mass shootings within the country's borders. The Jewish remnant and supporters have opposed this framing by the Lithuanian government, and have organized to correct this perceived rewriting of history and neglect of the record of the Jewish tragedy in their country, to publicly recognize Lithuanian heroes who rescued their Jewish neighbors, and to educate younger generations and the international community and engage them on this issue. One of the foremost Jewish organizations is The Jewish Community of Lithuania (TJCL), which operates a comprehensive website and blog, and utilizes public relations strategies and tactics that are characterized by issues organizations and activist groups to engage and mobilize supporters.

In 1998, Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus established the Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania (CECNSORL). The Commission's charge is to investigate crimes committed during Lithuania's occupation by the Soviet Union and Germany, from June 1940 to March 1990. The Commission worked until 2007, and was reestablished in 2012 by Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė.

This study will examine the narrative frames of the Lithuanian government, the Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, and The Jewish Community of Lithuania on the issue of Lithuania's involvement in the Holocaust. In addition, it will examine the CECNSORL's activities and the JCL's activism directed toward communicating what the organization's supporters perceive as an accurate history of the Lithuanian government's involvement in the Holocaust, and methods of educating and engaging people (e.g., students) who are not familiar with Lithuania's history during these years. For example, on January 31, 2016, four days after International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the CECNSORL held a conference attended by teachers and students from schools with tolerance education centers throughout Lithuania to remember victims and present student works about the Holocaust. TJCL posted a story about the conference on the organization's website.

Literature review

L. Grunig (1992) argued that an "activist group is a group of two or more individuals who organize in order to influence another public or publics through action...Its members are committed and organized...to reach their goals—which could be political, economic, or social" (p. 504). Smith (1997) suggested that activist organizations' primary purpose is to influence public policy, organizational action, or social norms and values. It is important to recognize that activists are organized and, therefore, face some of the same challenges as other organizations. They also strategically use communication to achieve those goals (Ferguson, 1997).

Smith and Ferguson (2010) reviewed two primary goals of activist organizations: to rectify the conditions identified by the activist public and to maintain the organization. Issues management literature suggests that issue advocates must draw attention to the problem, position themselves as legitimate advocates, and successfully argue for their recommended resolutions to the problem (Crabbe and Vibbert, 1985; Heath, 1997; Vibbert, 1987). An organization communicates its positions on issues, solicits support for action, and, ideally, engages target organizations in policy discussions. Second, activist organizations must maintain membership, thrive in what might be described as a competitive marketplace of ideas and issues, and adjust to changes in their environments. A group's position on its primary issue(s) not only identifies particular sorts of policy goals, but also embraces values that can be used to appeal to potential members and retain current members.

Methodology

This study will examine media coverage, website material, and other public communication of the Lithuanian government, the Jewish Community of Lithuania, and the Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania. Utilizing close textual analysis and narrative analysis, the paper will analyze communication directed at the two goals of activist organizations and themes in the narratives of these three entities.

Results, conclusions and implications

The study of the communication of these three organizations surrounding Lithuania's Holocaust history has implications for our understanding of how governments, government-sponsored entities, and activist organizations navigate complex socio-political history and issues, and for understanding the functions of the narratives that represent their positions. In addition, it provides insight into the communication strategies and challenges of activist organizations as they seek to fulfill the two goals of activist organizations.

Grabbing attention in the eight-second gap: of gold fish and public relations

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Recent research has shown that the average attention span of a human is now calculated as less than that of the average gold fish. Yet at the same time, some users of digital technologies are learning to process information more efficiently in short spans of high attention. This conceptual paper explores the implications for public relations of decreasing human attention spans, a phenomenon linked to increased use of digital devices, and suggests strategies for attracting and holding audiences' attention.

Research question

The research question is, "How can public relations fulfil its mandate for clients and employers in the light of rapidly declining human attention spans?"

Literature review

Methodology

This conceptual paper draws on and reworks secondary sources.

Results and conclusions

Public relations should take seriously decreasing human attention spans as it considers how to reach 21st Century audiences. In doing so, it should reflect on the role of visual communication, on the developing world of mobile PR, on how to engage with "the internet of things" and with the application of information foraging theory.

Practical and social implications

Contracting attention spans not only challenge PR professionals to influence audiences in new ways but also confront societies with dilemmas in how to communicate change to people mostly used to "snackable content".

Keywords: Attention span; visual communication; mobile public relations; internet of things; information foraging

Mobilization in times of crisis: A discursive psychological analysis of mobilizing strategies in Facebook discourse on earthquakes caused by natural gas extraction in the Netherlands

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Social media have become an influential part of people's everyday lives in the last decade. In the particular case of a crisis situation in the public domain, people share their opinions, emotions and advice on Twitter and Facebook. In this paper, the authors present a discursive psychological analysis of interaction that took place two Facebook event pages related to a particular crisis in the north of the Netherlands: the earthquakes caused by the extraction of natural gas in the province of Groningen. These pages were constructed to call visitors for participating in gatherings or demonstrations related to the earthquakes. In order to achieve the interactional goal of mobilizing others, participants have to overcome particular interactional dilemmas such as the risk of being treated as victims rather than decisive actors. The analytic focus lies on the discursive strategies participants use to deal with this dilemma, and to convince people to join their actions. Detecting these strategies provides useful insights for professionals or authorities whose aim is to interact with these citizens.

Literature review

A large body of communication research and theories focuses on the response phase (Coombs & Holladay, 2010; Avery, Lariscy, Kim & Hocke, 2010) in crisis management. To optimize the way in which communication professionals respond during a crisis situation, it is important to gain insight into the way people talk about crises on social media. Until now, the focus of research on online discourse about crises was mainly on the form and content of messages (see for instance Liu, Austin & Jin, 2011; Van der Meer & Verhoeven, 2013). Although it is important to take the context and content of discussions on social media during crises situations into account, it is of equal importance to gain insight into the way participants strategically use language to achieve particular (interactional) effects such as mobilization.

Methodology

To gain these insights, we conducted a discourse analysis from a discursive psychological perspective. From this point of view, language is not neutral, but builds a particular version of reality and simultaneously counters alternative versions (Edwards & Potter, 2001; Potter, 1996). The analytic focus lies on the rhetorical and sequential aspects of interaction, that is, how particular aspects of the event are constructed and which interactional effects are achieved. Those effects vary for instance from creating a rumor to activating people to participate in events. The discursive strategies people use in interaction also reveal the kind of dilemmas they deal with. For instance, by using a strategy that builds their identity as decisive people, speakers recount the suggestion that they are passive.

Results and conclusion

Our analysis particularly focuses on the identification of discursive strategies that are used by participants in the interaction on the two Facebook event pages to accomplish their calls for active participation. Three dominant discursive patterns were identified: disputing the integrity of authorities, constructing a positive atmosphere and a feeling of 'togetherness' and negotiating decisive identities. Each of the patterns was achieved through different discursive strategies and inherent rhetorical devices. Disputing the integrity of authorities was achieved by accusing the authorities of lying and cheating, contrasting the stake of authorities with the stake of citizens and presenting citizens as victims. To reach the effect constructing a positive atmosphere, the discursive strategies displaying positivity, constructing 'collectivity' and showing appreciation towards each other were used. Three discursive strategies that play a role in the negotiation of decisiveness were addressing (a lack of) decisiveness, minimalizing problems and doing being active.

The strategies that were used to mobilize others to participate in the events (such as creating togetherness and constructing decisiveness as an important identity) all work to demonstrate the speakers as part of a genuinely damaged group, and simultaneously to counter the suggestion that they act as passive victims. When the participants would overact their role as victims, this would undermine the success of mobilization.

Practical and social implications

This study shows that managing important themes such as mobilizing others for political events without overtly presenting oneself as a victim or without coming across negatively is done implicitly and through language. Treating participants as victims is depicted as a sensitive issue, which is an important insight for professionals in the domain of crisis communication to take into account. Although the analysis does not allow us to draw general conclusions on the way mobilizing is done in other contexts, future research could explore this issue further in other interactional environments and crisis situations. More generally, this study dem-

onstrates that it is important to explore the way people shape their online self-presentations and the interactional effects achieved through these.

Keywords: discursive psychology, discourse analysis, social media, crisis communication

Engaging publics: the way forward? PR mechanisms in urban planning

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Public engagement as a system for the involvement of local communities by public authorities is by now a well-established practice in public sector decision-making, up to the point that it is mandated in a variety of settings, at national, sub-national and local levels (Edelenbos 1999; Fung 2006; Ansell and Gash 2008; Klijn 2008). Engagement brings together parties with a common interest and allows them to work together through information sharing and the development of ideas in order to find solutions to problems which have proven to be hard to solve individually. Participatory techniques encourage the conditions in which engagement should take place in a form of rational deliberation where a self-focused attitude is suspended and actors seek to motivate each other towards understanding rather than seeking to influence one another (Hunt, Littlewood, and Thompson 2003). This paper aims at exploring whether public relations and communications' related mechanisms are a fundamental component of its success.

Literature review

The literature shows that there are several factors at play in engagement processes. On the one hand, the organisational arrangements such as process design and management are critical to successful engagement, especially with respect to the development of the relationship between the public and the authorities and the choice and implementation of appropriate tools of dialogue (Iacuzzi et al. 2015). Public authorities use communication and PR to attract community stakeholders into a relationship where complex issues can be addressed. Communication is designed to connect with the community to provide the basis for the formation or strengthening of such a relationship, in order to establish the trust and social capital necessary to provide the foundation for the introduction and use of engagement techniques. On the other, the literature identifies a number of internal and external social, psychological, economic and cultural factors which influence engagement (Irvin and John Stansbury 2004; Bryson et al. 2013). Taking the perspective of realist evaluation (Pawson and Tilley 1997; Pawson 2006; Pawson 2013) this suggests that mechanisms shape outcomes taking context into account – Context Mechanism Outcome framework.

Methodology

The paper utilises the CMO framework to provide a critical assessment of the public relations and communications' mechanisms of two experiments of public engagement in the field of urban planning in Italy. The Municipality of Cormons involved the population in a participatory process in order to decide the future of a large area in the city centre made available after the decommissioning of a former army barrack. At the same time, in the Udine area nine municipalities engaged local schools,

cultural associations, businesses and civil society at large in the identification of key landmarks for their communities in order to promote their landscape and cultural heritage as key resources for its identity and development. Eventually the selected landmarks helped create sustainable tourist routes for bikes and pedestrians.

Results and conclusions

The analysis of the two experiments reveals how the mechanisms adopted to enact public engagement influenced its outcomes and how the specific context influence this relationship. In a nutshell, results show that without credible commitment by public authorities, their willingness to renounce controlling the outcome and an institutionalization of the engagement process, public relations and communications' mechanisms are not sufficient for successful engagement. The analysis is limited by the number of case studies analysed and by their geographic and cultural proximity. Further experiments, in particular if looking at different contexts, can help validate our findings.

Practical and social implications

The overall learning point is that successful engagement is not achieved by enactment of public relations and communications mechanisms alone but a more integrated approach of different organisational tools needs to be in place.

Keywords: engagement, urban planning, CMO

Saving the Walbran: An exploration of the engagement approaches of activists, publics and stakeholders

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Introduction, purpose of the study and research question

In March 2013 environmental activists came across recently logged areas of old-growth forest within the Walbran Valley on Vancouver Island, British Columbia (BC), Canada. Despite the denial from the logging company in having future logging plans in this area in 2015, an ENGO, gained possession of evidence that indicated that the logging company indeed had clear plans for logging old-growth trees within the Walbran Valley. This has resulted in an on-going campaign by the ENGO with the focus of building awareness and engagement with its publics and stakeholders (including the BC government and the logging company) in order to stop the proposed logging activity as well as gaining protection for the area under threat. Currently the BC government does not consider the Walbran as protected parkland and on the logging company's website there is no mention of any stakeholder engagement with the only reference to its social mission being: "managing your resource for you".

The purpose of this study and aim of the research is the exploration of how the ENGO goes about its engagement with its publics and stakeholders, including the logging company. Specifically the main research questions explore: 1. What does engagement with environmental NGO community members and other stakeholders constitute? 2. How can public/social and stakeholder engagement as a communication activity be described and understood? And 3. Based on Kent and Taylor's (2014) engagement typologies what types of engagement approaches are utilised and why?

Literature review

Until recently the term 'engagement' has been a rather vague concept (Taylor & Kent, 2014) with differences in both the attached meanings as well as in the adopted approaches to implementation. Taylor and Kent's (2014) identification of five different types of engagement contexts within public relations literature (social media, employee engagement, CSR and engagement, civic engagement and social capital, and dialogic engagement) is helpful for differentiating the various approaches practitioners may adopt depending upon their perspective and area of public relations practice. As much of the work of ENGOs is to develop relationships with stakeholders (communities, government, and invested organizations) the dialogic engagement approach (Botan, 1997; Kent & Taylor, 2002) may resonate well with the organization-public relationship perspective if trust is present.

Jahansoozi (2007) built upon Taylor and Kent's (2002) work on ethical dialogue and discussed how relational dialogue increased both the strength and durability for building and maintaining organization-public relationships (OPR) as well as its centrality regarding conflict resolution. However, in practice it is likely many engagement approaches may not meet the criteria of dialogic engagement and that publics may be unwilling to participate (Botan, 1997) due to the level of engagement as

well as possible low trust levels. Still these publics and stakeholders might participate in some of the more accessible approaches (in terms of commitment) such as social media engagement, which is more likely to be one-way communication, and for those who are more actively involved civic and social capital engagement typologies (Kent & Taylor, 2014).

Methodology

A dominant qualitative research approach and purposive sampling frame was adopted with the main method being in depth interviews with environmental activists, involved publics including the logging company and other stakeholders as appropriate (approximately 12 interviews in total). Also, a small quantitative co-orientation survey was included on how engagement was perceived. In addition a textual analysis of a small sample of media reports, news releases and social media will be conducted, as well as participant observation of public information/engagement events as the campaign continues to unfold.

Results and conclusions

This research explored the types of engagement approaches used and understandings of engagement within public relations practice linked to the ENGO's on-going public campaign. Whilst this study is in progress it is anticipated that there will be variations when it comes to practitioners conceptualizations and use of 'engagement' compared with the dialogic engagement relational OPR approach. Limitations of this research include the scale of this research utilizing only one campaign. However the depth provided should result in a better understanding of how ENGOs currently may approach and understand engagement (including trust, understanding and importantly the willingness of the involvement of relevant publics) with their target publics. Future research building upon engagement typologies and OPRs in other sectors is recommended as sector cultures may be influential.

Practical and social implications

Implications of the findings identify whether organizations are using dialogic engagement or if they are using other types, which may not in reality be defined as engagement within public relations. The lack of understanding what dialogical engagement entails may backfire as substance is lacking.

Keywords: engagement, dialogue, ENGOs, OPRs

Challenges of Branding in Post-Conflict Countries – The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Country branding, by which the authors imply the management of identity and image, that is, communication with the global audience, is an omnipresent phenomenon, and numerous studies have confirmed that a country's good image is reflected in its international economic and political position. Accordingly, various strategies, techniques and branding tools have been developed and have been applied in practice by many countries throughout the world.

Literature review

Theory and practice in this area is rather lacking when it comes to branding divided and post-conflict countries (Gould and Skinner, 2007; Vitic and Ringer, 2008; Novelli et al, 2012). For this reason, the paper is concerned with the challenges, opportunities and methods of branding Bosnia and Herzegovina (Duraković; 2009; Skoko, 2010), which, even twenty years after the end of the war in that country, is still synonymous with an unstable state and a divided society in Europe.

Methodology

This paper provides an adjusted branding methodology, relying on an analysis of the elements of identity around which there is a consensus of all three ethnic groups - Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs, and reveals the potentials upon which the modern brand of a European Bosnia and Herzegovina can be built. The authors especially observe the role of domicile inhabitants and argue that their perceptions and attitudes towards Bosnia and Herzegovina have significant, if not crucial, role in making branding strategy. Their starting point and hypothesis indicates that foundation in branding post-conflict and multinational countries should be discordance determination among perceptions of ethnic groups. Furthermore, the authors point out the necessity to achieve consensus on the key elements that make country's identity and to establish attractive factors for foreign public. Research is conducted on three levels with a key goal of identifying contemporary identity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The authors see it as a foundation for developing branding strategy therefore they take into consideration the viewpoints on which there is consensus among all three nations (Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs). Survey was conducted with a purpose to determine perceptions on the past, the present and the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also to determine key elements of country's identity. The perceptions differ in a regard to examinees' nationality, however the authors managed to isolate key attitudes with a highest level of agreement as their starting point. The second level research was conducted with focus groups which were consisted of experts from different parts of a country (study included experts from tourism and marketing, economy, culture, public relations and

media – the ones that represent and promote Bosnia and Herzegovina). The third level research included foreign experts who have experienced Bosnia and Herzegovina (tourist agents, investors, journalists and officials from political institutions), to determine which parts of the country's identity are attractive to foreign publics.

Results and conclusions

By summarizing the results of all three research projects, the authors produced an overview of the most attractive natural, cultural and historical locations, manifestations, symbols, products, persons and specificities that could make Bosnia and Herzegovina recognizable in the world. The results show that there is a serious disagreement about events associated with the last war in the country and current political situation. On the other side, there is a high agreement regarding country's strengths such as natural beauties, lifestyle and historical heritage. Furthermore, the results indicate that citizens are more open to cooperation than political elites, while experts see country's unresolved political status and unwillingness of government representatives to cooperate, when dealing with various issues (politics, economy), as the biggest obstacle in branding Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Practical and social implications

This paper shows that especially the differences, which were recently the reason for conflict and war, can now contribute to uniqueness and specificity of the country brand. The specificity of Bosnia and Herzegovina is recognized through the existence of three constitutive nations and therefore diversity in historical, cultural and geographical sense. The authors present results from several research projects and bring the key elements of branding strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The branding analysis for the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina provides guidelines and recommendations in branding other post-conflict countries.

Keywords: Bosnia and Herzegovina, branding, identity, country, conflict

Exploring shifts in public relations discipline: From organisational functionalism to sociological, critical and cultural perspectives on public engagement

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Introduction and purpose of the study.

Several practitioners and experts in the field of public relations have emphasized the importance of public engagement in the context of new technological and social developments and the impact this has on (re)shaping public relations. While the practice is embracing the new trends, there is a question to what extent public relations discipline follows the suit. The purpose of this study is to explore the manifestation of the topic of public engagement in academic public relations research.

Literature review

Growing constellation of new publics and challenges the bring for organisations is – besides digital network evolution and its impact on communication as well as pressures of a global economy and changing organisational identities and responsibilities – characterised as one of the crucial drivers of change for the public relations profession, yet has received significantly less attention in public relations scholarship than the other two areas (Pasadeos, Berger & Renfro, 2010). In fact, public relations discipline has traditionally been dominated by functionalist paradigm and normative theories, particularly excellence theory, with a focus on organisational communication, public relations profession and how it can benefit organisations (Edwards, 2016; Hatherell & Bartlett, 2006; Jelen, 2008). There seems to be an overall scholarly fascination with producing more sophisticated knowledge to understand strategic managing of public relations within organisations (Holtzhausen, 2002; Sallot, Lyon, Acosta-Alzuru & Jones, 2003), creating an impression that public relations is nothing but “a management oriented communication practice that can be strategically planned, tactically executed and empirically evaluated.” (Bentele & Wehmeier, 2009, p.341).

While encouraging movements towards decentralisation and diversification of research areas, topics and perspectives have emerged together with socio-cultural turn (bringing critical, cultural, sociological and feminist approaches to the field), there is a question to what extent these shifts redirected scholarly attention from (powerful) organisations and questions of “best” organisational communication and relationship-building practices to publics and public engagement. The questions of understanding, explaining and managing engagement of different publics (e.g. employees, communities, media, consumers, activists), digital engagement, grassroots democracy, disengagement and institutional response as well as ways, in which individuals and groups can use the new technologies to communicate their concerns about different organisations and to mobilise others to action, albeit pertinent to practice still appear to be largely underexplored in public relations discipline.

Methodology

This study explores to what extent and from which theoretical perspectives public engagement has been studied in public relations scholarship in comparison with other thematic areas. Content analysis of academic articles published between 2005 and 2015 in five most influential public relations journals, namely International Journal of Strategic Communication, Journal of Communication Management, Journal of Public Relations Research, Public Relations Inquiry and Public Relations Review was conducted. 328 randomly selected articles were coded and analysed in terms of themes and theoretical approaches used.

Results and conclusions

Preliminary results confirm that there are encouraging movements towards diversification of topics and socio-cultural turn in theoretical approaches, yet these still remain very much focused on studying public relations phenomena in and for organisations, while not paying satisfactory attention to the role of publics and stakeholders. There is little concern with phenomena outside of (powerful and often resource-rich) organisational arena, including sociological, critical and cultural perspectives on the role of different publics and stakeholders in communication processes. While people are getting increasingly engaged in a disengaged world, public relations discipline remains disengaged from such developments and theorisations. These are extensively present in intellectual currents of other social sciences and humanities, including sociology, political communication, communication and media studies and organisational theory (Hatherell & Bartlett, 2006).

Practical and social implications

The results serve as yet another indicator that public relations scholarship failed to connect with or have an impact on society as well as theoretical frameworks of other disciplines. The field needs to devote more attention to publics and stakeholders, who in contemporary societies no longer represent a mere recipients of organisational communications, but are enabled to rapidly communicate and interact with organizations and other publics. This way, public relations scholarship will greatly benefit from much needed further diversity of topics and perspectives, which have a potential to render the discipline more relevant, credible and inclusive in the broader society and social scientific arena.

Keywords: public relations discipline, paradigm shift, engagement, functionalism, socio-cultural turn

CSR Communication in the Energy Sector: Message Positioning and Ambiguity in Corporate Messages

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Introduction and Purpose of Study

Media ethical discourses on corporate behavior – both sustainably and ethically – are usually negatively connoted, focusing on (managerial) misconduct. Hardly, positive contributions are put at the center, making accusations of “greenwashing” sound rather warranted and legitimate. Recent years, however, have led to a change in argumentation, which has forced corporations to rethink their scope of activities. One crucial question directed towards companies today is as old as the idea of a company itself: “what is business for and what contribution does it make to society” (Crane et al. 2008: 3f.)? Apart from economic goals (i.e. increasing sales and revenues), enterprises have increasingly started to address social and environmental challenges (Karmasin and Weder, 2011). Today, more than ever, a company’s reputation in the global marketplace is related to its social as well as its financial performance. Recent research and marketplace polls have confirmed that a firm’s social actions play a significantly greater role than anticipated in forming consumer and stakeholder impressions of companies. In consequence, a purely economic form of operation does not suffice anymore; instead, firms have to align their economic efforts with social and environment concerns in order not to lose their ‘license to operate’.

Methodology

This also holds true for the energy sector, whose motives has been often subject to public scrutiny and questioning. By use of a qualitative content analysis the project at hand intends to shed some light on (1) how energy providers and companies working in energy-related sectors position themselves with regard to their CSR activities in their online communication and (2) also intends to pinpoint potential ambiguities in their communicative efforts (e.g., energy “saving”). When consciously communicating their CSR efforts, companies can frame their messages in a two-fold way: they can either justify their actions (usually after having been exposed as operating unethically; past orientation) or they can legitimize their actions in order to open up new fields of operation (future orientation; Karmasin and Weder, 2008; Weder, 2012). Moreover, argumentations can address two sorts of issues (ranging from extreme, moderate to neutral in emphasis): they can either center on economic topics or take an ethical/ anthropological stance.

For the content analysis put forward herein, online communication tools – comprising websites, online press releases as well as content for download, such as CSR/sustainability reports and promotional messages – were investigated along the dimensions introduced by Weder (2012). On the

one hand, the challenges energy providers are facing when communicating CSR messages were examined; on the other hand, contradictions are likely to arise which were thematized as well.

Results and Conclusions

Results indicate that CSR has been implemented in most energy and energy-related industries; however, it receives varying degrees of attention and intensity.

Keywords: CSR communication, energy sector, framing, content analysis, qualitative study

Stakeholder Networks as Scopes of Responsibility: A Long-Term Study on the Individual Engagement of CEOs and Managers in Austria (1995-2012)

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Introduction and Purpose of Study

The social transformation of media relations is closely related to reciprocal actions that primarily affect the areas of media technologies, communication structures as well as communication processes. Recent developments, such as the mediatization, digitization and a high-degree of interconnectedness contribute to the rationale of a “network society” (Castells, 2001). This means that “we are now connecting all the knowledge centers on the planet together into a single global network” (Friedman, 2006: 8). Hereby, the network society’s dynamics are produced and reproduced through verbal practices, especially in form of public communication processes. As enterprises qualify as publicly exposed entities (Dyllick, 1989) and are required to explain and legitimize their actions, communication presents the means of shaping formal and informal, internal and external relationships amongst organizations and their actors (Weder, 2007a). Thus, it is a way of integrating enterprises into society as well as vice versa, meaning that society is put into relation to enterprises through communicative processes.

Literature Review

Located at the interface between a communicative and a rather economically-driven approach is the idea of Stakeholder Management, which is crucial to the area of entrepreneurial responsibility. Within recent years, it has been more frequently addressed in communication sciences (Karmasin 2007; Karmasin and Weder, 2013) where more advanced and communicative definitions of CSR have been employed (for example, see Ihlen et al., 2011; Raupp et al., 2010; Karmasin and Weder, 2008; May et al., 2009), leading to extended perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Broadly speaking, CSR describes “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis environment” (European Commission, 2001: 8). Today, CSR communication has developed into a transdisciplinary research agenda, with theoretical and empirical approaches increasingly focusing on the ‘communicative elements’ of CSR concepts (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012; Ihlen et al., 2011). This being the case, CSR communication holds the potential to “strengthen the social reputation and consequently the entire reputation of an organization” (Röttger and Schmitt, 2009: 43) and, thus, presents a business goal worth striving for.

Methodology

The research presented herein is based on a theoretical model of CSR Communication that tries to overcome the managerial or technical approaches to organizations and their effectiveness as well as the linear understanding of CSR Communication as external process of communicating social, economic, and environmental responsibilities (Golob et al, 2013, p. 178). As CSR is considered as participatory process (Sorsa, 2008), Stakeholder Networks are conceptualized as so-called ‘scopes of responsibility’ that are related to corporate engagement; these were put at the center of the present investigation.

Recent data derived from a long-term study (qualitative survey, conducted from 1995 to 2012) examined both Austrian managers’ (n = 150) and the population’s (n = 1000) attitudes towards corporate social responsibility.

Results and Conclusions

The study outlined herein revealed interesting results: First, interviewees were well aware of organizations’ networked embeddedness within society and their resulting responsibilities; and second, they were conscious of the relation between the implementation of corresponding structures in Austrian enterprises and individual decision-making processes. In addition, an individual commitment to get engaged in ethical issues is required; yet, it does not serve as a sufficient precondition for realizing responsibility. Furthermore, it was determined that responsible stakeholder relations were perceived as a pre-condition for and outcome of corporate CSR activities. CSR then, can be seen as both a strategy and framework of internal and external communication processes and structures. Finally, in order to succeed, a more differentiated organizational coverage in terms of ethical engagements together with the commitment of all stakeholders was perceived as mandatory.

Keywords: Stakeholder, Stakeholder Networks, Longitudinal Study, Individual Engagement, Institutional Engagement

A Viral Opportunity? Viral Videos And Public Relations - Seed Virality Into PR Video Campaigns

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Why do some public relations videos go viral on social media while others do not? Sufficient research preceding PR campaigns is one prominent reason why certain advertisement agencies' efforts have paid off resulting in higher viewing and discussion rate. Even though it seems obvious, companies do not commonly require scientific measurements to establish video strategy and instead they trust in their own judgment rather than launching sufficient research on their target "netizens". Whether or not there is a potential for a branded video to achieve online virality is worthy of discussion. In order to look further into this issue, a study is conducted to provide PR practitioners with an overview about viral diffusion online. It seeks to offer some insight into how to apply these tactics to online conversations between an organization and its audience. The results inform the efforts to attain the goals of increasing the level of PR service by creating effective video strategy.

Literature review

The author identified a gap in the existing literature. Audience research regarding the degree of viral technique acceptance, reaction, most importantly, favorability and transmission is needed to be conducted in order to understand the trends of global viral consumption. Moreover, the disclosure of cultural distinction may affect the reception of this viral material and hence is included in viral videos as a new tactic of PR. However, views from audiences have not yet been empirically investigated. Thus, this researcher attempts to examine the differences in video perception across audience of diverse regions in an attempt to reveal the structure of viral campaigns. This study traces the development of PR from its origins to this innovation and explores how online audiences are targeted in order to increase campaign coverage and lead to potential profits. This paper also focuses on how online audiences are targeted in order to achieve a viral effect on the social media Twitter.

Methodology

This study compares pre-existing viral and popular videos produced for PR purposes and residing in different tactic categories. Data from three group interviews and questionnaires that received 161 replies from the Generation Y, underscore the actual effect of individual socio-cultural processes in how the public perceives prominently well-featured viral videos. The content analysis on Twitter data reveals the substantial influence winning a PR award has on a video' mentions on Twitter. Insights provided by 13 key figures in PR industry shows that how this momentum matters pertaining to the practice of public relation in the new media age.

To the best of the author's knowledge, this is the first multi-method study combining public relations

and viral videos. This work contributes to the continuing development of empirical and theoretical foundations of PR practice, particularly those of surrounding the use of viral media.

Results and conclusions

Of the viral categories studied, audiences responded highly to elements of surprise, video characters, brand recognition, and high musical qualities. A complex combination of viral features in the video texts is more efficient than one-way viral theme. Satire and framing are rarely used in those exceptional cases that achieved worldwide success. Emotionally arousing content shows an inverse correlation with brand memorability, and high frequency of corporate identity system shows lower public favorability. The findings also reveal that the viral features to which the audiences responded and the extent of those responses were slightly different for European and Asian audiences.

Practical and social implications

In general, worldwide success of a PR video consists of collaboration among campaigners, a receptive social media audience, accounts of the video reported by traditional media, and in some cases influential individuals. While many commentators contend that virality can never be constructed but hoped, the author offers support to the debate on the use of highly stimulating video content leading to viral success as a PR strategy and examines the circumstances under which it may be more effective. This study also takes a psychological approach to understanding diffusion among audience, from media. It provides actionable insights for PR professionals, particularly that exploitation of emotive appeal can lead to high gains of exposure on social media.

Keywords: Public Relations, Viral Videos, Virality

Online communities for employee engagement and democracy in the workplace. The case of IBM

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Introduction and purpose of the study

The internet changed “business as usual” (Levine, Locke, Searle, & Weinberger, 2011) by breaking down the boundaries between internal and external stakeholder groups, decentralizing organizations, and empowering employees with borderless communication (Weinberger, 2011). The internet proves to be an invaluable tool in the hands of employees who can use it to engender a shift in a company’s leadership strategy and culture, namely from the information model of managerial control, characterized by strategy and consent to a democratic environment that revolves around employee involvement and participation (Deetz, 2004, 2009). In addition, with the help of the internet, employees can expose current organizational practices, thus forcing companies to be more ethical.

This study contends that employees can trigger a quicker shift toward a democratic workplace by engaging in online communities. Online communities were shown in past studies to facilitate equality and foster strong relationships among organizational members (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Butler et al., 2007; Hsu & Lu, 2007; Matei & Bruno, 2015; Tao, 2011; Turner, Grube, & Meyers, 2001; Rheingold, 2001), all of which trigger increased offline interactions. (Hsu & Lu, 2007; Rheingold, 2001). The purpose of this study is to analyze the interactions and the predictors of engagement within an employee online community and to provide guidelines for future use of online engagement for employee advocacy groups and unions.

Literature Review

The present analysis draws from past research on online communities (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Butler et al., 2007; Hsu & Lu, 2007; Matei & Bruno, 2015; Tao, 2011; Turner, Grube, & Meyers, 2001; Rheingold, 2001), internal communication (Johansen, Aggerholm, & Fransen, 2012; Friedl & Tkalac Vercic, 2011; Lies, 2012; Men, 2012; Poloski Vokic & Vidoc, 2015; Ruck & Welch, 2012; Welch, 2012), and critical theory (Deetz, 2004, 2009) to analyze the online community of Alliance@IBM, a workers advocate group at IBM whose mission was to restore management’s respect for its employees and the value these bring to the company.

Methodology

Alliance@IBM’s online community provides an opportunity to ascertain the predictors of online engagement, namely high self-efficacy, group norm, and social identity which were shown in past

studies to significantly increase contribution and commitment in online groups (Hsu & Lu, 2007). The sample of analysis comprised the comments made by IBM’s employees within the online community (N=377) over a period of 20 months, namely from the time the community was first created (April 6, 2015) until it ceased its activity (December 31, 2015).

The analysis was conducted using rhetorical criticism, a method that enabled the researcher to engage in a “systematic process of illuminating and evaluating” persuasion within text (Andrews, Leff, & Terrill, 1998) and that allowed for the analysis of the relationship between the message and its context, namely the “placement, development, and relationship of ideas in the persuasive message(s)” (Zhang & Benoit, 2004). This method was deemed the most suitable because the study analyzed the predictors of online engagement from the perspective of the critical theory (Deetz 2004, 2009).

Results

By analyzing the predictors of online engagement (self-efficacy, group norm, and social identity), the results of this study shed light on the most effective communication strategies that can trigger online contribution and engagement within the context of employee advocacy. The limitation of this analysis consists in its use of a single case study. Since organizational culture is unique, it is recommended that future research efforts focus on a cross-case analysis to ascertain the main online engagement predictors that can be used across industries.

Practical and societal implications

The results of this analysis can help improve online employee engagement for advocacy purposes and can contribute to efforts that aim to bring about positive changes in the workplace. Such changes become even more important for corporations as they are facing a new generation of employees, namely the millennials. Raised with access to the internet and aware of the changes that online communication can trigger in the society, the millennials will be expecting a democratic, transparent, and inclusive organizational culture (Gallicano, 2013; Fassinger, Shullman, & Stevenson, 2010). Finally, this analysis provides a rhetorical framework that will enable employee advocacy groups to effectively trigger online engagement.

Keywords: employee engagement, online communities, managerialism, workplace democracy, IBM

Flipping the coin in public relations research: Social media crisis of “Tonus” bread as the case of “organization relations”

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Introduction and purpose of the study

The most influential actors and institutions that have shaped information-communication systems in previous century have been gradually surrendering their power to the previously passive consumers of information and products – audiences and publics. The publics empowered with diversified digital media have started to step into the public relations. The purpose of this paper is to examine the reversed flow of public relations, when publics engage in communication with the organizations and exercise the power to change the organizations' behavior.

Literature review

Such cases have been already studied mostly as crisis situations (Coombs & Holladay, 2014, Pang et al., 2014; Pang, 2013; Champoux et al., 2012) or a “paracrisis” defined as “a publicly visible crisis threat that charges an organization with irresponsible or unethical behavior” by Coombs and Holladay (2012:409). Pang (2013:333) offers a broader perspective using the concept of „social media hype“, understood as a “netizen-generated hype that causes huge interest that is triggered by a key event and sustained by a self-reinforcing quality in its ability for users to engage in conversation”.

Methodology

The case study was chosen for this research as the most appropriate for thorough comprehension of the phenomenon in its context (Cavaye 1996). Although multiple case research design provides a ground for comparative analysis, it was decided to focus on a single case in order to provide rich description and to identify causal processes that can go beyond a single observation (Della Porta & Keating, 2008:211).

Results and conclusions

The case of social media “hype” or “paracrisis” revolving around the bread brand “Tonus” produced by “Trivit” company, located in Bečej in Serbia, will be studied in depth. The emergence and development of the “hype” will be presented through social media graph and content analysis of mainstream media and most influential blogs about the topic. The conduct of the company

and the company's reactions will be reconstructed step by step, ending with significant change in product labeling, image and financial losses. Also, the reflection on the company's demeanor will be provided through the interview with the top manager of the company. Those views will be contrasted with the observations of the social media influencers that petitioned for the change of the company behavior. The results of this research will show that the different conduct of the company and PR team could have prevented the crisis and minimized the tremendous loss.

Practical and social implications

This case study can stand as a valuable “lesson” for the practitioners facing a “paracrisis”. In the broader perspective, this study can make a ground for reexamining the status of “publics” whose power has been somewhat neglected in the mainstream research and theory of the public relations (for example see Edwards, 2012; Pasadeos, Berger & Renfro, 2010; Smith, 2010). The concept of “organizational relations” will be offered as a “counterweight” to “public relations”, signifying the shift of power between the organizations and their publics. Namely, this paper argues that “organization relations” can be fruitful stance for researching the rising cases of publics claiming the power over the organizations.

Keywords: Paracrisis, Social media, Social media hype, Crisis communication

Engagement as Sensemaking

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Introduction and Purpose

Too often, as scholars, we may reimagine public relations as either all good or all bad – rather than acknowledging it as a set of intricate social, economic and political practices. Public engagement, a dialogic and deliberative mode of participation, has been proposed as a potential mechanism for overcoming criticisms of public relations as spin, as socially disengaged. Pinning hopes for a radically changed public relations profession upon engagement is highly idealistic and . Our aim, in this paper, is to advance a nuanced conceptualization of engagement as a socio-cultural, sensemaking process.

Literature review

Engagement, Stirling (2008) argued, may be deployed for a number of deterministic and meaningful purposes. “Instrumental or normative engagement” (Stirling, 2008) processes seek commitment to pre-determined outcomes – often by closing down possibilities for participation, power-sharing and pluralist outcomes. “Substantive engagement” (Stirling, 2008), in contrast, is designed to create multiple opportunities for participation, open up possibilities for redistributed power relations, and encourage negotiated outcomes. The challenge for public relations is to develop substantive engagement processes that align public and organizational starting points, open up possibilities for framing issues in ways that resonate with multiple publics, and inform governance decision-making processes (Motion, Heath and Leitch, 2016).

Methodology

This paper draws upon data generated from a nationally-based, empirical research project that investigated how people make sense of recycled water initiatives. Within our research into recycled water we sought to trial a range of inventive engagement techniques to understand how engagement plays out as a deliberative sensemaking process and to generate data about citizens’ concerns and priorities. Ten focus groups were convened across Australia - each group consisted of ten members of the public, independently recruited to achieve the most representative sample of Australian attitudes to and concerns about the issue of potable reuse of water. The discussions were held over two sessions and concentrated on qualitative processes of collective sense making – how members of the general public make sense of the need for water source diversification and how they prioritise water recycling against other potential responses. The first session included discussion of a range of stimulus material designed to open up in-depth discussion of potable reuse. For the second session, researchers developed the methodology of reflexive dialogue to

enable participants to reflect on their earlier conversation and expand points for further discussion in more detail. The sessions closed with a visual research method in which participants were asked to imagine and draw a representation of future water supply.

Results and Conclusions

The research findings (Kearnes, Motion, and Barrett, 2014) identified a set of cultural sensemaking processes that act as critical starting points for how publics respond to potable reuse proposals. Scepticism, social justice, environmental justice and issues of fairness shaped how publics made sense of their relationship with water. Concerns about institutional communication practices led participants to question the veracity of messages around water scarcity - concern for others and the environment influenced how people prioritised possible options. Differences between political and institutional framing of water-related issues and the ways members of the general public think about and make sense of recycled water suggest that deterministic approaches have dominated public discourses and debates. Sensemaking processes within the engagement sessions were dynamic and, in some instances, opinions shifted a number of times. Critical insights for public relations from the research are that public responses are often highly conditional and influenced by a range of social, political and institutional factors such as fundamental questions concerning the need for particular proposals, mistrust in government and public institutions, notions of choice and consumer preference, and issues of control and empowerment. We close the paper by exploring the implications of theorizing the relationship between community engagement and public relations practice as sensemaking.

Practical and social implications

Theorizing engagement as a sensemaking has significant social and practical implications for public relations: it provides insights into ways that multiple cultural meanings are mobilized and drawn upon to interpret and understand particular issues; it highlights public relations power/knowledge/communication gaps; and opens up conversations about the power relations that underpin societal and organizational decision-making and governance.

Keywords: Engagement, sensemaking, cultural meanings

More than enough is too much! Community and Stakeholder Engagement in Water Management Projects in Central Europe

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Introduction

There is no engagement without a problem. This is the basic assumption of the international research project dealing with water management and the question of how much media and corporate communication influences people to get engaged with the environmental issues and resources and the water issue in particular. With four case studies at an European, national, regional and local level we can show that only a high degree of problematization of an issue (here: flooding or water scarcity and droughts) lead to participation as well as engagement which – much more than participation or activism - depends on the existence of organizational structures.

Literature review

In the scientific literature stakeholder engagement is almost exclusively seen from a view interested in the engagement of companies. In this study we leave the beaten paths and consider engagement from the perspective of stakeholders. Hence it defined as a process, by which internal and external stakeholders exert influence on decisions of organizations. In the literature the terms engagement, activism and participation (social movement, involvement and cooperation are used as well) are in respect of their meaning closely linked to stakeholder engagement. Engagement occurs here generally, that is without regard to a special meaning, or it is spoken about engagement in connection with specific forms and areas. Respective examples are social or voluntary engagement and civic engagement (UN 1999, Alscher et al. 2009 etc.). The study's approach is highly linked to scientific contributions on activism (Grunig 1992, Diani 1992 etc.), participation (e.g. Arnstein 1969) and social movements (Ganesh/Stohl 2014, Della Porta/Diani 2006, Tarrow 1994 etc.).

Methodology

The empirical case study analysis deals with the transeuropean project "Alp-Water-Scarce", the river dialogue "Untere Salzach", the "Wasser.reich" project in Carinthia and the citizens' initiative "Bürgerforum Wasser Klagenfurt". It outlines, which communicative moments influence the engagement of stakeholders. Within the scope of the analysis twelve semistructured interviews were held and interpreted. Case studies are the method of choice when an in-depth understanding of

an entity as it is situated in context is needed (Creswell 2007, Yin 2009). The interview method was chosen because of the great importance of the interviewees' subjective perceptions for the study (Flick 2009). The results were elaborated against the background of five categories: communicative moments, reasons of engagement, intensities of engagement, link between discourse(s) and organizing activities and lastly, limits and potentials. The categories were built deductively and then evaluated inductively on the basis of the qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2008/2015). After an individual examination of the cases a comprehensive cross-case analysis was made.

Findings

The results show that there is no direct link between the public discourse (media, corporate communication) on the water topic and (collective) engagement or organizing activities. Personal relations and collective dynamics play a major role in engagement though. Accordingly, communication flows that lead to participation are mainly identified on a personal level. Reasons of engagement correlate strongly with professional backgrounds. In the studies, water is broached to an issue and therefore a reason for engagement when too much or too little of it is present. As there is no water shortage and people have very rarely problems with drinking water, it is not a big issue in the public. Stakeholders remain disengaged, as long as they are not affected. The study doesn't only demonstrate that dismay and location play an important role in engaging people on water issues, but that stakeholder engagement equals a highly complex, autonomous and individual process that requires qualitative research methods.

Theoretical, practical & social implications

Many theoretical considerations, such as the existence of intensity levels, are not necessarily valid in the case of engagement on water supply and scarcity. This is not only due to the process-based character of engagement, but also because of the lack of scientific information on the necessity of structures, organizations, interpersonal relations etc. for engagement. Hence more qualitative research (e.g. scenario thinking, focus groups, interviews) and quantitative data on the people's ways dealing with resources is needed. Organizations, political institutions as well as corporations have to acknowledge that stakeholders get engaged "themselves", whereas the problematization of issues can foster the people's engagement. Highly individual and customized communication strategies are here essential from a PR point of view. Likewise, stakeholders should be aware of their (collective) power and give increasingly thought to the possible consequences of their individual behavior as for them it is about the guidance and control of organizational decisions.

Keywords: Stakeholder engagement, participation, activism, water supply and scarcity, communication flows

Micro narratives as internal communication strategy for engaging people

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Contemporary reflections on communications suggest that in the fleetness of post-modernity and in the presence of so many possibilities offered by the multiplicity of media platforms (traditional and digital), many organizations, in the urgency to communicate, generate large amounts of information with no relevance to their audiences. Limited to a ready template and replicated without criteria, this information is issued to individuals without considering the different members/constructive subjects of organizational culture and their stories, memories and wishes; missing the various opportunities to rethink the process of internal communication.

Before this scenario, the present study aims to identify opportunities to engage people, to involve the internal workforce, as well as creating more attractive and successful communication narratives. To that purpose, we seek a better understanding of the richness in the content of eight different oral memory projects, which nature is participatory and dialogic, such as those developed based on storytelling about the employees' experiences in the organizational environment: the micro narratives. This concept was developed based on the theories that interpret the grand narratives of modernity, which had a significant influence in people's lives and served as references to society, but started weakening in the twentieth century and were dissolved in the post-modernity, when the focus shifted to the individual and their stories.

Therefore, when we verify, describe, explain and understand the contents stated by respondents in their organizational micro narratives, it is possible to ponder how internal communications can work more effectively and affectively to generate new narratives that encourage involvement, engaging, recognition, identification, understanding and action from the employees, in detriment to rationality, standardization, and ephemeral excesses of information.

Literature review

The study will be based on the authors applied social sciences, organizational communication, internal communication, public relations, storytelling and studies on the narrative. Within the scope of organizational communication, internal communication and public relations, we have based on the professors at the USP, Paulo Nassar and Margarida Kunsch. How important support, other authors will also be analyzed, as James Grunig and Don Tapscott. In the context of storytelling and narrative,

authors as Pedro Bendassolli and Roland Barthes, and works by Paul Thompson, Gérard Genette and Daniel Pink. Works of researchers such as Marshall McLuhan, Zygmunt Bauman, Jean Baudrillard, Manuel Castells, Stuart Hall and Henry Jenkins, among others, will be part of the theoretical framework.

Methodology

The main objective of this empirical research, based on the methodology of Laurence Bardin (content analysis) is to verify whether employees, living their daily work in organizations (regardless of their positions, titles, ages or gender), expose - or not - the following categories when they describe their experiences and memories in relation to the organizational world: emotions, subjectivity (dreams and beliefs), feelings of belonging and recognition themselves, the mythological values of the organization, heroic acts, the spreading expertise of their work, their vulnerabilities and their identifications to organizations (whether positive or negative).

With that, this research seeks to understand the strength and wealth of information that may exist in the reports of small parts that make up the organization - in micro narratives - so, to describe, explain and understand the content displayed in these narratives, becomes can reflect how public relations can work more effectively to generate involvement, engagement, recognition, identification, understanding and action of its employees. The study is qualitative, based on interviews - micro narratives in storytelling format (life testimonials) - of officials drawn from 8 different Brazilian organizations, regardless of age, gender, position or current activities.

Results and conclusions

It's intended to observe and describe mainly the results on the idea that no matter what type of work done by an employee, or his seniority, everyone can be engaged. To tell their personal life stories in relation to their daily lives in the organizational world, all these categories are present in their content and have a good chance to emoting and engage people in a disengaged world, which usually do not value and the importance for the information of life histories of each employee.

Practical and social implications

The research, in addition to analyzing the aspects that can improve internal communication actions, aimed at trying to understand, especially the changes in society, in the face of consequences brought about by the new times with abundance of information and attention deficit disorder. When searching for the micro narratives we can understand the behavior of the individual, since it makes it difficult to wrap it up, because it is no longer unique and stable, but multiple and changeable according to the situation. Earn your attention and your engagement becomes somewhat complex and, therefore, must also be studied in the social sphere.

Keywords: public relations; internal communication; new narratives; storytelling; engaging people.

Engaging Employees in CSR. Engagement types and engagement strategies in employee communication

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Introduction

In management few subjects arise as much controversy as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), often described as moving issue bearing individual meanings for scientists as well as practitioners. In recent years CSR has grown strong within communication and management studies and has increasingly been discussed as a success factor for corporations (Breitbarth 2011) and element of creating a “shared value” (Porter & Kramer 2012) for organizations and society. To foster the institutionalization of CSR (Rademacher & Remus 2014) and to avoid the impression of merely green washing the organization corporations seek to involve their staff members in the initiative and support individual engagement of employees (e.g. volunteering) by offering a wide range of engagement opportunities. Employee communication and employer branding are responsible for sensemaking and linking the CSR initiative to thought leadership and business strategy (Schultz & Wehmeier 2010).

Originality and Purpose

The general approach to CSR is a business case-driven view that longs to connect CSR initiative to the core business (Matten & Moon 2008) and differentiates between a more explicit and more implicit approach – also representing different perceptions of CSR initiative among employees. It is likely that these perceptions are influenced by individual norms (Osborn & Redfern 2006) and values as well as by the employee communication (Morsing & Schultz 2010). Since CSR initiative is usually planned and communicated top-down the bottom-up perspective of employees is a missing link in the current research agenda. This leads to the question what kind of engagement types do exist among employees and which communication strategies and engagement opportunities are necessary to address this field of engagement types.

Design/methodology/approach

Based on a literature review an ideal typology of CSR engagement types and their communication patterns is developed and tested with an online survey among the employees of a German bank that was carried out among all levels of hierarchy as well as across local branches and core departments.

Practical and social implications

The results show a number of challenges in linking CSR initiative to the corporate strategy, in framing

the CSR initiative and influencing the perception of employees regarding the CSR programs of their own corporation. The results strongly support the development of a more differentiated and engagement type sensible communication framework for engaging employees in CSR affairs.

Mobilising and engaging South African students: The #feesmustfall campaign

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Introduction and purpose of the study

South African institutions are experiencing a tumultuous period of civil and student unrest, protests and demonstrations. The years 2015/2016 have seen numerous hashtag campaigns and social programmes that left significant impacts on the ruling government in general (#ZumaMustFall, #NkandlaMustFall, #PayBackTheMoney), and institutions of higher learning (#RhodesMustFall) and in particular (#FeesMustFall).

This is the era of digitally sophisticated citizens who are well informed of their rights and the responsibilities of government. Technology is leveraged as a means for ordinary people to vocalise their opinions and mobilise themselves towards holding governments and other institutions accountable.

The student protests that took place in South Africa in the last quarter of 2015 and early 2016, culminated in a national campaign with global support. This campaign resulted from the concerns of students regarding the cost of education at South African universities and the government's lack of delivery on their promises to investigate free education at university level. This protest led to the disruption of academic activities and the temporary closure of some universities across South Africa. Students and other stakeholders gathered at universities around the country to protest the annual increase of university fees. With the creation of the hashtag "#FeesMustFall" on social media platforms, students were able to engage stakeholders that they otherwise may not have been able to reach effectively. This hashtag campaign enabled thousands of students from all over the country to mobilise themselves and grab the attention of the South African government, university governance and even the world.

Purpose of the study

The "FeesMustFall" campaign proved the influence that citizens and activists have over state decisions through engagement on social media. It also provided a platform for government and university authorities to interact with students and negotiate terms that eventually suited all parties concerned.

Objectives of the study will be to:

- document the actual events as they unfolded from December 2015 through to January 2016
- thematically analyse the #FeesMustFall social media campaign content and responses (Leximancer programme to be used)
- record the campaign engagement of other stakeholders nationally and globally

Results and conclusions

Many South African voices, those of vice-chancellors of universities included, have been lamenting

inter alia the underfunding of higher education for over a decade with little effect. But it was the students with their marches on Parliament in Cape Town and the Union Buildings in Pretoria (corridors of government power and decision making) that shook up the state, changed the systemic parameters and began the process of fundamentally transforming higher education. With this campaign they achieved in seven days what the country had been talking about for over a decade.

Practical and social implications

Lessons to be learned from this campaign are:

Avoid (or if already there), challenge racial essentialism and racism as these de-legitimise any cause and undermine the unity in action required for future effective issues management

Avoid public violence and the violation of the rights of others on principle, because it undermines public engagement and support for the cause and provokes a securocratic response from the state

Recognise that successful social action requires both public action and institutional engagement.

Each is necessary if progressive outcomes are to be realised

Recognise that progressive outcomes will entail communication and management trade-offs. Such trade-offs can become part of public deliberation and not the preserve of a narrow political and institutional elite.

The #FeesMustFall campaign has through the 2015/2016 protests opened the door for the possibility of a fundamental progressive overhaul of the post-apartheid higher education system. This campaign has succeeded where other stakeholders, including vice-chancellors and other higher education executives, have failed. For this, the campaign must be commended. It has also been an example of mass mobilisation and engagement of many in a matter of a few days. If the campaign is to culminate into a successful sustainable progressive outcome, then it is incumbent on communication professionals in government and higher education to not only collectively support this movement, but to also learn the lessons of their past actions.

Keywords: Government, Reputation, Protest, Social Media, Activism

Self-censorship in an engaged world: when the digital environment abjures self-expression

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“Goebbels was in favour of free speech for views he liked. So was Stalin. If you’re really in favour of free speech, then you’re in favour of speech for precisely the views you despise. Otherwise you are not in favour of free speech”

Noam Chomsky

Introduction

Institutional laws against freedom of speech and expression anywhere in the world are not the greatest threat to democracy, media freedom, freedom of corporate expression and self-expression. Self-censorship is. Instead of speaking their minds, people refrain from saying anything of substance in the social media.

Self-censorship the act of censoring or classifying one’s own communication (in any format). This is done out of fear of, or deference to, the sensibilities or preferences (actual or perceived) of others and without overt pressure from any specific party or institution of authority. Because political and social rhetoric engages interests, expresses values, conveys intent and prompts action, such self-censorship is the hidden face of political correctness. The powerful instant, all-pervasive and immediate gratifier for individual and institutional information transmission – social media platforms – is becoming an enemy.

A year ago, Justine Sacco sent out a tweet and then boarded a plane. By the time she landed, her career was derailed, her reputation was shredded, and her relative anonymity had been replaced by the worst kind of celebrity. What did she do wrong? Sacco tweeted the following: “Going to Africa. Hope I don’t get AIDS. Just kidding. I’m White!” The tweet could be viewed as silly, offensive, or even terrible (it was later learned that the worst of these possibilities does not mesh with Sacco’s personal views or history when it comes to race), but when the social media lynch mobs pull out their pitchforks, what is learned later really is not valuable. The soon to be infamous tweet was retweeted. It was published. It went viral.

In the age of digital mass surveillance people are facing self-censorship of a different dimension. They are more cautious, warier. Their communication behaviour is changing drastically. Freedom of expression – in organisations and life in general – becomes sorely tried due to self-appointed or differently-minded lynch mobs who patrol the social media to enforce a specific hegemony of thoughts and views. In this process, decades-long existing rules and conventions of public debate

in the traditional media, are demolished. Apart from slander and defamation, there is little maneuver for “hearing all sides of the story” or debate. Instead of ad rem it becomes ad hominem with stereotyping and weaponry of coarse generalisations. These lynch mobs are prevalent across cyberspace acting as inter alia “racist radars”, at times misunderstanding and even misconstruing satire and humour in religious, cultural, ethnic and gender message content. Free flow of communication and expression of ideas in public and in the corporate corridors become inhibited and marred. This is not the etiquette- sane “think before you send” your message through Twitter or post your argument on Facebook. This is the alarming issue of voices that should be heard, that now become silent out of fear for content courts and cyber bullies that watch to expose and damage reputations.

Purpose of the study

Renewed racism rows as they unfolded in the content of social media waved through South Africa during 2016 with a fierceness never seen before. This paper offers a social media discourse analysis of the public scrutiny of three high-profile cases in South Africa:

an unfortunate re-tweet of an observed racist remark by a politician

a comment on Twitter by a famous South African media personality and Idols judge that ended up in court

social media comments by an economist on the problem of “group entitlement” in the current state of the South African economy

Conclusions and implications

Important voices in South Africa are currently branded as racists, apologists of apartheid, the entitled though patronage, corrupt politicians, con artists, et cetera. Dialogue on relevant issues becomes extinguished. Shared experiences and meanings are smothered. People fall into the spiral of silence.

Freedom of expression is by nature robust and uncomfortable. But too many individuals, including communication professionals, practice self-censorship. They say: “I do not want to expose myself and/or my company in 140 characters. I only say what is “safe” – not that I want to say or that should be said. I rather shut the fuck up.”

Communication professionals in all spheres may have to seek an antidote to address this silent poison before all disengage completely...

Keywords: Self-expression, Self-censorship, Social media lynch mobs, cyber bullies, digital mass surveillance

A positive communication climate - more than just another job resource to improve employee engagement

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Introduction and purpose of the study

The role of a positive communication climate in the constant need to increase employee engagement levels has not been sufficiently researched, with only a limited number of studies showing the direct relationship between communication climate and employee engagement. Despite the fact that communication is widely accepted to be one of the drivers leading to increased levels of engagement, few studies have been conducted to understand this relationship. It is argued in this paper, that for communication to have a central place in the structure, extensiveness and scope of organisations, it must play a much more encompassing role in employee engagement than has previously been suggested. This study will aim to contribute to the existing body of knowledge, by exploring internal communication from a critical perspective, advocating that communication can only be effective when there is dialogue and when it is strategically managed.

The paper will thus propose that communication climate influences job resources, which, in turn, influence levels of employee engagement.

Literature review

The first concept, communication climate, can be defined as employees' perception of the quality of the relationships they have in the organisation, the effectiveness of communication between both superiors and their subordinates, and the ability of employees to influence and be involved in business processes. A critical perspective on communication ties in with this notion that communication should provide for a dialogue that constructs meaning between superiors and their subordinates. Communication climate tests five specific dimensions: superior-subordinate communication, information quality, superior openness, opportunities for upwards communication, and reliability of information.

The second concept, employee engagement, can be defined as how positive employees feel, think and behave towards the organisation that they work for. Moreover, employees who are engaged will typically present characteristics including vigour, dedication and absorption. Literature shows that there are many drivers of employee engagement or factors that will cause an organisation to effectively connect with its employees and look after their well-being. Some of these drivers, Job Resources, are physical, social and organisational aspects of an employee's job that would reduce certain job de-

mands and stresses. For the purpose of this study, only three of the job resources will be used. They include role clarity, participation in decision making, and performance feedback.

Proposed researcher methodology

Quantitative survey research will be conducted to answer the following primary research question: Can communication climate influence job resources, leading to increased employee engagement? Three examples of the 39 hypotheses that will be tested in this study include: Supportive relationships are positively related to an employee's perception of role clarity; role clarity is positively related to vigour; and information quality is positively related to dedication. A quantitative method will be used as it is the most suitable research method to test the strength of the relationships between the variables.

A stratified random sample will be drawn (consisting of more than 600 respondents, to validate this proposed conceptual model) from the three largest short-term insurance organisations in South Africa. Data will be collected using a self-administered, internet based questionnaire. The latter will combine three existing questionnaires tested in the South African context, namely UWES, Dennis and JD-RS. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was developed and will be used for the purpose of testing levels of employee engagement in organisations. UWES tests employees' level of vigour, dedication and absorption. UWES has also been extensively tested in the South African context. The second scale, Dennis' Communication Climate Survey, was developed to test employee perceptions on the state of communication within an organisation. Dennis focused on the dimensions of communication climate as previously mentioned. The third scale that will be used is the Job Demand-Resources Scale (JD-RS). This measurement tool tests what drives employee engagement and thus the relationship between job resources and levels of employee engagement inside organisations. A combination of these three measurement scales will seek to measure the strength of the relationships between the variables.

Collected data will be analysed using the statistical program SPSS v.22, making use of a multivariate approach for descriptive and inferential statistics.

Practical and social implications

In conclusion, the research will work towards a conceptual model indicating the strength of the relationships between constructs of the concepts communication climate, job resources and employee engagement, as well as the way in which those relationships affect each other. The results will be presented as a communication solution for organisations to understand and address the challenges they face in their organisations' communication climate, and to suggest specific interventions they can employ to ultimately improve employee engagement levels.

Keywords: Communication climate, critical communication theory, employee engagement, job resources.

Employee voice: An antecedent to organisational engagement?

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Although there is no consensus in the literature on the definition of employee voice it is often described either as an indirect structural process that includes trade union representation or as direct individual and/or group processes that relate to speaking up inside organisations. This study adopts the latter definition and focusses on employee engagement and, in particular, organisational engagement which relates to an employee's engagement with their employing organisation rather than their job. The study addresses Gruman and Saks' critique of the literature that 'relatively little attention has been given to the relationship between voice and engagement' (2014, p. 459). It incorporates the following three research questions:

1. How satisfied are employees with opportunities to exercise their voice?
2. How good are line managers and senior managers at responding to suggestions from employees?
3. To what extent might employee voice be positively associated with organisational engagement?

Literature review

The literature review analyses the way that employee voice has been researched since the concept was popularised by Freeman and Medoff (1984) who argued that it made good sense for both company and workforce to have a 'voice' mechanism. The review incorporates a multi-dimensional understanding of employee voice that emerges in the work of Dundon et al. (2004, p.1152), Wilkinson et al. (2004, pp. 6-7), Morrison (2011, pp. 383-4; 2014, p. 180) and Wilkinson et al. (2014). Additionally, the review explores the emerging differentiation between work and organisational engagement (Saks, 2006, p. 604) and the way that Gruman and Saks (2014, pp. 463-471) conceptually associate employee voice and employee engagement.

Methodology

The study is based on a cross-sectional correlational research design incorporating a new Internal Communication and Organisational Engagement (ICOEQ) questionnaire developed by Welch (2011) which was administered at five organisations in England and Wales. The instrument explores employee satisfaction with opportunities for voice via questions which enable participants to rate voice items including: opportunities to feed my views upwards; ways for me to pass on criticisms; and, ways for me to communicate ideas to top management. It also includes questions that en-

able participants to rate line managers and senior managers on how good they are at responding to suggestions. Levels of organisational engagement were gauged via a scale which incorporated adaptations of Saks' (2006) questionnaire items. The total combined number of respondents was 2066. The response rate varied from 16 to 52 percent in each organisation.

Results and conclusions

Initial analysis has found variable satisfaction with elements of employee voice in the five organisations in this study. Results for 'opportunities to feed my views upwards' ranged from a mean of 2.81 to 3.63 measured on a 1-5 Likert type scale with 5 denoting 'very satisfied'. Line managers are rated as better at responding to suggestions than senior managers in the study. In two organisations the ratings for senior managers responding to suggestions were very low. A positive association between satisfaction with employee voice and emotional organisational engagement has been indicated in initial correlation and multiple regression analysis.

The paper explores the role of employee voice as a possible antecedent to organisational engagement. The results in the study suggest some consistency in the associations between employee voice and organisational engagement in five organisations from different sectors in the UK (banking, government, local council and social housing). However, further research is required with a greater number of different types of organisation (for example, smaller organisations and organisations from a broader range of private sectors) to explore how far the results are generalisable.

Practical and social implications

The empirical findings in this study indicate that levels of satisfaction with opportunities to express employee voice are variable from organisation to organisation and in some of the organisations in this study satisfaction was low. Furthermore the empirical results suggest that there is an association between employee voice and organisational engagement. The practical implications are that organisations should pay more attention to establishing systems of direct employee voice at both line and senior manager level. This could include the incorporation of ongoing employee voice tactics such as listening lunches and online question and answer sessions into internal corporate communication strategies and plans.

Keywords: Internal communication, employee voice, employee engagement, organisational engagement

A Co-creation Network for Knowledge and Innovation to Promote Safety and Security in the Arctic

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Introduction and purpose

The discussion on the safe use of Arctic resources is a contemporary communication and management problem. Activity in the Arctic is increasing. Therefore, this paper argues that there is a need to develop a Co-creation Network for knowledge and innovation to help ensure safety and security in the Arctic domain.

Global climate change is opening new Arctic possibilities. New sea routes cut distances between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans and thus “regardless of the risks, the Arctic routes are a hot topic and shipping in the Arctic will most likely increase in the future” (Salokannel, Knuuttila & Ruoslahti, 2015: p. 2). There is a need to cooperate and share information that benefits the security and safety of living, transport, and economic use in the Arctic environment (Ruoslahti & Knuuttila, 2016).

The research question for this paper is: How are end users involved in the process of creating a Co-creation Network for knowledge and innovation to contribute to Arctic safety and security?

The focus is in the investigation of the process of involving public and private institutions, and, in particular involvement of end users, in creating an enhanced Arctic research and study society. A Network for knowledge and innovation contributing to Arctic safety and security will involve active communication between the actors.

Literature review

Knowledge is an important source to competitive advantage, and “a key to the success of modern organizations and creative higher education” (Pirinen, 2015, p. 1). The issue arenas model for organizational communication (Vos, Schoemaker, & Luoma-aho, 2014; Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010) explains multi-stakeholder communication. This paper uses the model to examine co-creation of innovation and innovation. Galvagno & Dalli (2014) note that co-creation is useful in promoting innovation, as is a strategic approach to knowledge management; a key element of success in networked innovation, according to Valkokari, et. al. (2012).

Electronic platforms provide secured online possibilities for co-creative learning online, and for sharing information and research results (Bhalla, 2014; Saarinen, 2012; Hosie, et. al., 2003). Shared information are needed in externally funded projects; participation in which is an important channel of knowledge transfer (Pirinen, 2015; Di Cagno, et. al., 2014); and where combining management of projects,

networking, and learning is challenging (Ruoslahti, et. al., 2011).

Methodology

To build a basis for the creation of the Co-creation Network this study uses Engeström’s (2007) expansive learning process consisting of the following phases: (1) Questioning existing practices, (2) Analysis of existing practices, (3) Modeling a new solution, (4) Exploring the new solution, (5) Adopting the new solution, (6) Evaluating the process, and (7) Solidifying and expanding new practices.

This study focuses mostly on the third phase of the expansive learning cycle, modeling a new solution. The method is participatory and a work in progress. Notes from Co-creation Network partner communication and meeting discussions are gathered under the Chatham House rule (Chatham House, 2016) to ensure anonymity of all people participating in the study.

Results and conclusions

Creating a new long term co-operation program of higher education, a Co-creation Network will attempt to engage a still disengaged field by affecting change to currently scattered and unlinked programs and systems, and build alignment of best practices. New knowledge and more effective future cooperation, technically and as a process, may bring about a change of current mind-sets. This Co-creation Network needs to be multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional, bringing disparate security and safety management and communication researchers together with both one another, and with end-users. An electronic platform will serve learning online and sharing research results and co-creation information between the Co-creation Network members. The research will focus on the process of co-creation and knowledge exchange between the network members.

Practical and social implications

The Co-creation Network aims to broaden the focus of today’s defined training oriented National Coast Guard Institution educational programs, and create broadly defined academic basic research networks, such as the University of the Arctic. This should provide an opportunity to experience a multi-disciplinary approach toward security and safety of activities in the Arctic.

The enhanced Arctic research and study society aims to contribute to a safer, more secure and cleaner domain, and develop insights on sustainable economic growth, international processes and best practices, leading to increased situational awareness and decision making – for the benefit of the Arctic.

The research aims to provide insights on ways to involve end users in the co-creation process. This could help other collaborative problem solving processes that need input of end users.

Keywords: Co-creation of knowledge, Innovation, Co-creation Network, Knowledge, Arctic Security

Engaging employees in (at least partly) disengaged companies Results of a 2016 interview survey within 550 German corporations on the growing importance of digital engagement via internal social media

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Christina Scholz, Macromedia University (Germany)

Introduction & purpose of the study

In a more and more disengaged world, companies need to engage their employees at least to boost employee loyalty and productivity. Outside of the companies, if people do, they get more and at least connected via multiple social media platforms: in the best case of successful establishing these platforms internally in companies, it can change their employee engagement, their communication, their knowledge management, their leadership structure and finally often their business models fundamentally; in the worst case it can just be another empirical example for the disengagement of people also in companies.

This paper will show the increasingly growing importance of social media as internal communications instrument for companies, but also its limitation and problems as well as its organizational culture related prerequisites. In the area of internal communication, public relations' relevance is – as stated in the call for papers for this conference – growing. But with what entrepreneurial effect: Has this growth a positive effect for the companies if it comes to internal efficiency and collaborative knowledge? Are employees today not merely more, but better connected? Are they meaningfully engaged for improved work for the employers as well as for employees?

The study proposed here for Bledcom 2016 aims to discuss this questions based on a new empirical survey in about 550 German companies in comparison with a similar study that has been realised by the same authors in 2013 (at the time, also a presentation at Bledcom). The developments since then will be presented with a new special quantitative focus on the disengagement question and the trust issue.

Short literature review

Internal communication becomes more relevant for companies as the employees expect more transparent and comprehensible information (cf. Huck-Sandhu, 2016, p. 1 et seq.; cf. Arthur W. Page Society, 2007, p. 11). By doing so, employees are engaged to the company and its decision-making processes (cf. Verghese, 2012, p. 20). As e. g. the current Gallup German Engagement Index shows, this is an important factor to ensure economic value-adding (cf. Nink, 2015, p. 11). Cornelissen states that managers increasingly communicate to their employees via enterprise softwares (cf. 2011, p. 165).

However, especially Enterprise Social Networks foster employee engagement as they function like a "social lubricant" (Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield, 2013, p. 14) that allows bonding social capital by bridging across departments (cf., 2013, p. 15). That is how employees get digitally engaged in their companies: in a transparent digital dialogue they can participate in the configuration of their company (cf. Skierlo, 2013, p. 72). However, especially (dis)engagement issues are so far not really in the focus of empirical research on these issues.

Methodology

Main methodology for this paper was a quantitative semi-representative online survey with interviewees in different management function (especially communications people and managing directors) in 563 different German companies. Due to space limitations, the full methodological design cannot be elaborated here but will in the full paper.

First Results and Conclusions

Compared to 2013 study, the importance of internal social media within companies in Germany has nearly doubled: instead high or very high usage of this communication type in only 12 percent of German companies, today 21 percent are reached. One main purpose is better employee engagement.

Low hierarchies are becoming an even more important issue for the acceptance of this type of digital engagement. Concerning stakeholder engagement, employees demand much more than three year ago that managers should also in this area act as good example and that critical comments should be more accepted. As a new fact, strong change resistance is now identified as most importance problem when introducing digital employee engagement via social media.

Trust is seen by a very large majority as a (very) important factor for a successful digital employee engagement via internal social media though only in about one third of the companies this trust culture concerning engagement is really the case. However, four out of five interviews believe that trust a prerequisite (and, at the end, an effect) for successful use internal social media for employee engagement can be built up and developed in the future.

Concerning the limitation, due to its nature, this study is only semirepresentative and it has all the well-known limitation of an online survey. Additionally, the 2016 survey has just been closed for some very few days at the time of the finishing of this abstract; therefore all results have still a preliminary character and especially all crosstabelling and clustering has not been finished so far, but will be for presentation in Bled.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Media Engagement, Digital Engagement; Enterprise Social Network, Internal Social Media

The Dark Side of Engagement: Social Media Power in Confronting an Organization Directly During a Crisis

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Introduction and Purpose

Despite assumptions that social media empower publics to pursue organizational change, very little research has explored the use of social networking services (SNS) like Twitter and Facebook for engaging organizations directly to influence organizational behavior. Instead, studies have primarily explored public relations strategies for engendering positive public interactions with an organization, otherwise termed, “engagement”. This study examines the other side of engagement—the social media empowerment that influences publics to “use their side of the conversation to bash a company’s products” (Toledano, 2010, p. 231) or otherwise seek to influence organizational behavior. Specifically, we pose the question: How do publics engage an organization during a crisis? We selected examined two organizational issues faced by the Nestle Corporation during 2015: Nestle’s illegal water withdrawals during the California drought, and the FDA’s charge against Nestle’s Kind Bars for falsely advertising their health value.

Literature Review

There are three principal components to public engagement: 1) messages, 2) media, and 3) meanings. Messages and media tend to dominate public relations literature, as most research considers the effectiveness of strategic messages to “engage” publics to like, forward, or otherwise interact with an organization online (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2012; Saxton & Waters, 2014; Ye & Ki, 2012). Meaning in engagement, or the emotions and cognitions of public engagement (Oh, Bellur, & Sundar, 2010), has only recently been explored. In public relations, engagement has been characterized as a positive, affective, and dialogic connection between public and organization (Kang, 2014; Taylor & Kent, 2014). Scholars have argued that engagement is a principle factor of a good organization-public relationship (Men & Tsai, 2014; Taylor & Kent, 2014). This relational focus has overshadowed the gamut of the other possible emotional connections including anger, disappointment, and the way social media grant publics voice and empower them in their interactions with organizations (Saffer, Sommerfeldt, & Taylor, 2013; Toledano, 2010). Whereas “virtually all studies describe how organizations work to engage publics and attempt to show how engagement may help to build relationships” (Taylor & Kent, 2014, p. 386), this study examines how

social media “increase the power [publics] wield in confronting organizations” (Valenti, et al., 2012, p. 875). This study also builds off of recent research that has shown that publics use social media to distribute negative information and build awareness about an issue among their networks (Smith, Men, & Al-Sinan, 2015).

Methodology

To examine the way publics engage an organization directly on social media, we content analyzed six month’s worth of comments and responses to Nestle’s illegal water withdrawal and false advertising claims on Nestle’s Facebook page from 2014 and 2015. To analyze engagement, we developed codes around communication power (French & Raven, 1968), uses and gratifications of social media (Pai & Arnott, 2013; Trammell, Tarkowski, Hofmokr, & Sapp, 2006), public engagement (Kang, 2014) and activism (Sommerfeldt, 2011). Reliability was established with a random sample of 30% of the total comments (N=1,110).

Results and Conclusions

Results showed that publics engaged Nestle primarily to talk directly to the company and question the company’s actions. Contrary to assumptions about empowerment, very few factors of communication power or activism were evident in Facebook comments, with the exception of building coalitions. Results demonstrate that engagement may be driven by both extremely positive and extremely negative opinions toward an organization, and that it may be measured using a scale of factors that include positive/negative affectivity, trust/distrust, empowerment/disempowerment, and satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

Practical and Social Implications

Results provide direction for practitioners in identifying and assessing the tone of public engagement, and categorizing positive and negative engagement. Practitioners may use results to isolate and analyze the salient issues related to each engagement type. Future research should explore the lack empowerment and activism towards an organization in Facebook comments, which is contrary to assumptions about the nature of social media.

Keywords: Social Media Engagement, Power, Crisis, Organization-Public Relationships

When work style meets lifestyle - energizing corporate environments through developing communities of practices for parents

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The purpose of the study is a further exploration of parents' expectations towards their work style in multinational organisations. After a quantitative research (an online survey with 504 responses collected) on the expectations of working mothers conducted in May 2015 in Poland, the infographic of significant moments in the mother's lifecycle and a model that is treated as a canvas in the business discussion about a workplace that is flexible to professionally active mothers' needs have been introduced.

Single case study method

This time a case study will concentrate on the expectations of internal parenting communities of practice to develop the insights generated through the initial research.

The study will be conducted in one of the big companies in Poland (more than 350 employees) in which the business need to develop organizational capabilities to create working women's friendly atmosphere had been diagnosed and stated as part of the Human Resources/Employer Branding campaign.

The research question

What are the expectations of employees who are parents towards the employer's best practices to adapt the working environment to the parent's need?

What actions are taken to improve the quality of workings parent life?

How the parenting influences the work style of the employees?

What is the current state of community of practice initiative in this particular company?

Theory

The community of practice concept by Wenger (1998) will be used as a leading theory with Appreciative Inquiry in the background. This research joins an academic discussion of employee engagement and communities of practices.

The literature will cover also research on lifestyle management, for example SPREAD Sustainable Lifestyle 2050 (<http://spread.demoshelsinki.fi/>).

Methods used in the case study will include

thematic analysis of corporate internal forum for parents

in-depth interviews with the representatives of HR departments who coordinate activities designed for parents

an online survey distributed among internal group's members aimed at collecting their declaration towards closer cooperation and intensification of activities for parents inside the company

alternatively, an online survey to the employees who are not parents to see what is the general attitude to parenting in this particular company.

Implications for the companies

The aim is to contribute to the discussion about business that changes the family lifestyle. There is also a question about the sustainable development of organisation that treats the family of the employees also as an integral part of the well-being ecosystem. Collected insights will be indicators for HR departments on the way to consider re-modelling of their policies and company benefits to include the needs of working parents.

M-Factor as a business campaign is a set of actions to manage employees and employers' expectations better to attract and activate mothers to re-join the workforce in line with Sheryl Sandberg's Lean In concept.

From the business perspective, the areas of influence are: Employer Branding and Lifestyle Management through collecting insights about working mothers' expectations towards their workplace.

Implications for the society

M-Factor concept is rooted in Quality of Working Life and Social Innovation. The idea behind a research of the company's attitude towards parenting communities of practice is to create a network of companies which are willing to work on the creation of the workplace which support a lifestyle of working parents.

Limitations

the research in one company is testing our concepts and M-Factor model which has been introduced after the qualitative research. This case study may be treated as a first step in testing the model in qualitative research in the corporate environment, however, strong conclusions still demand a scalable data.

Keywords: community of practices, quality of working life, employee expectations, social innovation, employee engagement

Employee-Organization Relationships and Social Stake: Examining Factors in Employee Engagement on Social Media

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Introduction and purpose of the study

While the interest in employee-organization relationships seems to be growing (e.g., Kim, 2007; Kim & Rhee, 2011; Park et al., 2014), there is still a limited understanding of employees' engagement on social media when it comes to communicating about the organizations they work for. In particular, the knowledge of what factors contribute to employee social media engagement, as well as the consequences of such communicative endeavors, is still relatively scarce. Social media posts from employees stand to add legitimacy and credibility to an organization through the conversational human voice such content provides, and yet very little research has explored the concepts that would encourage social media engagement by employees. Namely, there is a need to weigh the motives of employees' engagement directed toward their organizations on social media, specifically because employees are in constant interaction with an organization's external publics and stakeholders (Kim & Rhee, 2011).

Accordingly, the purpose of this research is to establish a theory of employee engagement via social media. Whereas most research on employee engagement considers employees' internal connection to their organization, this research explores the potential drivers and concepts of external manifestation of their internal connection (Chiles & Zorn, 1995; Men, 2011) via social media content generation. In this study we propose the following research questions:

R1: What are the factors that influence whether an employee communicates about his or her employer on social media?

R2: How does an employee's sense of social stake (risk and empowerment) influence communication on social media about his or her employer?

R3: How does the organization-employee relationship influence employee social media activities?

Delving deeper into the above questions, our study hopes to contribute to a better understanding of the relationships between employees and organizations in the context of social media engagement. In addition, the main goal of this study is make both practical and theoretical advances in establishing the concept of social stake (Smith, 2010) by examining the factors that influence employee social media activities about their employers.

Literature review

While much public relations research has been devoted to employee-organization relationships and employee communication behavior (see e.g., Kim & Rhee, 2011), social media engagement is a rather new area of research that is yet starting to gain attention among public relations scholars and practitioners. Due to rather unclear definition and use of the concept of social media engagement, Smith and Gallicano (2015) made an important distinction between social media usage and social media engagement, where the latter is concerned with "cognitive and emotional involvement" (p. 82) rather than with loosely defined social media activities such as commenting, viewing, and sharing content online. Up to date, the current literature on social media and employees has primarily been interested in exploring organization-centric questions, such as what are the benefits and constraints of social media usage at work (e.g., Leonardi et al., 2013), the impact of social media on internal communication (e.g., Huang et al., 2013), and the use of social media as opposed to other internal communication channels (e.g., Friedl & Tkalac, 2011). Not surprisingly, given the relevance and importance of the topic at hand, in recent years more researchers have become interested in cognitive and emotional aspects of communicative actions on social media among employees (e.g., Krishna & Kim, 2015) as well as the sense of empowerment among social media publics (e.g., Smith, Men & Al-Sinan, 2015). In this study, we draw on the theoretical and conceptual foundations of employee-organization relationship and social media engagement to further establish the concept of social stake (Smith, 2010), which comprises an individual's sense of risk and network empowerment as a determinant for social media engagement.

Methodology

This study uses in-depth qualitative interviews to study how and with what motivations employees use social media to communicate about the organizations they work for. We employed a convenience sampling technique to interview employees of various organizations who consider themselves as being active on social media. Given the complexity of emotional and cognitive aspects of social media engagement that highly affect and/or are highly affected by the perceived relationship that employees have with their employers (Smith & Gallicano, 2015), such qualitative approach to studying employee social media engaged allowed us to gain deeper understanding and meanings of how and why employees communicate about their organization via social media.

Expected findings and conclusions

While the empirical part of this study is still ongoing, based on previous research done in this area (e.g., Smith, 2010), we expect that employees will consider social media as granting them expertise power, enabling them to contribute to decision-making within their organizations. At the same time, we expect that employees will also weigh the risks of communicating via social media about their organizations, preferring to use their social media expertise to advise and provide guidance in communication decisions. Social empowerment might be tempered by a sense of risk when communicating about their organizations, leading to high levels of self-censorship. Our study hopes

to add insight to Smith's (2010) theory of social stake, indicating that individuals post social media information based on sense of risk and social empowerment.

Practical and social implications

Social media provides an outlet for authentic and legitimizing information from inside an organization through employee social media engagement. Communication managers may use social stake to assess likelihood of employees to communicate about the organization and encourage personalized social media engagement.

Keywords: Social stake; employee-organization relationship; social media; employee engagement

Messages of Menace: The Recruitment Propaganda of Islamic State

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Introduction and purpose

In 2015, the Islamic State (IS) was variously described by the US Secretary of State, UK Prime Minister and French President as medieval, senseless and nihilistic. Yet, in 2014, according to The Times “hundreds more” British Muslims joined IS than joined the British Army and one in four of its foreign fighters is now British (Haynes and Hamilton, 2014).

The purpose of this paper is analyse the integrated system of recruitment communications that is deployed by IS in order to target disengaged young people in Western democracies. Based on a study of recruitment propaganda and interviews with radical Islamists, the paper sets out a counter narrative to the political and media depictions of IS summarised above and, instead, conceptualises the organisation’s recruitment communications as modern, rational and systematic – as well as highly effective in engaging certain young people as recruits.

Literature review

In his keynote speech at Bledcom 2004, Ray Hiebert (2005, p. 8) presciently saw “landmines ahead” in the convergence of new technologies, public relations and democracy, identifying fast internet as an innovation that “will revolutionize the recruiting of angry and disaffected audiences” by terrorist groups such as Al Qa’ida.

Al Qa’ida was the first exponent of a post-classical terrorism (Wieviorka and White, 2004) that goes beyond the classical era of regional or ideological groups recruiting locally and undertaking terrorist acts primarily in that locality, such as the Basque separatists ETA and the Irish Republican Army (IRA). In contrast, post-classical terrorist groups adopt a global outlook, emphasise the propaganda of the deed, interaction with global media infrastructures such as satellite television and the internet, and a transnational approach to recruitment.

The online propaganda infrastructure of IS has been surveyed by Jared Cohen (2015) director of Google and Adjunct Senior Fellow at the US Council on Foreign Relations, who has outlined ideas for a “digital counterinsurgency” but a gap remains in the emerging literature on the recruitment propaganda process used by IS to recruit disengaged young people.

Methodology

The currency of the object of the investigation and the geopolitical and legal barriers to access in the Islamic State itself led to adoption of a mixed methodology in order to understand the workings of IS propaganda operations. The resulting study is part contemporary history (an examination of the broader propaganda of Islamic extremism) and part ethnography (a combination of content analysis

of IS propaganda with interview material from 12 Islamic extremists). The interview content includes discussions conducted by the author with reformed extremists in the UK, along with interview transcripts from broadcast interviews with extremists and personal accounts taken from news sources.

Results and conclusions

Despite being characterised as medieval, senseless and nihilistic by some politicians and media commentators, the paper concludes from its content analysis that IS’s recruitment propaganda shows a high degree of empathy and emotional intelligence in the way it understands and communicates with disengaged young people in Western democracies, whether or not they are Muslims at the outset of the communications process.

Based on a profound understanding of the different factors that lead to disengagement, IS deploys an integrated system of recruitment communications that combines elements of public relations, social media marketing, digital content production and online messaging. This is followed by a phase of digital grooming that builds intimacy and drives the potential recruit to make the journey to join the Jihad.

The paper concludes with a conceptualisation of IS’s recruitment communications that describes and analyses the integration of verbal, visual and action channels in a rational, modern and highly effective system of recruitment propaganda.

Practical and social implications

The findings, analysis and conceptualisation presented in this work are intended to help reduce uncertainty about the approach to recruitment of disengaged young people adopted by IS and provide a foundation for further research into the communication systems of terrorist recruitment.

The results also offer a point of reference from which to devise counter-recruitment narratives, preventative communications and other anti-radicalisation interventions that could disrupt IS’s existing system of recruitment propaganda.

Keywords: Islamic State, propaganda, terrorism, youth, disengagement.

Communicating Corporate Social Performance: A Research on Twitter

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Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) concerns companies' efforts to fulfill societal and environmental obligations without compromising on the ultimate objective of profitability. Eventually, the scholarly inquiry into CSR has redefined the notion as stakeholder responsibility (Freeman et al., 2010). In order to meet these responsibilities, companies focus on different categories of CSR, i.e. economic, ethical, and legal (Schwartz and Carroll, 2003). Furthermore, the rising expectations of stakeholders with regard to social role of business has led to increasing attention devoted to the CSR communication, which begins with "anticipation of consumers and other stakeholder's expectations about CSR" (Podnar, 2008: 80).

Contemporary consumers have high expectations, and are empowered by the emergence of digital technologies and the expansion of social media platforms. They are no longer satisfied with being passive in their experiences with the companies, rather they expect to be fully engaged and involved in every stage of decision-making processes of organizations. It is assumed that ensuring the involvement of consumers would provide better experience, resulting in their becoming brand ambassadors, willing to voluntarily disseminate CSR related messages.

This study attempts to investigate whether CSR related messages regarding distinct categories (i.e. economic and ethical) and areas (i.e. product and community relations) would have different impact on consumer outcomes. Twitter will be utilized as the medium of this study.

Literature review

Consumers with easy access to information through social media have become more sensitive and responsive to ethical and sustainability issues (Ballew, Omoto, and Winter, 2015). Compelling need for interaction makes CSR communication a key component in terms of achieving consumer participatory experience, leading to increased engagement. Subsequently, it has the potential to strengthen emotional bonds and advocacy for the company.

Unquestionably, the interactive nature of social media makes it suitable means of CSR communication (Capriotti, 2011). In particular, companies' growing adoption of social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter allow the CSR message dissemination in an instant, continuous, and connective manner. This opportunity could impact on consumer outcomes creating a positive attitude towards message, brand and consumer engagement consisting of "attention, participation and connection" (Vivek, et al., 2014: 409).

Methodology

This research will utilize an experimental study as it "can provide much stronger evidence of cause and effect than can data collected through descriptive research" (Parasuraman, A., Grewal, D., & Krishnan, R., 2007: 66). To this aim, the below hypotheses are postulated:

H1. Exposure to a CSR message of product dimension, compared to that of community relations, will differ in their effect on:

1. attention towards the message,
2. attitude towards the message,
3. attitude towards the corporate brand, engagement,
4. and WOM intentions.

H2. Exposure to a CSR message of purely economic domain, compared to that of economic and ethical domain within product dimension, will differ in their effect on:

1. attention towards the message,
2. attitude towards the message,
3. attitude towards the corporate brand,
4. engagement, and
5. WOM intentions.

H3. Exposure to a CSR message of purely ethical domain, compared to that of economic and ethical domain within community relations dimension, will differ in their effect on:

1. attention towards the message,
2. attitude towards the message,
3. attitude towards the corporate brand,
4. engagement, and
5. WOM intentions.

Three pretesting phases will be conducted to construct the experimental stimulus and manipulations. In the exploratory phase, a content analysis was conducted on 5 Turkish Twitter accounts (BMW, Google, Intel, Microsoft and Sony). The list of Companies with the Best CSR Reputations was utilized for determining the corporate brands to be examined. Schwartz and Carroll's (2003) construct and Kinder, Lydenberg, Domini & Co., Inc. (KLD)'s criteria (Deckop, Merriman and Gupta, 2006), served as content analysis categories. It was decided to employ the most recurrent CSR dimensions and domains in the experimental stage. Accordingly, 'purely economic' and 'economic and ethical' domains within product, and 'purely ethical' and 'economic and ethical' within community relations dimension (see Table 1.) will be operationalized. The purpose of the second pretest is to specify the brand to be used as experimental stimulus, according to the level of engagement with the brand (Vivek et al, 2014).

The third phase entails generating the tweets that will be displayed in the experiment. Independent coders will be recruited and trained to ascertain the quality of variables. The coders will be asked to classify tweets on the basis of CSR domains within the dimensions and rate them on a five point scale on measures of valence, arousal, cognition, and behavior; so as to obtain tweets with equal impact in each experimental condition.

In the experimental study, a 2x2 factorial design will be employed to observe interactions between variables. The four experimental conditions will be as follows: purely economic within product; economic and ethical within product; purely ethical within community relations; and economic and ethical within community relations.

		CSR domains	
		<i>Purely economic or ethical</i>	<i>Economic and ethical</i>
CSR dimensions	<i>Product</i>	Group 1	Group 2
	<i>Community relations</i>	Group 3	Group 4

Table 1. Experimental design

Convenience sampling will be applied in this research to collect data. A total sample of 240 students will be exposed to tweets presented within their natural setting (via a tablet computer) to avoid artificiality of the stimuli. After the exposure, the questionnaire will be provided to measure consumer outcomes.

Results and conclusions

As the study intends to demonstrate the extent to which consumer outcomes are affected by different categories and areas, the results will shed light on the effective communication of CSR in social media. The study will fill the void by extending current knowledge through a quantitative approach, contributing to the generalizability of results. Although the use of student sample is a limitation, they are in fact fairly representative of social media users in Turkey. Furthermore, conducting the research through a single platform is another limitation. More communication platforms are recommended to be investigated in future studies.

Practical and social implications

The results within this study are expected to reveal practical implications with regard to design and conveyance of CSR related messages which aim to engage consumers. The insights concerning consumer outcomes will also provide greater strategic understanding of the concept of CSR communication. To the authors' best knowledge, this study will be the first attempt to operationalize the well-known CSR construct (Schwartz and Carroll, 2003) through an experimental study which aims to identify the existence of a causal relationship.

Keywords: CSR Communication, Engagement, WOM, Social Media, Consumer Outcomes

Engaging employees through internal communication

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Engagement is one of the most popular concepts in various social sciences, especially psychology, organizational behavior, human resource management, and of course public relations. Even though engagement is applied in multiple areas of public relations, it is most commonly explored in connection to internal communication. The purpose of this paper is to make a contribution to public relations theory by further exploring the relationship between internal communication and employee engagement. Particularly we wanted to test the relationship between the eight dimensions of internal communication satisfaction and three employee engagement dimensions.

Literature review

Engagement is becoming one of the more popular paradigms in describing the way organizations try to interact, integrate, and cooperate with their stakeholders. In public relations engagement has been studied in various contexts, has been defined in multiple terms and with different operationalizations. It has been used as the umbrella term that includes a wide array of organizational attempts to include stakeholders in its activities and/or decisions. In public relations engagement has been studied as civic engagement, stakeholder engagement, public engagement and other, however the area where engagement has been mostly applied is employee engagement.

Research shows that today there are more disengaged employees than engaged ones. On the other hand many organizations agree that engagement is an important source of competitive advantage. Results of multiple research show that there is a strong connection between engagement, employee performance and business outcomes. Key drivers of employee engagement include nature of the job and work environment, recognition of one's work, social climate, personality traits, and most important for this particular study – internal communication. However, in spite of the importance of the relationship between internal communication and employee engagement, the association has not been widely empirically tested.

Methodology

In order to test the relationship between the established dimensions of employee engagement (vigor, dedication and absorption) and dimensions of internal communication satisfaction (satisfaction with feedback information, satisfaction with communication with superiors, satisfaction with horizontal

communication, satisfaction with informal communication, satisfaction with information about the organization, satisfaction with communication climate, satisfaction with the quality of communication media, satisfaction with communication in meetings) we applied two established instruments. Employee engagement was tested by using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (the longer 17-item version), while internal communication satisfaction was measured by using UPZIK (The Internal Communication Satisfaction Scale). Both instruments were applied within a large Croatian organization (with more than 2000 employees).

Results and conclusion

Through measuring various dimensions of internal communication satisfaction and employee engagement we hope to discover relationships between particular dimensions. We expect these relationships to be especially strong between interpersonal elements of internal communication satisfaction and dedication as one of the employee engagement dimensions. We will also test the correlation between both concepts and certain demographic variables.

Practical and social implications

The main practical implication of the study is to help organizations in deciding which internal communication dimensions are most important in enhancing employee engagement. In a world in where there is more disengaged than engaged employees, it is crucial to find new ways of increasing engagement.

Keywords: Internal communication, Employee engagement, Internal communication satisfaction, UWES-17, UPZIK

What “engagement” means to European communication managers?

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Introduction

In the past decade, “engagement” became a fashionable concept in public relations. Yet, the usage of the term makes its meaning very fuzzy. With many communication professionals using Facebook ‘Likes’ as an indicator of engagement, it seems worthwhile exploring how practitioners conceptualise and operationalise the term “engagement”.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to test a basic definition of the term »engagement« among communication professionals in Europe and observe how they operationalise it. Our research question is: How communication professionals in Europe understand the concept »engagement«. We start with some basic definitions and operationalisations, develop two questions with multiple options and administer them in the context of the largest survey in professional communication in Europe.

Literature review

The term »engagement« has multiple meanings and contexts as »customer engagement«, “employee engagement”, “public engagement”, “stakeholder engagement”, “user engagement”, etc. (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Holebeek, 2013; Hollebeek, 2011; International Finance Corporation, 2007; Jeffrey, 2009; Kahn, 1990; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Tench, 2013). Kang (2014) has concluded that the concept of public engagement lacks a sound definition and operationalisation. She proposed a multidimensional understanding of the concept. The term »engagement« consist of three components: cognitive, affective and behavioural (Macnamara, 2016).

Methodology

This study is based on the tenth European Communication Monitor data. In March 2016, 3,287 communication professionals in 43 European countries completed a survey with 32 questions, two of which specifically addressed knowledge of the concept and its perception among the communication professionals.

Results and conclusion

Communication professionals in Europe perceive stakeholder engagement primarily as a commu-

nication activity with little agreement on its behavioural features. Furthermore, affective aspects of engagement (e.g. being excited, proud or emotionally attached) are recognised as relevant by a little more than half of respondents (vis-à-vis three quarters supporting cognitive features). It is clear that communication professionals in Europe have a very limited, skewed understanding of the term »engagement« and this may be endangering their positioning within organisations.

Practical and social implications

The results of the European Communication Monitor in the context of studying engagement indicates two potential biases worth further exploration. Firstly, there seems to be a communication bias versus behaviour, opening questions on conceptualisation of the public relations profession as concerned with symbolic or behavioural relations (with stakeholder) and of the status of the very term »communication« in that context (does public relations equal communication or using communication?). And secondly, there seems to be a public relations bias for cognitive against affective aspects of communication (in a kind of opposition to advertising favouring affective versus cognitive?). From these biases follow practical and social implications: practical in terms of determining the function of public relations in organisations, and social in determining the societal consequences of public relations work.

Keywords: engagement, public relations, communication management, strategic communication

Online (Dis)engagement: Content Analysis of a Company's Newsfeed Against the Backdrop of an Organizational Ethnography

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Introduction and purpose of the study

Even today, almost a decade after the first organizations started adopting software to make intra-organizational communication more social (Leonardi, Huysman, & Steinfield, 2013, p. 5), research on how these tools are used and perceived is scarce and monotonous. Scarce because most of the attention in the field of Public Relations has been devoted to communication with external stakeholders, and monotonous because we found the bulk of existing studies focusing on factors influencing technology adoption or addressing the putative effects resulting from the introduction of these tools.

Literature review

In 2010 Tina McCorkindale (p. 1) stressed that "(...) there needs to be more in terms of engagement and relationship-building strategies [on social media] (...). Although McCorkindale's article addressed engagement on social media with external publics, we wonder to what extent current research has provided answers to this important question. We suggest that an alternative epistemological framework might offer refreshing insights by asking original questions. To this end we apply a Critical Management Studies (CMS) framework. This allows us to look beyond the technology and discover how people appropriate technology in their work-practices.

What we want to know is how communication professionals perceive what has become known in the literature as Enterprise Social Media (ESM) or Enterprise Social Software (ESS). The fact that there is no consensus on which term to use is a first indication that the research field is not yet consolidated. In our paper we take a first step towards consolidation by introducing a new classification system to position existing tools on different dimensions. Our classification includes variables such as the origin and goal-orientation of the tool in combination with environmental variables such as the fashion in which the tool is introduced in the organizational context.

Because of the limited number of studies published specifically on ESS, we argue that there is still plenty of room for descriptive research. Some scholars who addressed the barriers to adoption of ESS revealed that management sometimes fears the kind of interactions taking place on corporate platforms (Cardon & Marshall, 2015, p. 277; Turban, Bolloju, & Liang, 2011, p. 214). By allowing bottom-up electronic communication organizational elites do indeed run the risk of getting negative

comments. Some scholars have also found that traditional hierarchy is challenged through the introduction of ESS (Stieglitz, Riemer, & Meske, 2015). However, we still know relatively little about what kinds of interactions take place on social corporate platforms. This is why our research compares communication professionals' perceptions with what goes on in terms of interactions on ESS.

Methodology

For this study we combined ethnographic research with a content analysis of posts that we found on an ICT company's "newsfeed". The ICT company is a Belgian based for-profit organization with 1000+ employees and a yearly turnover in excess of 200 million Euro. With regard to the data we included all original posts from 2015, as well as reactions to these posts. All posts and reactions were coded at the hand of two professional researchers and subsequently analyzed with SPSS. Our triangulation of qualitative with quantitative data allowed us to get a rich understanding of the research data.

Results and conclusions

As the analysis is still ongoing our findings are still emerging. However, the ethnographic data already reveal that communication professionals are somewhat skeptical towards the employees' use of the newsfeed. We found that what seems to be the main trigger for this skeptical attitude is their perception of the newsfeed as a "wall of complaints" and vector of trade union propaganda. What we do through the analysis of posts is test whether the assumptions held by communication professionals are congruent with the data found in the newsfeed.

Practical and social implications

We believe our research to be valuable for a number of reasons. First, with this paper we provide the field with a systematic literature review on the tools that build on a web 2.0 modus operandi but are specifically adopted for intra-organizational communication. Only recently did El Ouiridi et al. (2015) publish a similar overview, albeit one with a broader scope including all forms of social media usage in work environments. Secondly, we have focused on questions related to the comparison of perception with actual use of ESS. This is particularly interesting to test whether popular beliefs shared amongst practitioners hold up in the face of empirical evidence. A third innovative element is our unique set of methods that have as yet not been widely used to study social interactions on digital corporate social platforms.

Keywords: internal communication, enterprise social software, organizational ethnography, content analysis

The usage of Enterprise Social Networks in Engaging Employees

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Introduction and the purpose of study

Many organizations have recognized the great potential of the Enterprise Social Networks (ESN) in engaging employees. ESN are relatively new phenomenon that is present for 15 years in the research body of knowledge, and their dynamics and benefits are not fully yet explored and researched. In the web paradigm, for the enterprises, social media and social networks enable communication and collaboration among co-workers and give employees a sense of online community. However, there is a high need to support collaboration, communication, and information exchange between employees with IT department. The purpose of the paper is to analyze the usage of ESN in Engaging Employees.

Literature review

We begin with theoretical background and historical perspective by offering a definition of enterprise social media and we offer a review of relevant papers on enterprise social media, focused on ESN concepts and engaging employees. Employee engagement is a unique concept that deserves the same theoretical and practical attention as other more established concepts within the organization. Although the external social networks are more popular and widely distributed, internal networks are more appropriate for the communication and connection between the employees in the organization. The quality and performance of the external communications will depend on the internal relations and good communication among the employees. Employee engagement within the enterprise social networks is comprehensive and extensive concept and it represents the future of internal public relations.

Methodology

This paper analyzes the usage of ten enterprise social networks such as a Yammer, Jive, Tibbr, Connections, Social Cast, etc. which are the most widely used in business environment. The criteria for selecting these ESN are simply based on distribution on the Internet and popularity (we used the Fortune 500 reference). Here, we seek to determine which enterprise social networks exist in digital media landscape and which are the most widespread in their use. The aim of the paper is to analyze the value of different characteristics of ESN, to determine their perceived value to the ESN company, as well as their value to the ESN users. We explore ESN by interviewing tech support

and IT departments - creators of these networks, and from the experience of users' point of view, interviewing employees.

Results and conclusions

Based on the content analysis of ten ESNs which are the most frequently used in the world, we have singled out the main characteristics of ESN, common to most of the analyzed ESN. This paper investigates the importance of the following characteristics: organization - of team communication in one place; collaboration - between team members; participation - seek and share new ideas with real-time feedback; accessibility - an access from anywhere, at anytime, and from any device, and break down barriers - across locations and job titles by giving everyone a voice.

Practical and Social implications

Finally, in this paper, we are providing practical and social implications, suggesting that a successful implementation of ESN depends on the engagement of employees and is the future of internal public relations.

Keywords: enterprise social networks (ESN), employee engagement, internal social networks, internal communication

Emotional engagement strategies in PR firms: senior level perspectives of professional relationships

Liz Yeomans, Leeds Beckett University (UK)

Introduction and purpose of study

Much of the PR literature tends to focus on engagement in building relationships between organisations and publics or stakeholders. However, less is known about everyday interpersonal engagement, especially in regard to the professional context of the PR consulting firm (Sissons, 2015). This paper asks what it means to engage with clients and journalists, from the perspectives of managing directors and owners of London-based public relations agencies. What are the “feeling rules” (Hochschild, 1983) that govern these relationships and importantly, how and when are emotional/relational strategies passed on to PR executives and PR teams?

Literature review

Engagement is an elusive concept. It has been referred to as an “ideograph” which is something that is “concrete, vague, and evanescent all at the same time” (Taylor and Kent, 2014, p. 385). Nevertheless the concept of engagement is widespread and used in various contexts to refer to the building of social capital through interactions between groups. Five types of engagement have been identified in public relations: social media, employee, CSR, civic and dialogic (Taylor and Kent, 2014). Engagement using dialogue is considered to be the most ethical approach since many types of engagement are of a one-way nature, whereas dialogue, it is argued, is relational and engages the emotions through “underlying principles” including mutuality and empathy (Taylor and Kent, 2014, p. 387).

This paper reports on a study approached from a socio-cultural perspective that aims to explore the emotional dimension of professional relationships in public relations consulting firms. It aims to provide a nuanced understanding of public relations emotional/relational work, drawing on the sociology of emotion (e.g. Hochschild, 1983; Scheff, 1994; Clark, 1997; Burkitt, 2015; Flam and Kleres, 2015) and emotion in organisations (e.g. Fineman, 2010; Bloch, 2012; Gabriel and Ulus, 2015).

Methodology

The methodology adopted is social phenomenology which is concerned with analysing the meaning structures of everyday life (Aspers, 2009). Few scholars have published empirical approaches in social phenomenology; however, Yeomans (2013) developed an approach to explore how junior and middle-level PR executives experience, practise and understand their professional relationships. Drawing on rich, qualitative data, Yeomans (2013) was able to build a conceptual understanding of relational work in

public relations, using emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983; Bolton, 2005) as an interpretive framework.

Data to be gathered in Spring 2016 adopts a similar research approach. This will comprise a minimum of six in-depth semi-structured interviews of up to 1.5 hours in length conducted with a purposive sample of participants. Participants are directors and owners of PR firms identified as “emotional experts” (Kleres, 2015) who set the emotional tone of their enterprises. Interviews will be triangulated with observational data and the researcher’s self-reflexive account based on diary notes.

As adopted in Yeomans’ previous study (Yeomans, 2013), an initial analysis of key themes will be re-constituted as an anonymised ‘account of practice’ and sent to all participants as part of a member checking/validation process (Creswell, 2007). This descriptive account of practice will form the basis of further feedback/dialogue and data generated with participants, as well as further theorising of emotional engagement in PR professional relationships.

Results and conclusions

The answers to the research questions posed in this paper are likely to reveal the complexity of emotional engagement in professional relationships. Based on Yeomans (2013) earlier study of PR executives, the preliminary assumptions of this study are that the directors/owners of PR firms are likely to play an important role in the socialisation of new entrants, including the setting of emotional engagement expectations with clients and journalists, as well as of themselves. Further, typical emotional engagement strategies will be related to specific media/client contexts and situations, often characterised by practitioners’ adopting an instrumental form of empathy to achieve business objectives (Yeomans, 2016).

Practical and social implications

First, this paper aims to prompt practitioner debate on building social capital and social competencies through emotional reflexivity in interpersonal relationships within a professional context. This is an area of PR practice that tends to be taken for granted rather than explicitly discussed and valued. This study will contribute to public relations knowledge in two possible ways. First it will offer insights into senior level emotional/relational engagement strategies within the PR firm and thus how a specific aspect of “PRP culture” is produced and re-produced (Hodges and Edwards, 2014); second, the study can be viewed from the perspective of new institutional theory (PR consulting as an institution in its own right), contributing an emotional dimension to the notion of “institutional logics” – field-level practices: theories, frames and narratives (Fredriksson, Pallas and Wehmeier, 2013, p. 189).

Keywords: emotional engagement strategies, PR firms, professional relationships

An 11-Year Longitudinal Analysis Study Tracking Social and Digital Media Use in Public Relations Practice

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This paper reports on the results of an eleven-year long research project examining how social media and other digital technologies are impacting public relations practice. The study's methodology involves a web-based survey that's part of a longitudinal trend analysis. The 2016 findings are based on 412 responses and results show public relations practitioners continue to agree strongly that social and other digital media are changing the way public relations is practiced.

This impact continues to be much more pronounced for external than internal audiences. These 2016 results are part of a data set that includes more than 4,500 responses from public relations practitioners since our first published report on this topic in 2006; more than 3,700 responses since we dramatically revised our questionnaire in 2009; and nearly 3,200 since we started asking specific questions about Facebook and Twitter in 2010. That's an average of more than 450 respondents each year.

As was the case in each of the past four years, our major finding this year in 2016 involves the use of Facebook and Twitter in public relations practice. Although Facebook was used more than Twitter each year from 2010 through 2013, in 2014 Twitter narrowly replaced Facebook as the most frequently accessed new medium for public relations activities in 2015. This was the first time Twitter was on top of this list in the years we have been asking this question. Many of our respondents tell us they frequently send the same messages via both Facebook and Twitter.

This year in 2016, our findings indicate Facebook use is slightly higher than Twitter. It's important to note these questions focus on how frequently subjects access specific digital media sites as part of their work in public relations. Respondents are specifically asked not to count personal use on these sites

Creating An Authentic and Engaged Learning Community via Twitter: Insights from a Cross-Institutional Twitter Activity

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Kyung-Hyan Yoo, William Paterson University of New Jersey (USA)

Introduction

The popularity of today's digital landscape is slowly influencing traditional pedagogical approaches in higher education. For a highly applied field like public relations, such trends to digitize teaching and learning are even more prominent. An increasing number of public relations professors have begun to experiment with various digital tools and social media platforms to facilitate teaching such as Twitter, Facebook, Periscope, Snapchat, and various Google Apps for Education (GAFE). These emerging pedagogical approaches have substantially influenced students' learning experiences, especially in terms of collaboration, engagement, active/authentic learning, and students' sense of belonging to and building a learning community. However, one important but under-investigated area is whether or not social media can build authentic and engaged learning communities among spatially disengaged people (Research Question). This is a critical question as a growing number of colleges and universities have begun to provide online courses and programs, and to adopt hybrid teaching pedagogies. This study therefore fills in the void in the literature by examining how cross-institutional Twitter interactions among undergraduate students can influence the creation of an authentic and engaged learning community when the students are spatially separated and have never met.

Literature Review

The social theory of learning defines learning as social participation. This theory notes the importance of community in the learning process and proposes four major components in learning: community (learning as belonging), practice (learning as doing), identity (learning as becoming), and meaning (learning as experience). Rainie and Wellman's (2012) theory of networked individualism holds that modern individuals regularly use social media at their disposal to form social networks that provide them with information, support, and community. Sociologist Mary Chayko (2014) has theorized and demonstrated the relevance of these collaboratively created "portable communities" to modern "techno-social life," noting that they tend to be experienced as real and meaningful. One of Chayko's studies (2002) demonstrated that spatially separated people can form bonds and communities, and that the Internet and digital technology excel at providing such individuals with the means to form useful and supportive social connections.

Methodology

Based on these theoretical foundations, the authors of the present study designed two cross-institutional Twitter activities among three universities on the East Coast. Student participants completed four specific tasks via Twitter while interacting with students within and outside their own institutions. A common hashtag was created to track the activity. Upon the completion of the Twitter activity, students reflected on the experience and wrote an essay addressing a number of questions developed to examine their interactions and community building process.

Findings and Implications

Tweets will be collected and analyzed using open source analysis tools, specifically NodeXL, which provides capabilities for network analysis and visualization. Reflective journals will be analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The visual illustrations generated via NodeXL and the findings of content analysis will help shed light on the virtual connections and engagement among the student participants. The study will also draw implications for creating authentic and engaged learning environments among spatially separated people and identify ways to make undergraduate public relations education more engaging to the students and more relevant to practice.

Keywords: social media pedagogy, Twitter, social theory of learning

5. Authors



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4. Papers



Global Engagement: How the West Can Use Social Media to Defeat ISIL

Mark Dillen, Dillen Associates, LLC (USA)

How can the international community end the violence and terrorism associated with extreme interpretations of Islam? This is something that has been occupying policy makers and publics for at least twenty years. Early this year, the U.S. Government set up a Global Engagement Center¹ at the U.S. State Department to take over the communications side of this urgent issue.

This paper looks at how this effort — sometimes referred to as Countering Violent Extremism — is faring. Social media have played an important role in recruiting jihadists across international boundaries. Can social media be used to defeat such efforts? What role can other media play?

Some politicians in the United States have advocated more intense military actions against ISIS or related groups. Just as they advocated and carried out military actions against al-Qa'ida and affiliated organizations before and after 9/11.

But military responses have proven very costly and occasionally even counterproductive. Even when a military or police action achieves positive results, such as capturing or killing terrorists or reclaiming territory, the gains are often temporary.

For the United States alone, battling this phenomenon over the last twenty years has cost several trillion dollars², counting military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen and Somalia, the physical damage from 9/11, the security upgrades at airports and public institutions, anti-terrorism procedures, the economic loss from terrorism, not to mention the loss of life — military and civilian — the care for those surviving terrorist attacks and the opportunities deferred or lost because of the resources diverted to deal with terrorism and related threats.

What if there were a way to change the views of those who might become terrorists, who might

¹ "A New Center for Global Engagement," State Department Fact Sheet. January 8, 2016.

² The "Costs of War" Project at Brown University's Watson Institute estimates the direct federal budgetary costs of U.S. military-related actions from 2001-2014 at \$4.4 trillion.

be inclined to join ISIS or similar groups — before they become active combatants?

What if there were a way to engage this part of the “disengaged world?”

It is not as though there have been no attempts. After the shock of 9/11, the United States undertook an enormous effort to understand the causes of the attack. The analysis in documents such as The 9/11 Commission Report dwelt on Osama bin Ladin’s hatred of the United States and the influence that radical Egyptian thinkers in the Muslim Brotherhood had had on him³. The impact of Saudi Arabia’s support for Wahhabism among Sunni Moslems around the world was also assessed as having played a key role in influencing, via Islamic clergy, the development of jihadist sentiments and actions.

Although I am focusing on social media today, it is clear that the jihadist appeal has grown and has been nurtured over decades, going back to before the advent of the Internet. The phenomenon was exacerbated, but not caused, by social media. The solution therefore lies in having the right overall approach, dedicating resources to it, as well as using social media intelligently.

We should recall that the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan in the 1980s was the first success at large-scale recruiting to get young Muslims to travel great distances, train and fight. It used traditional communications — telephones, newspapers, analog taped messages, and radio broadcasts to make the appeal.

While in Afghanistan in 1998, Bin Laden sent fatwas under his name via fax⁴ to London, where they were published in a printed, Arabic-language newspaper. From Afghanistan, Bin Ladin was able to coordinate the attacks on the US Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, using ordinary, non-Internet media.

But the high-speed, data-rich environment of the Internet age rapidly increased the pace, availability and sophistication of messaging to practically every corner of the world and to nearly every potential battlefield. Indeed, ISIS-related groups focus much of their attention on winning adherents far from their operational bases via social media, and then having those converts either come to battlefields in the Middle East or attack civilian targets in their home countries.

In the United States alone, according to the Department of Homeland Security, more than 150

terrorism plots have been attempted since September 11, 2001.⁵

In this nearly 15 year period, the United States degraded al-Qa’ida, tracked down and killed Osama bin Laden and protected the country from any mass casualty follow up attacks. But al-Qa’ida’s brand of militant ideology spread and morphed into the current multinational Islamic State, or ISIS, also known as ISIL or Da’esh.

Today the successor generation to Bin Ladin, Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, etc., uses the Internet and its social media as a messaging platform and as a battlefield, looking for ways to spread their message and to gain converts, but also to disrupt the communications and messaging of opposing forces and ideologies.

And they have been very successful.

The success of ISIS’ messaging effort is evidenced by its ability to trigger suicidal violence by converts who have not even met any ISIS recruiters in person nor traveled to any country associated with ISIS. Underscoring the effectiveness of appeals to violence among some highly impressionable audiences is the fact that more than 20,000 foreign fighters from more than 90 nations have traveled to Syria since the beginning of the conflict, including at least 3,400 from the West and 2,000 from the Russian Federation.

“We have to eliminate their ability to exploit the Internet,” says U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter.

How do they do it?

As Carter puts it, ISIS uses the Internet “to give encouragement or even instruction to people who have already been radicalized, or radicalizing some of these poor lost souls who sit in front of a screen and fantasize about a life as a jihadi.” Most of the first-level messaging presents a positive, idealized image of life in a new society and welcomes new adherents whom they then attempt to draw in.⁶

But exactly how?

According to Michael Lumpkin, head of the new Global Engagement Center, “Usually it starts on Twitter, then it goes to Facebook, then it goes to Instagram, and ultimately, it goes to Telegram

3 The 9/11 Commission Report, Washington DC. 2004. See in particular Chapter Two, “The Foundation of the New Terrorism.”

4 Bernard Lewis, “License to Kill: Usama bin Ladin’s Declaration of Jihad,” Foreign Affairs, November 1998.

5 “Terror Threat Map,” Homeland Security Committee, U.S. House of Representatives (<https://homeland.house.gov/map/>).

6 See Richard Stengel’s comments, “Breaking ISIL’s Brand,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC, May 10, 2016 (<https://www.csis.org/events/schieffer-series-breaking-isils-brand>).

or some other encrypted, point-to-point discussion. They are doing what Amazon does. They are targeting selected information to an individual based on their receptivity. We need to do the same thing.”⁷

Since 2014, as al-Qa’ida became weaker and ISIL gained ground, al-Qa’ida social media activity dropped off and ISIL activity greatly increased. According to J.M. Berger at the Brookings Institute⁸, ISIL’s monthly output of social media propaganda in April-May 2015 was 250 postings. These would be, presumably, among the entry points for the kind of interaction that Lumpkin is describing.

“As both a magnet for foreign fighters and an inspiration for individual acts of terrorism (i.e. “lone wolf” attacks), ISIS has far outpaced al-Qa’ida in its prolific use and mastery of social media. Whereas al-Qa’ida relied mainly on videos that had to be smuggled to al-Jazeera or other television networks to reach mass audiences, ISIS sympathizers can follow specific Twitter accounts or YouTube channels and have immediate access to information, videos, songs, and depictions of life in ISIS-held territories.”⁹

So how have we responded so far?

At the State Department, first the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, now the Center for Global Engagement, a Digital Outreach Team has produced daily content in Arabic, Urdu, Somali and English, identifying it as coming from the State Department. The content is uploaded onto Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Vimeo, etc. Average daily production by the 28-member team is 36 messages, and the average engagement rate on Facebook is 10 per cent and on Twitter 2.6 per cent.¹⁰

“We’re having some success...but democracies are slow, and they only tell the truth,” says Carter. “And, in a message-driven Internet world, that puts you at a structural disadvantage compared to people who are nimble, agile, and lie.

“But we ought to try to do better.”

Incredibly, relatively little was being done in more targeted communications, in targeted

7 Michael Lumpkin, quoted by Kimberly Dozier, “Anti-ISIS Propaganda Czar’s Ninja War Plan: We Were Never Here,” *The Daily Beast*, March 16, 2016.

8 J.M. Berger and Jonathon Morgan, “The ISIS Twitter Census: Defining and Describing the Population of ISIS Supporters on Twitter,” *Analysis Paper*, The Brookings Institution, March 2015.

9 U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2015 Report, p. 33.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 138.

engagement, until early last year when an anti-terrorism summit was held in Washington. In fact, only in the last year have the Western countries come up with comprehensive communication plans based on their experience dealing with ISIS.

This came at the end of essentially five years of frustration and neglect.

Let’s review what was tried. In 2010, the Obama Administration for the first time authorized new positions at the State Department for digital outreach — in a new Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications¹¹.

A couple dozen contractors, including some fluent in Arabic, were hired to go on-line, engage in on-line rejoinders to ISIS and other advocates of jihad or terrorism.

This came to be known as the “Think Again, Turn Away” initiative. These staffers would look for extremist appeals to enlist on-line and they would try to respond on line in real time to try to discredit them.

“We were totally outnumbered on the Internet,” says former head of the Center, Alberto Fernandez, who complains that when he headed the office, he was never given the executive authority or the resources to properly coordinate the communications messaging across the many agencies of the U.S. government that were doing similar work.¹² When he tried producing videos to mimic and satirize ISIS’ own videos, senior State Department officials worried that such efforts should not be tied to the Department.¹³

The floundering continued until February 2015, when the White House convened the Summit on Countering Violent Extremism¹⁴, which brought together all 63 member states of the anti-ISIS coalition.

The summit itself was, in the words of the executive director of the Commission on Public Diplomacy, a “total waste of time,¹⁵” but it coincided with a political push to expand the communications effort against ISIS.

As the Saudi-owned Al Arabiya put it in June of 2015: “Despite the U.S. leading role in quickly

11 White House Executive Order 13584, “Developing an Integrated Strategic Counterterrorism Communications Initiative,” September 9, 2011.

12 Author’s interview with Alberto Fernandez, April 22, 2016.

13 Greg Miller and Scott Higham, “In a Propaganda War against ISIS, U.S. Tried to Play by the Enemy’s Rules,” *The Washington Post*, May 8, 2015.

14 “The White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism,” White House Fact Sheet, February 18, 2015.

15 Author’s Interview with Katherine Brown, Executive Director, U.S. Commission on Public Diplomacy, Washington DC, April 28, 2016.

understanding the regional threat and developing a multinational coordinated military coalition to combat ISIS, winning the online war has not been at the top of its priorities. The new Mideast digital communication center promises to be the informational parallel of the military coalition and to counter the group's propaganda efforts online." The "new Mideast digital communication center" being referred to is The Sawab Center, based in the UAE and financed by the Emirati government as well as the United States Government.

So a year ago, July 2015, the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, former editor of Time Magazine Richard Stengel, went to UAE personally to announce the effort.

They called it at the time "the first-ever multinational online messaging and engagement program in support of the Global Coalition Against Daesh."¹⁶

The Sawab Center will use direct online engagement to counter terrorist propaganda rapidly and effectively, including messages used to recruit foreign fighters, fundraise for illicit activities, and intimidate and terrorize local populations. The Sawab Center will increase the intensity of online debate by presenting moderate and tolerant voices from across the region and amplifying inclusive and constructive narratives.

The Center will expand to welcome other partners in the 63 country Coalition... [to] challenge Daesh's doctrines of hate and intolerance. The Center will also engage and expand the network of people willing to speak out against the terrorist group's propaganda, recruitment and fundraising efforts.

However, as of today on Instagram the Sawab Center has only 2,000 followers, on Twitter 87 thousand followers, and on Facebook less than 70 K "likes."

Perhaps the intention is that the Sawab Center serve as the single public face of partnership, reaching out behind the scene to other NGOs that have no ties to the United States to distribute US-origin material. The Sawab partnership may effective yet not reveal what it does.

Frustratingly for journalists and other advocates of government transparency, the [new Global Engagement] center will seldom reveal who it is supporting, just as special operators don't reveal the forces they are training unless that nation chooses to reveal it.

"I don't want to burn our partners," Lumpkin said, while acknowledging that his office is already working with a handful of non-governmental agencies, some of which

approached his office for help.

"We're helping guide them, hiring out content to be developed, giving them the contact... They will put their own logos on it and call it their own, which I am very happy with, and then we can help amplify it and hand it to other people to repurpose it, but they're kind of on their own once they've got it."¹⁷

The premise is that such work, to be effective, has to be surreptitious. Even then, it "carries huge risks for everyone involved. It co-opts the messengers, potentially endangers them, and gives audiences more reason to suspect the anti-ISIS messages they receive are nothing more than clunky propaganda."¹⁸

There's some anecdotal evidence to suggest that this approach, despite the risks, may work — at least for a while. However, there is still, almost 15 years after 9/11, very little scientific research into the mechanisms that draw disaffected youth into being influenced by ISIS or other radical extremists. Last fall, a group of outside experts was tasked with evaluating the State Department's messaging to date and the principal conclusion was that the U.S. Government had not been a very credible messenger. The USG is moving forward without the benefit of much research. Just last February, the Deputy Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, said "We're still learning. It's only a year ago that this conversation really began." He went on to say that that there would be a new effort to try to collect meaningful information.

We've helped establish an independent network of local researchers around the world... By examining violent extremism in its unique context we're improving our ability to vigorously measure the effectiveness of our policies and our work, to ensure that we understand exactly why something works or why it fails. ...The Global Counterterrorism Forum will release a tool kit this coming September of best practices and strategies that address the complete life cycle of radicalization to violence, from prevention to intervention, to rehabilitation and reintegration.¹⁹

U.S. sources tell me that the number of foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq is at a two and a half year low and that the number of tweets being sent by ISIS adherents is also down. They also cite the most recent Burson Marsteller Arab Youth Survey as cause for optimism: this study of youth in most countries of the Arab Middle East found that an overwhelming majority — 78 per cent — reject ISIS and believe that it will fail to establish an Islamic state.²⁰

17 Dozier, The Daily Beast, March 16, 2016.

18 Adam Weinstein, "Here's How the U.S. Should Fight ISIS With Social Media," Wired, March 12, 2015.

19 Anthony Blinken, "New Frameworks for Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism," remarks at The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, February 16, 2016.

20 "Inside the Hearts and Minds of Arab Youth," Eighth Annual ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller Arab Youth Survey,

As we await release of the “toolkit,” with its lessons learned and pathways forward, we might do well to look for indigenous examples of debunking ISIS ideology — such as “Burka Avenger,” a cartoon series, now in its fourth season, watched by thousands of children on Pakistan TV. Here we have an example that is effective in debunking the so-called heroism of ISIS, without even referring to it by name. It has credibility because it is locally produced, and it has a wide audience because it’s entertaining. It may in the end be that the light touch rather than the heavy hand is more effective in diminishing the appeal of terror-based organizations.

In the meantime there will continue to be experiments in flooding the zone, using NGOs to aggressively undermine ISIS Twitter campaigns:

In the highly charged, narrow ideological space we are discussing, the good guys are heavily outnumbered. ISIS and its supporters are trolling and messaging around the clock, and doing so in large numbers. It is necessary to answer volume with volume [MD-emphasis added]. That, however, requires increasing both the number of anti-ISIS messengers and making it more difficult for extremists to communicate freely. This is possible to accomplish. An August 2015 MEMRI report minutely documented how an ISIS hashtag campaign was “hijacked” by Twitter trolls. In that instance, the hashtag #WeAllGiveBayahToKhalifah was massively interrupted with over 50 percent

anti-ISIS material, including a lot of explicit sexual content, over the course of 24 hours. This hijacking limited the reach of the ISIS media campaign, and represents a new tactic—one that was not being utilized a year ago at the height of the ISIS media offensive following the declaration of the caliphate.²¹

And there will continue to be a ramp-up by military and intelligence services to attack ISIL social media access using covert technologies and to get social media platforms to take down ISIS-related posts:

As the NYT described it recently:²²

Lisa O. Monaco, a deputy national security adviser and Mr. Obama’s top adviser for counterterrorism, has led efforts examining how to disrupt the use of social media for recruiting. She has met technology executives in Silicon Valley; Austin, Tex.; Boston; and Washington to come up with a more integrated plan for both taking down social

media posts and encouraging the development of a counternarrative. One effort has included amplifying the testimony of Islamic State recruits who have escaped and now describe the group’s brutality and question its adherence to the true tenets of Islam. Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are also growing more efficient at finding and removing Islamic State posts — which they can take down without court orders because the posts are a violation of the companies’ terms of service, executives say.

But Ms. Monaco suggested that the effort was just beginning. “We are not going to kill our way out of this conflict,” she said. “And we are not going to delete our way out of it, either.”

This cooperation of the private sector now extends to proactive messaging — or at least planning in this direction. An informal network of the leading firms in advertising (Madison Avenue) along with IT (Silicon Valley) and entertainment (Hollywood) has been interacting with top U.S. government officials in what is called the “Silicon Valleywood” meetings.²³ There is some talk of setting up a tax-exempt foundation that could pool industry resources for anti-terrorism messaging. Otherwise, it will depend on these giant industries pursuing projects on their own that they deem commercially viable.

Finally, other members of the anti-ISIS coalition are setting up their own social media engagement programs. The British — and the French after the terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo — came around. France is acutely aware that it is now the European country with the greatest number of youths who have either gone to Syria, are planning to go or have returned. Some who took part in the Nov. 13 Paris attacks last year that killed 130 had travelled to Syria. That includes one youth considered to be a ringleader in the attacks.

The staggering thing is that there has been so little objective analysis applied to the various approaches that have been tried. This is true across the broad range of efforts to respond to large-scale social media propaganda.

Often, they operate on the principle “‘This is the message – send it out’; invariably that message is crafted by European or North American men in suits [sitting] behind a computer in an office. But one cannot help but wonder how that man in a suit knows what messages will resonate with the man in the shalwar kameez in Pakistan, the miner in East Ukraine, the young Muslim ISIS fighter in Syria?”²⁴

June 7, 2016 (<http://www.arabyouthsurvey.com/en/about>).

21 “ISIS Hashtag Campaign Hijacked by Twitter Trolls: A Case Study,” Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), August 26, 2015, cited by Alberto Fernandez in “Countering the Islamic State’s Message,” *Journal of International Security Affairs*, Winter, 2016.

22 David Sanger, “U.S. Unleashes Digital Arsenal in War with ISIS,” *The New York Times*, April 25, 2016.

23 Cecilia Kang and Matt Apuzzo, “U.S. Asks Tech and Entertainment Industries Help in Fighting Terrorism,” *The New York Times*, February 24, 2016. See also Kaveh Waddell, “How New York’s Top Advertisers are Fighting Terrorist Propaganda,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 15, 2016.

24 Cdr. (rt) Steve Tatham, “The Solution to Russian Propaganda is not EU or NATO Propaganda but Advanced

The one thing on which there seems to be a consensus is that the U.S. Government should be as invisible as possible.

There is a wealth of credible voices across the Middle East—governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups—that are not being fully tapped for this fight. These include people from vulnerable communities who have first-hand knowledge and experience of Da'esh's [ISIS'] violence.

While we have a good message to tell, we are not always the most credible voice to tell it. Going back to the first point about the networked information space: It takes a network to fight a network, and we have to encourage and assist other voices in this regard.²⁵

Indeed, the latest budget²⁶ for the Global Engagement Center includes \$750,000 for outreach programs targeting non-governmental international partners in order to extend the reach of the Anti-ISIL campaign with a broader range of messages and messengers. Some of these would reach new audiences; others might have greater credibility with existing audiences. The Department states that it “currently lacks the capacity to perform the outreach necessary for such an effort.”

The budget for the current fiscal year also notes that the State Department has several in-house audiovisual producers, but “lacks the technical resources to produce original footage, complex animation, or mobile-phone/tablet applications. Extremist adversaries, including ISIL, exploit all of these techniques to garner recruits and support their operations.”

Another line item in the budget candidly states that the State Department needs more “social media analytics” to add value across the various platforms where the Department is active. “[We] currently [have] access to only the most minimal tools for surveying and analyzing how the social media environment can inform and shape content to make it relevant and engaging to target audiences. This new and evolving business practice can make the Department’s public diplomacy materials more effective and improve the Department’s ability to create policy content that is informed by data.”

Social Science to Understand and Mitigate its Effect in Targeted Populations,” National Defence Academy of Latvia Policy Paper, July 2015, page 5.

25 Michael Lumpkin, Remarks before the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, March 8, 2016.

26 FY 2016 Overseas Contingency Operations Request for International Information Programs, Department of State.

Conclusion

Appeals by radical jihadists have resonated within and well beyond Muslim majority societies. These environments vary greatly, but they do share some characteristics. For the most part the targets are Muslim Millennials who have “grown up scrutinized because of their religion, and much of this attention is not positive... Millennials tune in to unsavory figures encountered on the Internet and in other venues.”²⁷

There are broad potential coalitions that would unite Muslim and non-Muslim opponents of radical, violent messaging, but they have worked together only sporadically. Governments can be the catalyst for this messaging, but they cannot be seen as the sole or main proponents if the campaigns are to have maximum effect and credibility.

Given the large, global population base where disaffected youth may be targeted by radical adherents, there must be different messages for different audiences, including different media/spokesmen for different audiences²⁸, as well as a broad overall approach.

Western and other coalition countries have devoted insufficient resources to this effort. As recently as five years ago, there was no organized effort within the U.S. Government to counter-message radical extremist ideology:

Perhaps some believed the U.S. Government agencies could not be a credible voice in opposition to al-Qa'ida. Perhaps some felt our participation in the debate would simply enhance al-Qa'ida's visibility and notoriety. Others thought responding would elevate AQ's status. And there was a lack of focused, coordinated, and sustained effort across government²⁹

Only \$16 million was allotted for the Global Engagement Center in the latest State Department budget, and although this is slated to increase to more than \$21 million in FY2016, hiking the current staff of 60 to 150, efforts by other governments remain much smaller.

In the United States, there has not been — at least until recently — a clear organizational chain of command in the communications part of the fight against what is termed “violent extremism.” Messaging efforts by non-military agencies need to be more fully integrated with military and intelligence planning. This is partly being addressed by filling many of the positions in the

27 Farah Pandith, “The Rise of Radicalization: Is the U.S. Government Failing to Counter International and Domestic Terrorism?” Statement to the House Committee on Homeland Security, July 15, 2015.

28 Interview with Katherine Brown, April 28, 2016.

29 Richard LeBaron, “The State Department’s Role in Countering Violent Extremism,” remarks to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, November 11, 2011.

State Department's new Global Engagement Center with people with military or intelligence backgrounds. One wonders, however, with the appointment of Lumpkin, an ex-Navy SEAL and former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, to head the State Department's Global Engagement Center, whether the focus has shifted too much in a military direction.

There is not a transparent enough system of implementation of engagement efforts to know whether the efforts undertaken are impactful — which detracts from political accountability. Emphasizing surreptitious actions, however justified, will only make it harder for the public and its elective representatives to judge the effectiveness of these efforts.

There is also, at least on the U.S. side, a metaproblem: by resolving to call it “Countering Violent Extremism,” in order to avoid appearing anti-Islamic, we mask the problem's ideo-religious content. Al-Qa’ida and ISIS and similar groups justify their actions by citing Islamic thought and ideology. They may do so cynically, incorrectly, even diabolically. But their appeal lies in a particular interpretation of Islam that is more than the dryly neutral phrase “violent extremism.”

As Rashad Hussain, the Obama Administration's Special Envoy for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications puts it:

Policymakers should reject the use of language that provides a religious legitimization of terrorism such as “Islamic terrorism” and “Islamic extremist.” They should replace such terminology with more specific and descriptive terms such as “Al-Qa’ida terrorism.” Tweaking the rhetoric of the war on terrorism is a simple step that can help delegitimize terrorists, earn the trust of the Muslim world, and increase the precision with which we describe and address terrorism.³⁰

The entire anti-ISIS coalition needs to up its game. In the long run, it won't suffice for the United States and a few of its European allies to produce content that is then relabeled and distributed as though it had no Western origins. Unless content is generated locally with authentic messages that convey credibility, the repackaged nature of the product is likely eventually to be either ineffective or obvious and therefore counterproductive.

Fernandez finds that nearly all of the counter-messaging is “inherently flawed in that none [has] ...the tailored combination of lethal agency and revolutionary authenticity that ISIS messaging offers.”³¹

30 Rashad Hussain and al-Husein N. Madhary, “Reformulating the Battle of Ideas: Understanding the Role of Islam in Counterterrorism Policy,” Analysis Paper #13, The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, 2008.

31 Alberto Fernandez, “Here to Stay and Growing: Combatting ISIS Propaganda Networks,” Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, October 2015, p 21.

Tatham argues for a completely fresh approach to narrative, one based on listening to local populations and responding to their concerns. The development and delivery of micro-narratives will require a huge cultural leap for officials and policymakers who have grown up in the stage-managed world of press conferences, set-piece speeches, and the journalistic conventions of the traditional mass media.

Pandith, the first person hired by the U.S. Government to address the “hearts and minds” issues of the post 9/11 Muslim world, argues against a “messaging war on Twitter... [but instead] getting credible, local voices to inoculate their communities against extremist techniques and appeal... helping parents to understand extremist tactics so that they can educate their children about this threat...supporting the hundreds of grassroots ideas and initiatives in [the United States] and around the world that reject extremist ideology...[and] working closely with mental health professionals to understand the adolescent mind and to develop programs that can help stop radicalization. Ultimately, we need to monopolize the marketplace of ideas online and offline, spawning credible voices that that give new agency and purpose to this generation.”³²

More than ever, the best media minds from local cultures need to be empowered to produce their own messages, which may not always fall in sync with the latest policy statements out of Washington, London or Berlin, but will be, in the final analysis, more effective than content from Western partners.

32 Pandith, p. 4.

 2

Rescuers of Memory and Moral Conscience: Activism and Engagement in Lithuanian History of the Holocaust

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KEYWORDS: Activism, Lithuania, Holocaust

Introduction

Before World War II, Lithuania was home to a large and influential Jewish community, comprising 7 percent of the country's total population—more than 200,000 people. During the Holocaust, more than 95 percent of Lithuanian Jews were killed. Today fewer than 5,000 Jews remain in Lithuania.

The Lithuanian government's framing of the Holocaust has emphasized Soviet crimes and Lithuanian victims of the Soviet occupation, often failing to acknowledge the scale of the Holocaust in Lithuania and the role of Lithuanians in the mass shootings within the country's borders (Ben-David, 2010; Clark, 2006; Lefkovits, 2009; Liphshiz, 2016). The Jewish remnant and supporters have opposed this framing by the Lithuanian government, and have organized to correct this perceived rewriting of history and neglect of the record of the Jewish tragedy in their country, to publicly recognize Lithuanian heroes who rescued their Jewish neighbors, and to educate younger generations and the international community and engage them on this issue. One of the foremost Jewish organizations is the Lithuanian Jewish Community (LJC), which operates a comprehensive website and blog, and utilizes public relations strategies and tactics that are characterized by issues organizations and activist groups to inform, engage and mobilize supporters.

This study seeks to integrate earlier lines of inquiry and findings regarding activist organizations' use of public relations strategies and tactics. First, it responds to Smith and Ferguson's (2001, 2010) call for more research that tests assumptions about activists and their tactics, specifically, that explores the commitment of activist organizations to their cause, in international settings; for case studies of communication behavior between activists and government; and for examination of the clash of messages between activists and government that produces and reproduces issue definitions and influence the development of the issue

(Smith, 1992; Smith & Ferguson, 2001). Second, this study continues exploration of how activist organizations use websites to build relationships (Taylor et al., 2001), the framing techniques they use in website message (Zoch et al., 2008), and how their use of the internet reflects their social, political, and relational environment (Yang & Taylor, 2010).

This paper will examine public messages related to the Lithuanian government, the Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, and Lithuania Jewish Community on the issue of Lithuania's involvement in the Holocaust. In addition, it will examine the CECNSORL's activities and the LJC's activism directed toward the organization's mission of communicating what the Jewish community perceives as an accurate history of the Lithuanian government's involvement in the Holocaust, and methods of educating and engaging people. The first section reviews the history of Lithuania and the Jewish community, focusing on the government system, occupation by Russia, and the Holocaust Era. Second, I will discuss the activism theoretical framework, addressing cultural factors (in particular, history of governing and media systems). A discussion of the texts analyzed and identification of frames follows. The paper ends with a discussion of implications and conclusion.

History of Lithuania and Lithuanian Jews

Early Lithuania: 14th Century Stature, Fusion and Occupation, and Independence in 1918

Before examining the 20th century experience of Lithuania and Lithuanian Jews, it is important to understand their rich and proud heritage, and their persistent striving for independence. Lithuanian history is marked by an early period of expansionist glory, gradual decline, cultural subjugation, and an ongoing struggle to develop and reassert a national identity (Clark, 2006). Lithuania was first mentioned in public records in 1009. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) was created in the middle of the 13th century and by the end of the 14th century had become one of the largest states in Europe, extending from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, far beyond the country's current eastern border (Clark, 2006; Eidintas, Bumblauskas, Kulakauskas, & Tamosaitis, 2015). During the union with Poland and the subsequent Treaty of Lublin in 1569, the GDL entered a long period of decline, its political and social institutions fused with those of Poland (Clark, 2006). However, the state did contribute much to European and global civilization in the 17th-18th centuries. In the mid-16th century the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was established, creating a "tradition of religious tolerance and nobiliary democracy that was virtually unheard of at the time" (Eidintas et al., 2015, p. 21). In Vilnius a legal tradition was developed that produced "the most systematic legal code in Europe, the Lithuanian Statutes, and, in 1791, a constitution that was the earliest written constitution in Europe" (Eidintas et al., p. 23).

When the PLC was partitioned at the end of the 1795, Lithuanian lands were brought under the Russian Empire, and remained under its rule (except for a brief period in 1812) until Lithuania declared its independence in 1915 and created a state—the Republic of Lithuania—based on democratic and national principles. The intervening years were marked by occasional defeated uprisings and by the consequences faced by those seeking to restore statehood and by the evolution of ethnic Lithuanians into an independent political culture (Clark, 2015; Eidintas et al., 2015). The initial partitioning evoked a resistance that culminated in the Insurrection of 1831.

The abolition of serfdom in the Russian Empire, with the attendant social and educational reforms, had the unintended consequence of sparking the beginning of a Lithuanian national reawakening. The Insurrection of 1863 sought an independent Lithuanian state, and fanned the flames of the Lithuanian national reawakening (Clark, 2015), but was met with harsh consequences by the Russian tsar. The printing of any publication in the Lithuanian language was banned until 1904 (Clark, 2006). This policy had a profound effect on Lithuanians in two ways: 1) it identified language as central to national identity, and 2) it consolidated support for an independent nation-state (Clark, 2006). The Lithuanian Social Democratic Party was established in 1896 with the “goal of establishing a sovereign Lithuanian state within a loose confederation of neighbouring states” (Eidintas et al., 2015, p. 141).

In early 1905, the first social democratic revolution that had begun in the capital of Russia made its way to the cities of Lithuania. The Social Democratic Party of Lithuania began agitating for political change in the smaller towns and rural areas, and strikes, demonstrations, and rallies were organized (Eidintas et al., 2015). After the ban on publishing was lifted in 1904, the independence movement continued to press for an independent and national Lithuanian state, with Lithuanian the only official language (Clark, 2006). In October of that year Lithuanian activists convened in Vilnius a large assembly of Lithuanians from across the nation, partly in reaction to the threat of radical socialist revolution (Eidintas et al., 2015). The assembly produced and adopted a resolution demanding political autonomy for Lithuania, and the right to elect its own parliament (Seimas) in Vilnius. The tsarist ignored the resolution, considering the former GDL a part of Russia proper. Lithuania activists continued to hope that “sooner or later political circumstances would be favourable for the realization of their visions, basing such hopes on the possibility of a new revolution in Russia or a war in Europe” (Eidintas et al., 2015, p. 147). Lithuanian activists continued their coordination efforts and public expressions directed at independence through the German occupation in 1915, announced their intention to proclaim independence at the Conference of Nations in 1916, and described the kind of independent, democratically organized state within ethnic boundaries they envisioned at a Vilnius conference in 1917 (Eidintas et al., 2015). The vision was achieved on February 16, 1918, when Lithuania declared its independence in 1918, and the Republic of Lithuania was created, based on new democratic and national principles following the collapse of the Russian Empire (Clark, 2005; Eidintas et al., 2015).

20th Century Lithuania: Independence, Occupation, and Holocaust, and Rebirth

In the 20th century, Lithuania arose again as a newly established and independent country, having a historic link to the GDL, but now based on ethnicity in a national Lithuanian language. Lithuania was admitted into the League of Nations in September 1921, and in August 1922, the Constituent Assembly passed the Lithuanian State Constitution, which was modeled on democratic principles with sovereignty belonging to the people (Eidintas et al., 2015). Lithuania enjoyed twenty-two years of independence. During those years Lithuania enjoyed expansion and contraction of their freedoms, however, by President Smetona’s authoritarian regime that banned political parties and

rewrote the nation’s constitution, omitting the word “democratic” (Eidintas et al., 2015). After Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933, Lithuania was forced to cede Klaipėda to German sovereignty in January 1939 and to allow Soviet bases on Lithuanian soil in exchange for retaining Vilnius, the historic capital (Balkelis & Davoliute, 2008; Eidintas et al., 2015). By May 1940 the Soviets invaded Lithuania and replaced its government with a pro-USSR one. It was the start of a period of two successive occupations by totalitarian regimes—more severe than the previous Russia of Nicholas II—that would “destroy all who opposed them as well as anyone whose political, social or racial affiliations displeased them,” (Eidintas et al., 2015, p. 226; Balkelis & Davoliute, 2008).

After war broke out between Germany and the Soviet Union in June 1941, Lithuania was occupied by the Germans within three days. When Germany attacked the Soviet Union, hatred for the Soviet regime and its reign of terror, anger at the nationalization of property, anger for the arrests, deportations and murders, erupted; this may explain why many Lithuanians welcomed the German army’s (Wehrmacht) entry into the country (Eidintas et al., 2015). Even before Germany attacked the Soviet Union, an anti-Soviet uprising was being organized by the Lithuanian Activists’ Front (LAF), with the goal of restoring Lithuania’s statehood. The LAF announced a provisional government that would return to a free and independent Lithuania, restoring the previous judicial system and laws. The provisional government “did not realize that the totalitarian Nazi regime was an entirely different kind of enemy and that it professed an ideology that included extermination of peoples based on race and eugenic selection” (Eidintas et al., 2015, p. 235). The Nazis dismissed the provisional government and closed the LAF in September 1941.

Lithuanian Jewish History

The Jewish community in Lithuania has a proud and vibrant history and culture, yet marked by profound tragedy. In the 16th–18th centuries, Vilnius became the sole European capital standing on the frontier between Central and Eastern Europe, known to the Jewish world as the city of the Vilna Gaon and the “Jerusalem of the North” (Eidintas et al., 2015). The Vilna Gaon’s authority contributed to Lithuanian Jews’ (the Litvaks) reputation as exalted Jews, distinguished from less conservative Jews by their strict observance of religious tradition, intellectual rationality and respect for education (Eidintas et al., 2015). Vilnius became a symbol of the stability and cultural richness of Jewish life in the 18th century. According to the 1897 census of the populations controlled by the Russian empire that were in the current territory of Lithuania (excluding the Klaipėda region, which was then part of Prussia), 13 percent of the population was Jewish, comprising the largest ethnic group among city and town dwellers and constituted about 42 percent of the urban population (Eidintas et al., 2015). During the early 20th century, the Jewish movement was considered by the Russian press to be the third most powerful in the Russian Empire, after that of Poland (Eidintas et al., 2015).

As World War I drew to a close, the leaders of the nascent Lithuanian state sought the support of Lithuania’s Jews who, on the whole supported the goal of an independent Lithuania, especially

the Jews of Vilnius (Eidintas et al., 2015). In November 1918, Jewish representatives were invited to join the Council of Lithuania and in 1920, the first Jewish National Council in Lithuania was elected, with the right to levy taxes and regulate the Jewish community's cultural and religious life and social welfare. According to Lithuania's first free census in 1923, Jews comprised 7.6 percent of the population (155,000), making them Lithuania's largest ethnic minority and 83 percent of business owners, dominating in the import/export business and business in general (Eidintas et al., 2015).

However, the Jewish community's success was met as a threat by some Lithuanians. As Lithuanians flooded into cities and secured jobs in industry and commerce, after the world economic crisis competition and ill feelings increased, especially by nationalists who opposed the Jewish community's use of Yiddish rather than the Lithuanian language (Eidintas et al., 2015). By the 1930s the Lithuanian minister of defense issued orders to punish persons fomenting anti-Jewish activity, and President Smetona spoke out against increasing anti-Semitic rhetoric and Nazi racist theories. Still, rights and opportunities to Jews were restricted.

At the time of the 1940 Soviet occupation, Vilnius was home to one of the most thriving Jewish communities, comprising about a third of the city's population (Clark, 2006). As the Soviets began to form their occupation government, young Jews, especially since they readily spoke Russian, were given posts in municipal governments, enterprises, institutions and trade unions (Eidintas et al., 2015). Although Jews were not responsible for either the occupation or Sovietization, their visibility in the occupation government caused them to be associated with the Soviet regime:

Jews began to be noticed in pro-Soviet demonstrations, in the administration, and among political leaders, which would have been unusual in independent Lithuania. . . This fact particularly strengthened anti-Semitic feelings, causing many Lithuanians to stereotype all Jews as traitors of independent Lithuania and its ideals. (Eidintas et al., 2015, p. 237)

Days before war broke out between Germany and the Soviet Union, the Soviets conducted the first mass deportation from Lithuania, from June 14-18, 1941. Along with thousands of Lithuanians, thirteen percent of Jews were deported and Jewish commercial banks, factories, trade enterprises and private property were nationalized.

Under the Nazi occupation, which began on June 22, the mass deportation was used to promote anti-Semitic feelings by associating Jews with communism and blaming them for the deportation, even though the Jewish community suffered severely during the Soviet occupation (Eidintas et al., 2015). The uprising against the Soviet regime, planned before war broke out between Nazi Germany and the USSR, was followed by persecution of local Jews by bands of armed ultrapatriotic Lithuanian partisans (Balkelis & Davoliute, 2008). From the first days of the Nazi occupation, segments of the Lithuanian population were openly hostile to Lithuanian Jews, and "the Nazis and their Lithuanian auxiliaries started a campaign of mass killing of the Lithuanian

Jews" (Balkelis & Davoliute, 2008, p. 3; Eidintas et al., 2015). Unlike in Western Europe in Lithuania the Nazis began to massacre Jews almost immediately (two days after war broke out), during "clean-up actions" using mobile killing units . . . to make it appear as if they and the first pogroms and were carried out by local people (Balkelis & Davoliute, 2008; Bruttmann, 2010; Eidintas et al., 2015). Judicial discrimination, ghettoization and physical destruction took place almost at the same time (Bubnys, 1998). All provincial Jews were driven into temporary ghettos and isolation camps. Over the next few months, the Nazis destroyed Lithuanian Jewish communities in the provinces. The History of Lithuania, published in 2015 on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, describes the horror of the Holocaust exacted on Lithuanian Jews:

"Whole Jewish communities "were shot dead in forests, fields and gravel pits a few kilometres away from their ghettos and detention camps, and their bodies were dumped into ditches that had been dug for that purpose. Preparation for the mass murders and the transport and shooting of victims involved Lithuanian self-defence police units in Zarasai, Kupiškis, Jonava and other locations, as well as the auxiliary police and some local station policemen who had sworn allegiance to Adolf Hitler. (p. 239)

"Day after day throughout the summer and autumn of 1941, most Lithuanian Jews (about 150,000) were killed in massacres. About 50,000 Jews were temporarily left in the Vilnius, Kaunas, Šiauliai and smaller ghettos" (p. 239) "and used as forced labour. Jews in the large ghettos, however, were also regularly decimated during the so-called "actions". In 1943, as the war approached its end, the Nazis began eliminating the city ghettos, and dug up and burned dead bodies. Some 11,000 Lithuanian Jews were deported to concentration camps in Estonia and Latvia, about 3,500 to camps in Poland and about 8,000 to Stutthof, Dachau and Auschwitz. During the Holocaust, about 90% of the approximately 208,000 Lithuanian Jews were killed (including those in the Vilnius region). About 8,000 were rescued and survived and a further 8,000-9,000 escaped death because they managed to retreat to the depths of the USSR. About 6,000-8,000 Jews brought from Austria, Germany, Czechoslovakia and France were shot dead in Fort IX in Kaunas. (p. 240)

By the end of the Holocaust, almost 196,000 Lithuanian Jews (about 95 percent of the whole community, and compared to 45,000 Lithuanian non-Jews) lost their lives (Bubnys, 1998).

Conclude Eidintas et al. (2015) in their report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

as a result of the Nazi policy of racial genocide Lithuania lost a rich and colourful part of its heritage – the Jews, who had lived in the country for centuries. The massacre of innocent people just because they were Jews is the bloodiest page in Lithuania's 20th-century history. The loss of so much human potential and talent was an enormous tragedy not only for the Jewish people but also the whole of Lithuania. (p. 240)

Post-Holocaust Lithuania: Occupation and Rebirth

In the summer of 1944, Soviet military forces routed the Nazis and re-occupied Lithuania, marking the beginning of the second 20th century Soviet occupation. Overall, Lithuania lost about 1.1 million people, or more than a third of its population during Soviet domination (Anusaukas, 1996; Eidintas et al., 2015). This second occupation “provoked one of the most intense and long-lasting armed resistance movements in Europe that continued from 1944 to 1953” (p. 1). After Stalin’s death in 1953, the Soviet Union under Nikita Khrushchev began new reforms with some limited independence, yet continued to replace Lithuanian culture with “one Soviet culture” and kept strict censorship in place (Eidintas et al., 2015, p. 267; Balkelis & Davoliute, 2008). 1960 is considered the beginning of Lithuania’s dissident movement, exposing the Soviet regime’s politics in Lithuania to the world (Eidintas et al., 2015). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, dissidents protested, published accounts of Soviet atrocities in underground press and circulated them to Western countries, and organized about 1,200 activist groups (totaling 300,000 members) to push for independence by the end of the Soviet occupation (Eidintas et al., 2015). The Lithuanian Liberty League (LLL), founded in 1978, was noted for its political activism directed at these goals: the restoration of Lithuania’s independence; the fostering of religious, ethnic and political consciousness among Lithuanians; and the advancement of the cause of Lithuania’s freedom in international forums. (p. 276)

Despite the LLL’s lengthy history in fighting for Lithuania’s freedom, it was the Lithuanian Reform Movement (Sąjūdis) established in 1988 rather than the LLL that became the main driving force behind the restoration of Lithuania’s independence (Balkelis & Davoliute, 2008; Eidintas et al., 2015).

When Mikhail Gorbachev’s reform policy (perestroika) began in the USSR in the mid-1980s and brought no change in Lithuania, public discontent increased and protest groups began to initiate demands for openness (glasnost) and change (Eidintas et al., 2015). Sąjūdis supported the reforms initiated in Moscow and worked to implement them in Lithuania, promoting the main slogan of the reforms: “openness, democracy and sovereignty” (p. 283). From 1989 to 1990 Lithuania, while still part of the Soviet Union, adopted several “transitional justice measures which focused on establishing the illegality of the Soviet occupation and creating a basis for re-constituting Lithuania’s sovereignty” (Balkelis & Davoliute, 2008, p. 10). Constitutional amendments that “declared the supremacy of Lithuanian laws over those of the USSR, as well as a declaration of the sovereignty of the Lithuanian SSR” were adopted by the Supreme Soviet in May 1989 (Eidintas et al., 2015, p. 286).

When Gorbachev insisted in January 1991 that the Act of March 1990, which proclaimed the restoration of the independent Republic of Lithuania, be repealed and sent Soviet tanks and armored vehicles to take control of the radio and television building and tower, thousands of Lithuanians came to defend the stations (Balkelis & Davoliute, 2008; Eidintas et al., 2015). News images of Soviet tanks crushing innocent civilians circulated around the globe, and the events at the TV tower shocked Lithuania and the world. After 90 percent of Lithuanians voted in favor

of independence in February and the world’s major countries recognized the reborn country in August 1991, the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania was adopted in October 1992 by voters in a national referendum (Eidintas et al., 2015). The Constitution’s main provisions state that Lithuania “is an independent democratic republic,” and that “sovereignty belongs to the Nation” (p. 300). Based on the historical record, it is indisputable that grassroots activism and global media coverage were key factors in Lithuania’s independence movements.

Activism’s Relationship to Government and Media Systems

The review of Lithuania’s and the Lithuanian Jewish community’s history since the 13th century highlights several important characteristics of the people who have inhabited the various territories under the changing government systems throughout occupation, war, and horrific massacres. Chief among them are the indomitable will for independence, justice, and national and cultural identity. The Lithuanian independence movements throughout history have depended on activism—grassroots efforts by groups (such as the Sąjūdis and earlier Lithuanian Liberty League) made up of individuals directly affected by an issue or situation and committed to effecting change. L. Grunig (1992) argued that an “activist group is a group of two or more individuals who organize in order to influence another public or publics through action that may include education, compromise, persuasion, pressure tactics or force” (p. 504). Activist groups are organized around a common goal and attempt to influence public policy, organizational action, or social norms and values in order to reach that goal (Berry, 1984; Smith & Ferguson, 2001). They also strategically use communication and public relations strategies and tactics to achieve those goals.

Activist organizations use public relations for two primary, interrelated purposes: to rectify the conditions identified by the activist publics and to maintain the activist organization or sustain the movement (Smith & Ferguson, 2010). The focus in this study is on the first purpose: historically, activism in Lithuania has had the goal of securing and maintaining independence; activism by Lithuanian Jews, which is the subject of analysis below, has been directed at seeking justice for the Holocaust massacre of their people, advocating for the punishment of war criminals, correcting the historical record of Lithuania’s role in the murders, rebuilding the Jewish community and culture in Lithuania, and educating Lithuania’s next future generations and the world community.

One perspective on how activist organizations form and develop provides macro-level explanations of the conditions that foster the formation of activist publics. One macro-level explanation suggests that a country’s system of government, political climate, media, and culture provide the preconditions for activism (Ferguson, 1998; Sriramesh & White, 1992). Much of this research has examined public relations as practiced internationally, particularly in countries undergoing economic and political transformations. Researchers have investigated what political, economic, and cultural conditions were necessary before normative public relations principles can be practiced and, specifically, whether it was even possible to practice these generic principles in a socialist, centralized society (see Vercic, J. Grunig, & L. Grunig, 1996). Based on his ethnographic study of public relations practices in India, Sriramesh (1992) argued that, as the instrument of communication with external constituencies, public relations “will thrive only in a

society that possesses a potent external environment consisting of alert and challenging media, conscientious environmental and consumer advocacy groups, and special interest groups” (p. 268). Ferguson (1998) argued that cultural variables and the transformation from a controlled to a free media system have been significant factors in the development of activism and public relations in post-Communist Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Utilizing Hofstede’s (1980) concepts of power distance, which refers to the distribution of power and resources in a society, and uncertainty avoidance, a society’s ability to tolerate ambiguity, Ferguson suggested that activist organizations thrive in a culture characterized by relatively high freedom of expression and a reasonably wide distribution of power. In these studies, the cultural and media environment not only established the conditions for activism, but activism also contributed to the nature of those countries’ public relations practice.

Lithuania’s history affirms this thinking and previous research. The Lithuanian people’s experience and collective memory about existing as a republic with a constitution that proclaimed the sovereignty of the people, a democratic judicial system, a national identity and culture that held the unique Lithuanian language as a unifier and, most recently and vividly, the twenty-two years of freedom during the interwar period, guided the nation through occupation and oppression back to the goal of independence. In Lithuania, as in Eastern European countries such as the Czech Republic and Hungary, there has been a return to the dominant national culture of those countries where, prior to Communism, there was a tradition of enlightenment and tolerance (Ferguson, 1998; Millar & Millar, 1995).

In nations that experienced a semblance of democratic civil society prior to Communist rule, there has been a smoother transition to free expression and media systems as well (Ferguson, 1998). For example, earlier and greater progress was made to a free media system in Eastern European and former Soviet Union-occupied countries such as Lithuania, Latvia, and Slovenia than in countries with a long history of Communism, such as Russia or Serbia (Ferguson, 1998; Vercic et al., 1996). Print and broadcast media played a vital role in Lithuania regaining independence and transitioning to a democratic society during occupations, oppression, and following the collapse of the Soviet Empire. Television and radio were particularly instrumental in Lithuania as the nation built support for independence and experienced progress toward democracy, providing a lens by which these citizens were able to see what was happening in other areas of their country and in other parts of the world (Clark, 2006; Eidintas et al., 2015; Ferguson, 1998). When occupied by the Soviets, Lithuanians refused to accept the principles of the Soviet media theory, and when occupied by the Nazis they resisted state-controlled press. Even when an independent nation and under Smetona’s authoritarian regime, which included press censorship, journalists and the Lithuanian people (especially after glasnost brought access to information about how free media systems operate in other societies and information about how people in democratic societies live) challenged government control over the media and public expression. By 1992 Lithuania was free of censorship and discontinued subsidy of the state-run newspaper (Ferguson, 1998).

Activist groups rely on the media as they work to stimulate the agenda-setting process by formulating issues, seeking the legitimation of issues, and attempting to capture the attention

of the media and key public opinion leaders (Crabbe & Vibbert, 1985; Ferguson, 1998). Because organizations and government must pay increased attention to these pressure groups and their ability to influence public opinion, proactive media relations becomes an increasingly vital aspect of activists’ public relations strategy (Ferguson, 1998; Grunig 1989; Sriramesh, 1992).

In addition to media relations, activists employ a wide variety of strategies and tactics to gain attention and recruit and mobilize supporters to pressure governments and organizations. A number of studies have examined how activists use public relations to achieve their goals (Smith & Ferguson, 2010). These studies have primarily looked at public relations strategies, or the general approach to communicating to achieve a goal, and tactics, or the specific tools used in public relations, such as press releases, newsletters, and digital (especially websites) and social media (Ferguson & Smith, 2012; Knight & Greenberg, 2002; Smith & Ferguson, 2013; Taylor, Kent, & White, 2001; Yang & Taylor, 2010; Zoch, Collins, Sisco, & Supa, 2008). Several of the studies in this area seek to refine the typologies of tactics used by activists and by institutions and government in responding to activism. Previous studies grouped activist tactics by their function, such as informational activities (meant to educate publics about issues), or legalistic activities, which seek solutions to issues through the courts or legislative/regulatory venues (Jackson, 1982). Jackson identified five general categories of tactics:

1. Informational activities, including interviews and other media relations techniques;
2. Symbolic activities, including boycotts;
3. Organizing activities, such as distributing leaflets, networking, and holding meetings;
4. Legalistic activities, such as petitions, lawsuits, filing legislation, testimony at hearings, or prodding regulatory and administrative agencies; and
5. Civil disobedience, such as sit-ins, blocking traffic, or trespassing. (p. 215)

In a review of 34 cases of activism, L. Grunig (1992) concluded that activists’ tactics ranged along a continuum and included contact with the media (see also Ryan, 1991), direct solicitation campaigns aimed toward the public or regulators, lobbying, public forums, petition drives, litigation, pseudoevents, public education, picketing, boycotts, and sit-ins.

Especially relevant to this study are how activist organizations use their websites. In an analysis of social movement networks, Diani (2000) concluded that web-based communication is especially important for activist organizations that need to mobilize and secure resources from a dispersed and fairly unorganized membership body. Taylor, Kent, and White (2001) examined the mediated communication of one hundred environmental organizations and the use of their websites to build relationships with publics. They found that, overall, these activist groups failed to take full advantage of their websites’ dialogic capacities to achieve their policy goals, based on these principles: dialogic loops, ease of interface, conservation of visitors, generation of return visits, and providing information relevant to a variety of publics. Use of the Internet has been found to be effective in building relationships with like-minded social actors and extending activists’ existing networks (Taylor et al., 2008; Xie, 2008). Yang & Taylor (2010), studying Chinese environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) found that ENGOs’ use of the internet

reflects the realities of restricted activism in China. They called for study of NGO websites that is situated in their social, political, and relational environment, speculating that the “political system, media environment, and dependency relationships may all affect the design of organizational websites” (p. 350). Zoch, Collins, Sisco, and Supa (2008) analyzed activist organizations’ websites to determine the framing techniques they used in their public relations messages. They found that public relations practitioners in these environmental and social issues-focused organizations were not framing these messages on their web sites in ways that would “achieve their full potential” (p. 355). Of the five categories of framing devices (catchphrases, depictions, exemplars, metaphors, and visual images) developed by Gamson and Modigliani (1989), activist organizations’ messages were most commonly statistics and general description which, Zoch et al. (2008) argue is “one of the least compelling ways to tell the story or to motivate others to get involved in environmental or social issues” (p. 356).

Analysis: Jewish Community of Lithuania’s Framing and Website Strategies and Techniques

This study seeks to integrate some of these earlier lines of inquiry and findings. First, it responds to Smith and Ferguson’s (2010, 2001) call for more research that tests assumptions about activists and their tactics, and that explores the commitment of activist organizations to their cause, in international settings (Smith, 1992; Smith & Ferguson, 2001). Second, this study continues exploration of how activist organizations use websites to build relationships (Taylor et al., 2001), the framing techniques they use in website messages (Zoch et al., 2008), and how their use of the internet reflects their social, political, and relational environment (Yang & Taylor, 2010).

The Lithuania Jewish Community’s (LJC) website messages related to the Lithuanian government on the issue of Lithuania’s involvement in the Holocaust, are analyzed. In addition, the LJC’s activism directed toward the organization’s mission of communicating what the Jewish community perceives as an accurate history of the Lithuanian government’s involvement in the Holocaust, and methods of educating and engaging people, is examined. Jewish Community of Lithuania website content and updated posts (at <http://www.lzb.lt/en/>) during 2015-2016 comprise the sample of messages analyzed.

Website messages were analyzed using an interpretive perspective, without manipulating texts or empirically differentiating specific units of analysis (Owen, 1984; Putnam, 1983; Weberling, 2012). Rather, the messages were examined for themes or frames that emerged, both within and across texts. Thematic analysis identifies themes that are important to the description of the phenomenon (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997) that emerge through “careful reading and rereading of the data” (Rice & Ezzy, 1999, p. 258). Patterns are recognized within the data, where emerging themes become the categories for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Smith & Ferguson, 2013). According to Gamson and Modigliani (1987), a frame can be viewed as a “central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning” (p. 143) to the events related to a story or issue. Frames were recognized when there was significant recurrence and repetition (Owen, 1984); once recognized, diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks were

identified (Snow & Benford, 1988; Zoch et al., 2008).

Because the goal or “mission of activist organizations is to solve some problem or issue, it follows that action by the organization and its publics is contingent not only on identification of the problem, but also identification of those who have caused or contributed to the problem and thus can be blamed (Zoch et al., 2008, p. 351). Snow and Benford (1988) call this “diagnostic framing.” Activist organizations also must generate support for their positions and goals by “articulating a proposed solution to the problem and the strategies for carrying out a plan of action” (Zoch et al., 2008, p. 351). Snow and Benford (1988) refer to this articulation of a proposed solution as “prognostic framing.” Finally, activist organizations’ messages contain “motivational framing” to encourage action by “individuals who. . .agree with [the organization’s] views and aims” through a “call to arms” (Snow and Benford, 1988, p. 199).

Lithuania Jewish Community

The Lithuanian Jewish Community is the umbrella organization of Lithuanian Jewry. It unites twenty-seven different Jewish organizations, operating from headquarters in Vilnius. According to European Jewish Congress website, the Lithuanian Jewish Community lives in harmony with the Lithuanian majority and the other minorities in the country . . . [and] stands up proudly for Jewish rights and interests and has made much progress in many areas in close partnership with Lithuanian colleagues who champion tolerance and dialogue. (“The Jewish Community of Lithuania,” n.d.)

The Lithuanian Jewish Community (LJC) operates a comprehensive website and blog, and utilizes public relations strategies and tactics that are characterized by issues organizations and activist groups to inform, engage and mobilize supporters. Visitors to the Lithuania Jewish Community website (<http://www.lzb.lt/en/>) find a website that provides relevant up-to-date news and public policy developments, photos and articles about the history of Jews in Lithuania and the massacre of the community during the Holocaust, commemorations of deceased Jewish members and historical events, news of current events and issues that are relevant to the Jewish community, and ways to get involved in the Jewish community. Membership and language (English, Russian, Lithuanian) option links are provided on the top right. The banner flashes photos with news headlines and brief descriptions of upcoming events and news items. On the main menu, from left to right under the banner images, are these labels: News; About us; Learning, History, Culture; Programmes; Social center; Bagel Shop; Heritage. Tabs beneath the main menu identify these links: Religion, Announcements, Greetings, Grateful, Condolences.

Thematic analysis of the LJC website revealed the following four frames and the accompanying framing task(s). Some articles contained more than one frame, and some articles accomplished more than one framing task:

1. Nazis, the former Soviet Union, and the Lithuanian government must take responsibility for the deportation and murder of more than 95 percent of Lithuanian Jews (diagnostic framing)
2. The rights of Lithuanian Jews, especially citizenship of deportees, must be ensured.

(prognostic framing)

3. The Jewish community in Lithuania's proud heritage and Holocaust must be commemorated, and future generations of Lithuanians and the global community must be educated to correct history and prevent future occurrence. (prognostic and motivational framing)

4. Participate in the LJC to ensure that the Jewish community in Lithuania flourishes. (motivational framing)

Frame 1: Nazis, the former Soviet Union, and the Lithuanian government must take responsibility for the deportation and murder of more than 95 percent of Lithuanian Jews

The LJC website contains many articles that assign responsibility and blame to Nazi, Soviet, and Lithuanian perpetrators of violence against Lithuanian Jews. According to one article, the founders of the Provisional Government of Lithuania, [k]owtowing to the Nazis," announced when Nazis invaded Germany in 1941 that Jews were "personae non gratae and turned them over to the Nazis and their [Lithuanian] collaborators." A story about an April 2015 Holocaust education conference quoted a prominent professor and Holocaust historian:

The summer of 1941 was the very bloodiest page in the history of Lithuania. We shouldn't call it 'the tragedy of the Lithuanian Jews', but must call it instead the mass crime of the destruction of the Jews of Lithuania. A crime in which participated not hundreds, but thousands of Lithuanians.

. . . [and] included representatives of all the social strata. The participation of local collaborators and anti-Semites in the mass murder of the Jews during World War II aided Berlin's task to a remarkable degree."

A June 6, 2016 story reprinted from the Baltic News Service reviewed an event to discuss "Questions and Answers after 75 Years: Numbers of Perpetrators of Jewish Genocide" that was organized by the parliamentary group For Historic Memory and Justice and the alumni society of Vilnius University's History Faculty in partnership with the International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Committed by Nazi and Soviet Regimes in Lithuania. Algis Gurevicius, the director of the of Jewish Culture and Information Center, "stressed the risk of the entire Lithuanian nation being dubbed as shooters of Jews if the country does not conduct a probe of the perpetrators of the Jewish genocide." The Nazis annihilated about 90 percent of Lithuania's pre-war Jewish community of over 200,000 during World War II, often assisted by local Lithuanian collaborators, said Gurevicius. Alfredas Ruksenas, a specialist of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, said that the rough number of Lithuanians involved in the shooting of Jews may be around 6,000 people. In a story reviewing the June 12, 2016 event in Los Angeles to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Soviet mass deportation, Latvian consul Dr. Juris Bunkis was quoted as saying that [h]istorians attribute the efficiency of these murderers to the massive collaboration in the genocide by Baltic locals who eagerly participated in the rounding up and murdering of hundreds of thousands of innocent people. . . . [y] Yet some like Jonas Noreika in Lithuania are considered heroes today and have had buildings and streets named after them! One author's post about a conference held at the Lithuanian parliament in June 2016 relayed a

speaker's warning that "[a]voiding the subject of the Holocaust and research in this field, Lithuania is in danger of becoming a nation of Jew-killers in the eyes of the world." Conference attendees said that it was difficult "to calculate who took part in mass murder operations, for example, some people's names are duplicated because they participated at different locations," and to decide "who should be included as perpetrators: should they only include people who fired weapons, or also those who transported the victims to the mass murder sites or otherwise aided the process." At the close of dozens of articles on the LJC website is this "boilerplate": During World War II, the Nazis and their Lithuanian collaborators killed over 90 percent of Lithuania's pre-war Jewish population of more than 200,000."

Frame 2: The rights of Lithuanian Jews, especially citizenship of deportees, must be ensured.

One of the most heavily covered issues on the LJC website is the advocacy efforts directed toward the very recent (June 23, 2016) passage of the amendments to Lithuania's citizenship law to ensure the rights to citizenship of Jews who left Lithuania between the two world wars and to their descendants. One post cites the Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania's (CECNSOR) statistic that

"[t]he Soviets deported more Jews to Siberia as a percentage and in larger scope than Lithuanians (about 1 percent of members of the Lithuanian Jewish community were deported, whereas about 0.5 percent of ethnic Lithuanians)," and that it was incomprehensible that "Litvaks who emigrated in the interwar period shouldn't be granted in principle Lithuanian citizenship." Yet, the Migration Department, since November 2015 "has rejected almost every request for restoration of Lithuanian citizenship by people who left Lithuanian between 1920 and 1939 and their descendants."

Writing to members of the Lithuanian Jewish community and to Litvaks living abroad in May 2016 weeks before passage of the constitutional amendment on citizenship, LJC chairwoman Faina Kukliansky charged that "after the extermination of the Jews in Lithuania . . . to prevent the Lithuanian Jewish Community from welcoming into our ranks Litvaks who are citizens of another state and who want to become Lithuanian citizens--this is a stupid and short-sighted political decision." She called on the interior minister to "immediately make a decision, because people have been waiting for three to four years." During the same month the website featured a story recapping Kukliansky's participation on a panel on a Lithuanian radio program on the topic of citizenship. She argued that "Lithuanian Jews--Litvaks--are not just people who have achieved great things in the world, they contributed greatly to the strengthening of the Lithuanian state as well. They sought Lithuanian independence and they fought in the battles for independence [in 1918-1919]." The article noted that the debate over citizenship for Lithuanian Jews evolves around arguments on whether the Lithuanian law on citizenship makes some sort of distinction between those who left on their own volition and who therefore "withdrew," and "those forced to leave by the Nazi or Soviet regime."

Another May 2016 website article reported that [a]s the Lithuanian Migration Department and the courts “issue rejections on applications for Lithuanian citizenship by Litvaks, parliamentarians are preparing to amend the Lithuanian law on citizenship, even though, they say, the current law provides for granting citizenship to the aforementioned people.” An article two days later reported that “[l]awsuits by Litvaks living in Israel and South Africa regarding Lithuanian citizenship have come to the attention of the Lithuanian parliament,” and that two parliamentary committees planned to make inquiries into why Lithuanian Jews who had left the country were getting negative responses to their applications for citizenship. According to a May 9, 2016 LJC website article, about one thousand requests from Litvaks from Israel, South Africa, America and other countries for Lithuanian citizenship had been granted; about 200 requests were denied. When the Baltic News Service reported parliament’s decision to amend the citizenship law on June 23, Lithuanian Jewish Community chairwoman Faina Kukliansky was quoted: “I very much welcome the change in the law, and I am certain the Lithuanian state has lost nothing at all, and on the contrary, has received much more, a good name and living potential.”

Frame 3: Jewish heritage and Holocaust must be commemorated and people educated to correct history and prevent future occurrence

Articles and announcements about events educating and commemorating Lithuanian Jewish history, Lithuanian Jews (e.g., interwar Lithuanian President and chess enthusiast Kazys Grinius), “Jew savers” numbered in the dozens, and Holocaust events (e.g., deportations from Lithuania in June 1941) during 2015-2016. In September 2015 a story was reprinted from the Baltic News Service about a ceremony awarding “47 people with Life Saving Crosses for saving Jews from the Nazis during WWII,” which included JCL’s leader Faina Kukliansky description of them as heroes. The next day, on the National Memorial Day for the Genocide Victims of the Lithuanian Jews marking the liquidation of the Vilnius Ghetto, 800 Lithuanians were to be recognized as “Righteous Among the Nations for saving Jews.” Photos and a June 2016 article reported that efforts “commemorate and clean up Jewish cemeteries and memorial sites continues in Kaunas,” showing photos of new information boards and signs. Condolences of recent deaths were accompanied by photos and stories about their service to Lithuania and loyalty to the Jewish community and noted statues, monuments, and events honoring them.

Another September 2015 story printed the program for a commemoration marking the 90th anniversary of the founding of Yivo and the Lithuanian Day of Holocaust Remembrance. The week-long conference-commemoration included presentation of the scarf donated by a Kaunas ghetto and Stutthoff concentration camp survivor, reading of another prisoner’s diary, prayer, multiple musical concerts, a documentary film screening, a tour of “Jewish Vilna,” and a conference dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the founding of the YIVO institute for Jewish research, and commemoration of Holocaust victims at Ponar. An article earlier that year, on June 27, marked the 74th anniversary commemoration of one of the iconic events of the Lithuanian Holocaust, the infamous Lietūkis Garage Massacre of 27 June 1941 . . . carried out by local Lithuanian ‘patriots’ wearing the white armbands of the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF) butchered dozens of Jewish

passers-by at a garage on Kaunas’s Vytautas Avenue, using a variety of execution methods, including clubbing to death with crowbars, and particularly, forcing water from high-pressure hoses into bodily orifices of the victims until they burst. A growing crowd, including women holding up their young children to get the best views, cheered them on.

The liberation from Nazi concentration camps was commemorated, e.g., the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

Many articles combined the functions of commemoration and education. An October 2015 article recapped the Svencionys Jewish Community’s commemoration of Holocaust victims, when eight thousand Jews were murdered in the surrounding forest. The article quoted Lithuanian Jewish Community chairwoman Faina Kukliansky, explaining the importance of the commemoration of Jewish victims and remembering those responsible:

We should remember not just the names of those who were murdered, but the names of those who murdered as well. This is necessary not just for condemnation or revenge, because those who are some still alive are very old, while others have passed on and stand in the court of the Almighty. I think it is necessary for all of us, their inheritors, so that our neighbors might know by whose hand the most horrific crime of the 20th century was committed. Because only when everyone whose hands were sullied with the blood of innocent victims is named and condemned, even if only in our thoughts, only then can we start to hope Lithuania might rid itself of its shameful title as a ‘nation of Jew-shooters.’

A June 2016 article reported a meeting between deputy Lithuanian foreign minister Mantvydas Bekešius and Lithuanian Jewish Community chairwoman Faina Kukliansky during which they discussed “protection of Jewish heritage and the renovation and upkeep of the old Jewish cemetery in Molėtai and Holocaust mass graves by the regional administration.” They also spoke about the need to honor rescuers of Jews, increased public sensitivity to Jewish issues and the organization of a March of Memory in August. Chairwoman Kukliansky’s speech at the Lithuanian Parliament at Commemoration of the Day of Mourning and Hope and the Day of Occupation Genocide was quoted in another June 2016 article, combining commemoration and education about the lives of Lithuanian Jews as the nation was being invaded by Nazis in 1941, which described a rich, vibrant Jewish culture:

“On the eve of the first Soviet occupation the majority of Lithuanian Jews were involved in different cultural, social and political organizations and associations. . . there were 16 Jewish daily newspapers, 30 weeklies and 13 non-periodical publications as well as 20 collections of literature being published in Lithuania before World War II . . . Of the total number of enterprises seized in 1940, 83% belonged to Jews and provided a living to a large portion of the Lithuanian population.

Kukliansky concluded with a reference to the current Litvak citizenship issue: “It is a great shame the figure of the Jewish deportee has all but been forgotten in Lithuanian society today, or is ignored, with deportation being understood as solely the tragedy of the Lithuania people.”

Frame 4: Participate in the LJC to ensure that the Jewish community in Lithuania flourishes

The fourth frame emphasizes the broad Lithuanian Jewish community and invites Jews and LJC supporters to join in events, and combines with the function of commemoration and Frame 3 in many articles. For example, in June 2016 an article quoted LJ's Kukliansky: "[T]he centennial of the restoration of statehood is a holiday for the Lithuanian Jewish Community. We are so glad to have our homeland which we love." The author said that Kukliansky confirmed that Lithuanian Jews will take an active part in the centennial celebrations, including plans to hold a 5th World Litvak Congress, publish a calendar and commemorate appropriately Lithuanian Jewish history and culture in Lithuanian towns and cities "where Jews who helped put Lithuania on the map lived, worked and created." Commemoration, education, and religious events are promoted in advanced, and website readers are encouraged to attend. The website's "Social center" posts invite LJC members to concerts, summer camps, conferences, the eve of Shavuot ceremony, and offer birthday greetings, tell readers of new Bagel Shop news and free matzo, and provide photos and stories about members and recent events. In her letter reviewing 2015 LJC accomplishments, chairwoman Kukliansky concluded with a call to increase the community:

I am pleased that the number of Vilnius residents joining the Community is quickly growing. Although we have always said that all Jews living in Vilnius are members of the Community, today we see them becoming true members and paying membership fees, which have been greatly reduced. And non-Jews are also taking part in the Community's work, and just as we ask for tolerance for others, we strive to be tolerant people ourselves. . . . The Community is hoping for more participation by the youth because we are not just elderly people. Taking a more active part means each individual may contribute according to their desire, talent and ability. If an individual wants to preserve his or her Jewish identity and those of his or her children and grandchildren, we welcome any and all such initiatives.

Conclusion

This study sought to integrate some of the earlier lines of inquiry and findings related to activism. It responded to Smith and Ferguson's (2010, 2001) call for more research that tests assumptions about activists and their tactics, and that explores the commitment of activist organizations to their cause, in international settings (Smith, 1992; Smith & Ferguson, 2001). The Lithuanian Jewish Community engages in strategies and tactics found in earlier studies of activist organizations, however, this is one of the few examinations of an ethnic-religious activist organization. Analysis of the website demonstrates how messages perform functions, in this case, informational and legislative (Jackson, 1982), commemorative and relationship building, and reveals that key strategies tactics included the LJC's and chairwoman Kukliansky's advocacy for citizenship of Litvak deportees, commemorating dates and events of significance to Lithuanian Jews, and publicizing events and engaging members of the community in many other ways. In this way, this study continues exploration of how activist organizations use websites to build relationships (Taylor et al., 2001), the framing techniques they use in website messages (Zoch et al., 2008). The analysis and Kukliansky's quotes demonstrate the organization's emphasis on continuing to grow the Lithuanian Jewish community.

Framing theory research suggests that how a message is presented can make a major difference in how it is received (Zoch et al., 2008). Examination of Lithuanian Jewish Community website messages revealed the use of four frames: 1) Nazis, the former Soviet Union, and the Lithuanian government must take responsibility for the deportation and murder of more than 95 percent of Lithuanian Jews; 2) The rights of Lithuanian Jews, especially citizenship of deportees, must be ensured; 3) The Jewish community in Lithuania's proud heritage and Holocaust must be commemorated, and future generations of Lithuanians and the global community must be educated to correct history and prevent future occurrence; and 4) Participate in the LJC to ensure that the Jewish community in Lithuania flourishes. These frames reflect the conditions identified that need to be rectified, or the first purpose of activist organizations (Smith & Ferguson, 2001).

A number of authors (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Snow & Benford, 1988, 1992) have suggested core framing tasks as potentially important factors in the successful framing of messages. Zoch et al. (2008) argued that such tasks and devices would be especially critical to the framing of messages that are not only designed to describe a problem but also motivate adherents to take action to achieve a solution. Examination of Lithuanian Jewish Community website messages confirmed the use of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks, and found that messages contained multiple framing tasks.

Finally, this study highlights how activist organizations' use of the internet reflects their social, political, and relational environment (Yang & Taylor, 2010). The Lithuanian Jewish Community's activist communication cannot be examined without taking the pre-Holocaust history of the nation, the Jewish community, including Soviet occupation and the geo-political environment; the Holocaust era extermination of more than 90 percent of Lithuanian Jews and deportation of thousands more, and the role of the Nazis and Lithuanian government; and the post-war developments and rebuilding of the Lithuanian Jewish community and global understanding.

Although this study examines only one ethnic-religious activist organization's website messages over a limited period of time, and cannot be generalized, it does support earlier research. Further research could explore additional communication strategies and tactics of the Lithuanian Jewish Community, for example, additional public messages in other outlets in addition to website messages, as well as the "clash" between LJC and other organizations' messages. While the establishment of organizational and issue legitimacy was not the focus of this study, it became clear through the examination of the LJC website that legitimacy was an underlying theme, and could be further studied.

This study is part of a larger research project that examines the narrative frames of the Lithuanian government, the Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, and The Jewish Community of Lithuania on the issue of Lithuania's involvement in the Holocaust, as well as the CECNSORL's activities and the JCL's activism directed toward communicating what the organization's supporters perceive as an accurate history of the Lithuanian government's involvement in the Holocaust, and methods of educating and engaging people in Lithuania globally. As such it is an early attempt at understanding how activist organizations, government, and government agencies communicate to build support and effect public policy and opinion change.

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In 1998, Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus established the Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania (CECNSORL). The Commission's charge is to investigate crimes committed during Lithuania's occupation by the Soviet Union and Germany, from June 1940 to March 1990. The Commission worked until 2007, and was reestablished in 2012 by Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė.

Limitations

It should be noted that this study focuses on one religious-ethnic organization's messages over several months. Thus, findings are limited in scope and the research should be replicated with other issues and organizations in the future (see also Weberling, 2012).



Flipping the coin in public relations research: Crisis of the “Tonus” bread as the case of “organization relations”

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Abstract:

The crisis in public relations research is most often associated with threats to organizational operations or reputation (Combs, 2014) and examined from organizational perspective. Despite the growth of consumer perception crisis research, audience use of social media for communicating with and about organization during crisis is almost out of PR focus (Duhé, 2014; Austin, 2012). Particularly, complex communication in “paracrisis” triggered and shaped by publicly visible threats accusing organizations for irresponsible or unethical behavior (Coombs & Holladay, 2012) has been underreported. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to examine how various publics use social media to shape the paracrisis, engage in communication with organization and exercise power to change its behavior. We explore the “rhetorical arena” (Coombs & Holladay, 2014) surrounding the crisis related to “Trivit Company” in Serbia that has been charged for false advertising “Tonus” bread claiming it reduces blood sugar and prevents cancer, among other. We draw on content analysis of multilayered communication of various actors in different sub-arenas, traditional media, Twitter and blogs, during one-month period in 2015. The main results show that the paracrisis was dominantly shaped by bloggers and citizens on Twitter, whereas traditional media just gave credibility and momentum to the crisis, without following the course and outcome of the crisis. The evaluation of the company and product depended on the paracrisis turnover triggered by influential blogger. The company communication had minor stakes in resolving the crisis or repairing reputational damage.

Key words: paracrisis, rhetorical arena, social media, crisis communication, organization relations, “Tonus” bread

Introduction and purpose of the study

The most influential actors and institutions that have shaped information-communication systems in the past century are gradually surrendering their power to the previously passive consumers of information and products – audiences and publics. During past decades the means of “mass self-communication” (Castells, 2007) or “produsage” (Bruns, 2007) have been widely used by different societal actors to raise public awareness, build support for causes and projects, confront various institutions and organizations, and challenge distribution of social power. The realm of public relations has been transforming accordingly. The time of publics understood as message targets, manageable entities or participants in organizational decision-making process is passing. Kruckeberg and Vujnovic (2010: 124) point out that “infinite numbers of volatile publics worldwide can form immediately and unpredictably, and they can act seemingly chaotically and with unforeseen power”, warning PR practitioners that “it has become meaningless to identify publics (plural) and to attempt to distinguish among a nonpublic, a latent public, an aware public and an active public”. Yet, the public relations research remains organization centric and dominated by strategic management perspective (Edwards, 2012; Rittenhofer & Valentini, 2015; Valentini et al., 2012; Yang & Taylor, 2015). Despite the emergence of the “convergence culture” (Jenkins, 2006), the role and power of public(s) remains neglected in public relations studies. This paper aligns with recent calls for abandoning “unidirectional organizational focus in public relations theory and related identification of publics” (Rittenhofer & Valentini, 2015: 11), arguing that publics empowered with diversified digital media can engage in relations with organizations and affect them in unprecedented ways. The publics have stepped into the “public relations”. Therefore, based on the case study about the crisis surrounding Trivit Company located in Serbia for falsely advertising its product, this paper aims to offer a concept of “organization relations” as a “counterweight” to “public relations”, signifying the shift of power between the organizations and their former publics.

Literature review

Recent studies show that PR practitioners (Verhoven et al., 2012) and organizations (Macnamara & Zeffass, 2012) have been embracing digital media, but not its dialogical potential. There is little evidence of changing balance towards symmetry in organization –publics interactions and relations (Milojević, 2016). Accordingly, systematic literature reviews reveal that digital PR research agenda is dominated by organization-oriented perspective (Duhé, 2015; Huang et al., 2016), leading Huang et al., to a conclusion: “After two decades of development in the field, the trend has basically been to ignore calls for more research that might contribute to power balanced,

symmetrical, and more diverse research agendas” (Huang et al., 2016: 11). The same patterns repeat in the rich field of crisis communication. The meaning of term crisis is only associated with threats to organizational operations or reputation (Combs, 2015), leaving limited possibility for public or recipient oriented crisis communication research. Although Duhé (2014: 4) analysis shows growth of consumer crisis perceptions research, it is mostly done from organizational perspective. Audience use of social media for communicating with and about organization during crisis is almost out of PR focus (Austin 2012), as well as secondary crisis communication evolving in between publics on different platforms (Schultz et al., 2011). Yet, social media communication is becoming prominent source of reputational threats turning into crisis with unpredictable course and outcomes, making Coombs (2014: 2) to proclaim social media “the driving force in the bleeding edge of crisis communication research”. Therefore, this paper aims to offer a fresh perspective on crisis emerging in online public sphere by expanding focus from organization crisis messaging and responses, onto communicative flows on social media among publics.

The case of “Tonus” bread makes a classic example of “blog-mediated crises” according to Jin and Liu (2010) because it was initiated and reversed by a blog. The crisis evolved as a „social media hype“, defined by Pang (2013:333) as a “netizen-generated hype that causes huge interest that is triggered by a key event and sustained by a self-reinforcing quality in its ability for users to engage in conversation”. It can be also considered a prototype of “paracris” or a “publicly visible crisis threat that charges an organization with irresponsible or unethical behavior” (Coombs & Holladay, 2012:409). More precisely a “challenge” as a “most complicated” variety of “paracrisis” occurring when “stakeholders publicly claim that current organizational practices are irresponsible” (Coombs, 2014: 8). In Tonus “challenge” all red flags pointed by Coombs and Holladay (2012) were raised: crossing over from social into mainstream media; escalation of negative comments about product and company; challenge spreading among different platforms; having challengers with expert skills and main challenger who had success in making other organization to change. Similar crisis cases have been rarely studied, especially departing strict organizational perspective (Coombs & Holladay, 2014; Champoux et al., 2012; Pang et al., 2014; Pang, 2013; Johansen et al., 2016). Therefore, much more knowledge about occurrence and development of paracrisis is needed in order to understand phenomena and properly react to it. In that respect, this study examines life-cycle of the paracrisis asking first:

RQ1. How crisis originated, diffused and ended?

Furthermore, the digital PR subfield is slightly lagging behind contemporary communicative developments in practice and theory. Duhé (2014: 4) found only four crisis contributions to PR theory related to new media in 34 year time span: blog-mediated crisis communication model (Austin et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2012; Jin & Liu, 2010); networked crisis communication model (Utz et al., 2013); value modeling for assessing the effectiveness of crisis messages (Freberg et al., 2013) and rhetorical arena model (Coombs & Holladay, 2014). Since the aim of this paper

is to capture the complex communication in a paracrisis, we have adopted the rhetorical arena model as a multi-vocal approach. Coombs and Holladay (2014: 41) explain: “A rhetorical arena opens around a crisis and is where the various crisis voices are heard. Those voices are not limited to those representing the organization. The rhetorical arena is the space where numerous crisis actors talk about the crisis and respond to talk about the crisis”. Applying model which acknowledges publics as crisis communicators without privileging organizational voice this study investigates:

RQ 2. Whose voices were shaping the Tonus bred crisis?

The rhetorical arena consists of sub-arenas, mostly different media platforms on which the conversation about the crisis takes place (Combs & Holladay, 2014). Crisis communicators can participate across different arenas, but there are some boundaries and distinctiveness between sub-arenas (Combs & Holladay, 2014; Austin et al., 2012) or ways of creating meaning in different media realms. We posit that crisis diffused differently across sub-arenas. Likewise, interpretation, evaluation of crisis, Tonus bread and company that produce it, must have varied among crisis actors in sub-arenas. Coombs and Holladay (2014: 44) distinguish between crisis communicators as information-providers, critics or supporters (of organization/product). Therefore, different sub-arenas were explored in search for answers on:

RQ3. How Tonus crisis disseminated among sub-arenas?

RQ4. How Tonus bread was evaluated in main sub arenas?

RQ5. How Trivit Company was evaluated in main sub arenas?

Finally, in order to compare relevance of different actors in the course of Tonus crisis, this study examined position of companies’ voice in rhetorical arena as well as companies’ conduct and communication during crisis:

RQ6. How Trivit Company responded to crisis?

Method

In order to examine understandings and motivations of various actors, to provide an explanation of particular cases (Della Porta & Keating, 2008: 13), as well as in-depth comprehension of the phenomenon in its context (Cavaye, 1996), the method used in this research is an interpretive form of the case study. Case studies are considered to be effective in identifying causal processes often going beyond a single observation (Della Porta & Keating, 2008: 211), or “more useful when the strategy of research is explanatory, rather than confirmatory” (Gerring, 2004: 352). The case under study is crisis surrounding Serbian Trivit Company for falsely advertising and wrongfully labeling its main product - Tonus bread.

The “rhetorical arena” theoretical model was applied, so quantitative and qualitative content analysis was used as main research method. The study aims to define rhetorical arena widely and to capture communication between publics as well as company communication. Therefore we have focused on topic instead of actor search in the most important sub-arenas: traditional mass media, Twitter and Blogosphere. Starting from the posting date of a blog that initiated crisis we have gathered: all stories related to Tonus bread in most influential national daily newspapers (Blic, Politika, Večernje novosti, Kurir) and main newscasts of three national TV stations (B92, RTS, Pink); all tweets found through #tonushleb, #TonusHleb, #Tonus, and “Tonus hleb” Twitter search; all blogs linked in Twitter comments and all relevant appearing in first 30 results on “Tonus hleb” search. Comments on blogs were not considered, due to findings showing that blog followers are usually supportive of the blog topic (Coombs, 2014; Coombs & Holladay, 2014; Kent, 2005). Since the number of stories and references to Tonus declined rapidly after 14 November, it was decided to set 23 October - 22 November 2015 as the research time frame. During that period the company’s communication spaces (Twitter, Facebook page) were monitored and all reactions to crisis were coded. The public event - Conference about the Tonus crisis case “Communication in crisis – from minus to plus” organized by the Serbian PR Association, live streamed on YouTube (14 March 2016) – was used as balance check and relevant source of information about Trivit’s owner retrospective on the crisis.

The unit of the content analysis was “text” identified as the newspaper article, news story within the main national television newscasts, published blog or tweet during one-month period (23 October - 22 November) in 2015. There were 334 units of analysis coded. We have looked particularly into the voices represented, overall evaluation of the company and the product (e.g. neutral, positive or negative valence of the whole text), how the company and the product were labeled, and the visibility and type of the company’s strategy (e.g. proactive or reactive).

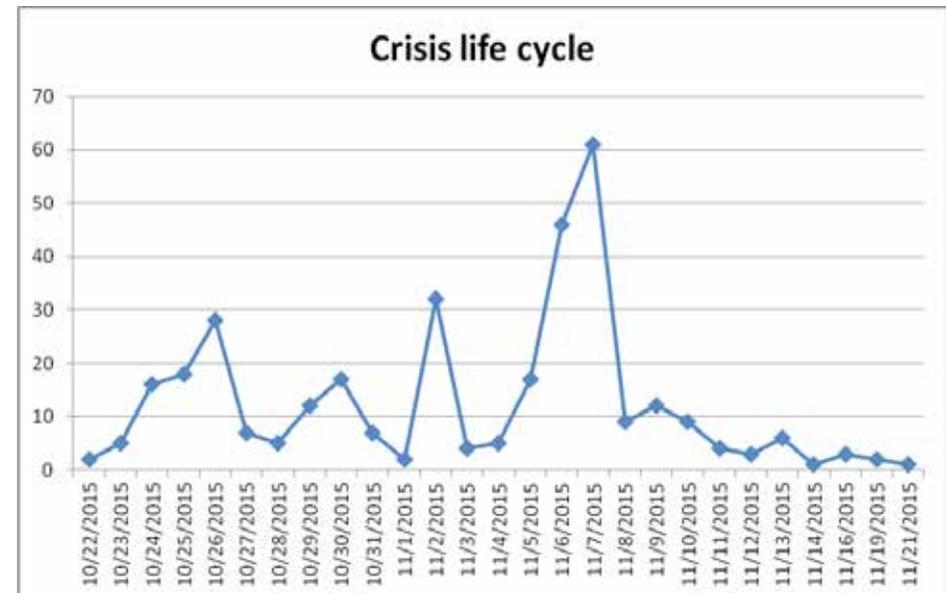
Results

The case of Tonus bred – Crisis life cycle

The crisis began when blogger Tatjana Vehovec (<http://www.mooshema.com>) released the document on 22 October 2015, showing official response of the market inspection regarding her private complaint against Tonus bread. The bread is produced by Trivit Company in Serbia and advertised to prevent cancer and cure diabetes under the license of the Russian Science Academy. Vehovec made a complaint in July 2015 after her friend’s grandmother had stopped taking medicine for diabetes and decided to start eating the Tonus bread instead. Vehovec asked the market and health inspections to investigate whether the product’s labels were correct and truthful. The market inspection officially responded to Vehovec, stating that the bread had been falsely advertised as “Licensed by the Russian Science Academy”. The blogger also published results obtained from the agricultural inspection, which had already determined numerous irregularities regarding the product’s characteristics and, moreover, its incorrect advertising. The story was picked up by the most read newspaper in the country and accelerated on Twitter

two days later. Trivit and Tonus not only suffered severe public condemn and harsh negative publicity, especially on Twitter, but also withdrawal of Tonus bread from stores of all major retailer companies in the country (30 October).

Graphic1. Number of texts published daily during Tonus crisis



However, the turnover in the story’s cycle occurred on 5 November, when blogger Milan Kamponeski (@AmizDulniker) blamed several other bloggers for “racketeering Serbian companies” and making deliberate false accusations against Trivit and its product. In his version of the story, several bloggers including Vehovec, have initiated and orchestrated the whole paracrisis in order to offer service and expertise of partner PR agency to solve the crisis for Trivit. This interpretation of events, which made Trivit look like a victim, attracted a lot of attention and started a wave of support for company. The crisis gradually and spontaneously faded out by the end of November (see Graphic 1.). In the following months Tonus bread silently and slowly returned to stores in new packing without health claims. Tonus “comeback” have not attracted any media attention, or stakeholder reactions on social media and in blogosphere.

Voices shaping the story

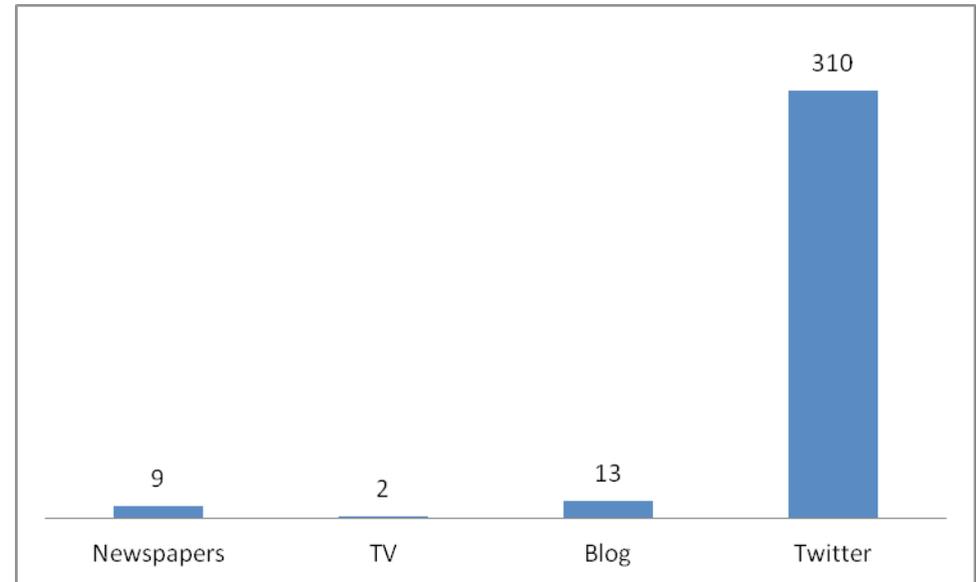
We have identified various actors talking about the Tonus crisis. The most dominant voices in the sampled media coverage are those of citizens commenting on Twitter, company’s representatives, story’s initiator (Tatjana Vehovec, @Mooshema), PR experts, and online media. Although less represented, other voices refer to relevant state institutions, nutrition experts, consumer associations and retail companies (see Table 1).

Table 1. Voices shaping the story

Voice	Count of voices in texts
Citizens	270
Company	41
Story initiator	16
PR experts	13
Online media	12
State institutions	10
Nutrition experts	4
Other publics	4
Consumers associations	2
Retail companies	1
Total	373

Crisis distribution in sub-arenas

Traditional media outlets did not show large interest to follow the crisis. Only 11 stories referring to Tonus bread and Trivit company were published in 4 out of 7 monitored mainstream media: Blic (8), Politika (1), B92 (1), RTS (1). The other sampled print and TV stations did not mention the crisis during the period of research. The story was mainly distributed on Twitter and various blogs (see Graphic 2).



Graphic 2. Crisis distribution in sub-arenas

Evaluation of company and product in different sub - arenas

Despite the overall disinterest of traditional media to report on the crisis, the stories published in newspapers and broadcasted on TV stations have had different interpretation and evaluation of both the company and Tonus bread in comparison to other identified sub-arenas. Therefore, traditional outlets evaluated the company and the bread mostly negatively in more than 60% of the stories, while offering some neutral interpretation in only one third of analyzed articles and TV news. Negative evaluation of the company is reflected in tabloid headlines, such as “Tonus fraud of the century”, “Tonus keeps baking lies”, “Consumers discover Tonus deceit” (Blic), where the company is accused for lying, deceiving the public, false advertising and unverified health declarations.

The crisis’ interpretation across other sub-arenas show significant difference compared to newspapers and TV newscasts. While negative evaluation of the company and the product persist in traditional media coverage throughout the sampled period, there is a clear distinction between two particular periods identified in the story’s cycle distributed on blogs and Twitter. Namely, negative evaluation of company and the product dominates from the story’s release on 22 October until the turnover on 5 November, when Milan Kamponeski published the blog accusing PR experts for “racketeering” Serbian companies and deliberate triggering of the crisis. After 5 November, more positive blogs (see Table 2) and Twitter comments (see Table 3) appeared, decreasing negative evaluation of both the company and the Tonus bread.

Table 2. Evaluation of company and product on blogs (count of texts)

Evaluation of company		22/10 – 4/11	5/11 – 21/11
	Neutral	1	0
	Positive	0	2
	Negative	3	5
Evaluation of product	Neutral	1	3
	Positive	1	3
	Negative	2	1

In blogs, the company was mostly accused for “false and illegal advertising” and “lying”, while positive labels in the second period of the crisis referred to the company being “a victim of public assault led by group of bloggers”.

Table 3. Evaluation of company and product on Twitter (count of texts)

Evaluation of company		22/10 – 04/11	05/11 – 21/11
	Neutral	3	6
	Positive	13	26
	Negative	41	24
Evaluation of product	Neutral	10	12
	Positive	19	36
	Negative	65	47

Negative evaluation of company on Twitter dominated several days after the story had been released. Negative comments were encompassed with strong usage of language and extremely negative adjectives addressed directly to the company’s representatives: “Shame on you, liars!”, “Fraud of the year”, “Evil company”, “Should apologize to people”, “Bad PR”, “Bad copyright”, “Bread mafia”, “Certified for fools”. After 5 November, positive evaluation increased and was expressed mainly in regards to the outcome of the battle between PR experts and bloggers. Therefore, positive comments on Twitter, such as “Tonus bread should win”, “Honest domestic company”, “Long live the Tonus”, followed the same pattern of changes in evaluation identified in the sampled blogs, whereas the discourse of company’s victimization and defense of the bread appeared as the most dispersed across these sub-arenas.

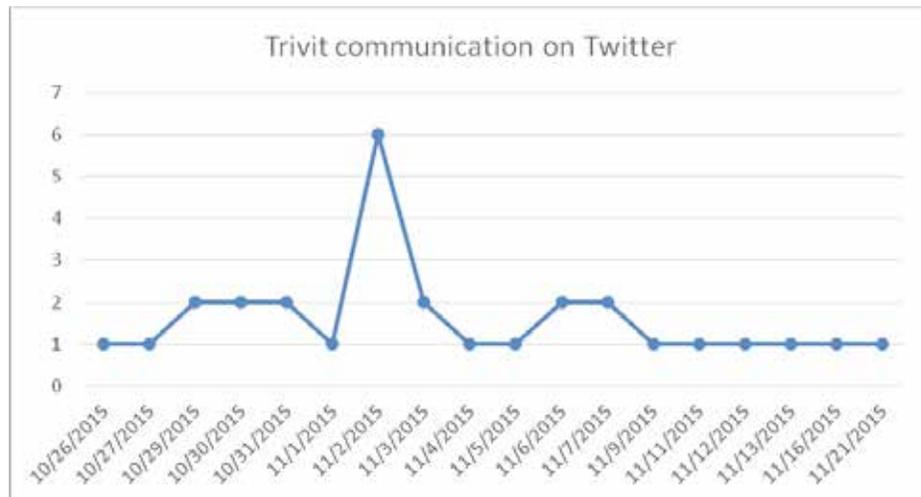
Organization response versus suggestions for a good practice

Based on the evidence from crisis communication research the Trivit Company has missed all benchmarks for managing reputational damage. As Coombs (2014: 3) has summarized, crisis response should be guided by following knowledge: “(1) timing, being the first to report the crisis is beneficial to the organization; (2) victim focus, emphasizing the victim in public crisis messages, and (3) misinformation, the need to aggressively fight inaccurate information”.

The first advice to crisis managers is to respond promptly, if possible before the issue escalates in mainstream media (Coombs, 2014; Pang et al., 2014). Trivit Company has reacted to crisis on 26 November 2015, by posting an official statement on organization’s Facebook page, linking it to organization’s Twitter account, 48 hours after the story was picked up by mainstream media, as late as 4 days after the triggering blog post.

Instead of addressing potential victims – consumers feeling deceived, and apologizing to consumers whose health might have suffered because they have misunderstood the claims on the Tonus bread packaging, Trivit opted for denial response. The communication strategy was visible in only 34 texts and mainly reactive (in 96 %). Moreover, the company was sending contradicting messages, adding more confusion to already complicated issue. In the first statement (26 October) company claimed that the advertising message “Licensed by the Russian Science Academy” was removed as inspection ordered. Yet, on 9 November, Trivit stated that the problematic label “Licensed by Russian Science Academy” was changed into the “By the license of OOO Academproduct Russia” on 1 October 2015. In the statement from 2 November Company explained that Trivit was forbidden to use phrases “without GMO” and “therapeutic” on packages and in advertisements, as well as any other health or nutrition claims, and therefore announced that transitional packages without any claims would be used from the next day. However, on the same day (2 November) the company addressed the director of the Clinical center to assure him that Tonus bread previously donated to the Clinical center was delivered in correct package. Trivit tried to assure publics that Tonus bread was healthy, by promising to publish medical evidence, without disclosing them until the end of crisis.

Against the findings that “organizations recover reputations and stock prices quicker when they communicate aggressively (frequently and through many channels) than when they communicate passively (release very little information)” (Coombs, 2014: 6), Trivit’s response was not aggressive at all. They have used only three channels of communication, Twitter, Facebook and television, publishing altogether 29 tweets (see Graphic 3), while Trivit’s owner appeared in three TV shows (31 October, 2 and 3 November). Trivit also failed to engage with most influential actors shaping the story – bloggers, PR experts and newspapers.



Graphic 3. Dynamics of Trivit Company communication in Twitter sub-arena

Overall, crisis response, described as “communication disaster” by one participant in the blog – arena, was probably consequence of the fact that Trivit as mid-sized company (500 employees) was lead without PR team or PR professional. Even after the crisis, company owner and director still refuses to hire PR professional or organize a PR team, confessing that she “personally controls and checks every word that goes public, with help of IT experts” (Conference, DSOJ, 14 March 2016). Such business decision can be related to the way of ending the crisis, which can be considered as “lucky strike” for Trivit. According to the words of company’s director and owner, she was approached by Milan Kamponeski who “opened her eyes” about the source of the crisis (influential bloggers in conspiracy with PR agency) and reasons behind it (to be hired to solve the crisis for Trivit), so she “sponsored his blog” in order to “spread the truth” (Conference, DSOJ, 14 March 2016). Evaluating such acts, especially ethical implications, can be a matter for a separate study, and will not be addressed in this paper.

Discussion

The Tonus case study confirms previous findings that crisis get momentum after gaining credibility in traditional media coverage (Pang et al., 2014; Pang, 2013). In Tonus crisis, only after the writing of a blog author was reported in the most read newspaper in the country, the conversation on Twitter outburst, leading to the crisis escalation. These results could be issue related, since health concerns associated with a daily consumed product, have great news value. However, it can also indicate the increasing influence of social media on mainstream media reporting. This study corresponds with research showing that and social media are becoming important source for journalism stories (Broersma & Graham, 2012; Diakopoulos et al., 2012; Hermida, 2010) as well

as intersecting of influential bloggers and traditional media agendas (Lowrey & Bureson, 2008; McCombs et al., 2014; Wallsten, 2013). If this trend accelerates, more paracrisis will transfer from digital to traditional media, making more damage to challenged organizations. Therefore, organization relations can become fruitful stance for researching publics petitioning different organization to change.

The Tonus paracrisis gained traction in the traditional media since Trivit failed to respond timely and in appropriate manner. The issue escalated, inducing rhetorical arena in which the voice of company was marginal during the whole crisis. As Coombs and Holladay (2014) have argued, the voices shaping the crisis are not limited to those representing the organization. Our results show that the crisis life cycle has been mainly determined by citizens on Twitter. It can be argued that citizens are personally more concerned about the outcome of the crisis because it directly refers to their health. Therefore, they tend to initiate the public debate and influence the overall flow of the crisis. However, it can be also argued that company’s voice was less present in rhetorical arena because Trivit has acted passively as a respondent to crisis rather than proactive speaker with clear communication strategy.

The state institutions in charge for food and health inspection were the most prominent voices in newspapers and TV stories, followed by the company’s representatives and the initiator of the story. This can be consequence of the journalism culture in Serbia, namely heavy reliance on official sources in reporting (Krstić & Milojević, 2013; Krstić, 2015). Accordingly, ministry of health and market inspections were asked for opinion and given more space in newspaper coverage than citizens’ voices. However, the distribution of voices is also related to the different interpretation of issue in examined sub – arenas.

Previous research shows that mainstream media coverage is generally more objective and balanced, and lead by newsworthiness rather than conversation in social media (Pang et al. (2014). Also, Coombs & Holladay (2014) point to different evaluation of challenged actors in different sub – arenas. The case of Tonus supports these general conclusions, but with some specificity. Traditional media reported about Tonus at the beginning of crisis, without following issue further, probably because trustworthy information were scarce towards the end of crisis. Therefore, media coverage was uniform throughout the crisis, while Tonus and Trivit were evaluated mainly negative and somewhat neutral. On the other hand the “victimization of Trivit” by Kamponeski was reflected in Twitter community and Blogosphere by increase of positive comments. Such course of crisis demonstrate that social media users can shift opinions very quickly without substantive evidence, making paracrisis highly unpredictable and complicated to plan and execute response.

Moreover, the case of Tonus is very unique because highly unexpected outcome was not result of Trivit disengagement with publics, but rather engagement of single stakeholder, who could be labeled a “volatile, citizen, independent” crisis manager. His blog generated support for the company and causing more reputational repair than any communication effort of the company. Therefore, this case shows that publics have gained power not only to enter into relations with organizations, cause paracrisis, but also to stir the course of crisis. For successful coping with paracrisis, PR practitioners must identify influential bloggers and social media users, and monitor

numerous sub-arenas in order to prepare prompt response to acts of potential “volatile, citizen, independent” crisis managers.

Conclusion

Based on a Tonus crisis case study, this paper aligns with recent calls for reexamining the status of “publics” in the mainstream research and theory of the public relations, arguing that publics have the means to engage in communication with the organizations and power to change the organizations’ behavior. The term “organization relations” is offered for labeling communication rising in public sphere and aiming at organizations, as a potential concept which could serve as incentive for future research of such phenomena.

Therefore, this study has relevance for the theory and practice of communication. In theoretical realm, it refines the rhetorical arena approach by expanding the available knowledge about communication flows in different sub – arenas. Furthermore, it points out that existing perspective on crisis communicators as people receiving organizationally sanctioned crisis messages should be further extended. In Tonus case, crisis communicators did not respond to organization, but mainly to each other, until one actor imposed himself as “uninvited” crisis communicator with social capital and capacity to reverse the crisis.

For the practice, this study emphasizes already determined weight of timely response in case of paracrisis. Also, it highlights the necessity for monitoring various sub-arenas, and value of comparing issue evaluation in sub-arenas for adapting crisis messages for different sub-arenas. Furthermore, it signals to crisis managers to have in mind possible “volatile, citizen, independent” crisis managers, who could interfere with their communication efforts.

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4

MICRO NARRATIVES AS AN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING PEOPLE

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Abstract

Contemporary reflections on communications suggest that in the urgency to communicate, many organizations generate large amounts of information that is irrelevant to their audiences. Limited to a ready template and replicated without criteria, this information is issued to individuals without considering the different members/constructive subjects of organizational culture and their stories, memories and wishes; missing the various opportunities to rethink the process of internal communication. Given this scenario, the present study aims to identify opportunities for engaging people, involving the internal workforce, as well as creating more attractive and successful communication narratives. For this reason, we seek a better understanding of the richness in the content of eight different oral memory projects, which nature is participatory and dialogic, such as those developed based on storytelling about the employees' experiences in the organizational environment: the micro narratives. This concept was developed based on the theories that interpret the grand narratives of modernity, which had a significant influence in people's lives and served as references for society. The narratives were dissolved in post-modernity, when the focus shifted to individuals and their stories. Therefore, when we verify, describe, explain and understand the contents by respondents in their organizational micro narratives, it is possible to ponder how internal communications can work more effectively and affectively to generate new narratives that encourage involvement, engagement, recognition, identification, understanding and action from employees, to the detriment of rationality, standardization, and ephemeral excess of information.

Keywords: organizational communication; internal communication; new contexts; new narratives; storytelling; micro narratives; organizational memory and history.

MICRO NARRATIVES AS AN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING PEOPLE

Given the new contexts in today's world, such as the post-modern, employees in the realm of organizations witnessed a change in the way they felt about the world and work. Due to excess information, attention deficit and superficial experiences, current memories, narratives and communications are in a state of crisis. What can be done to engage employees in a disengaged world?

Reflections based on the optics of a digital, fluid, random, rational excessive context that is exposed demonstrate that there is no space in today's organizations for traditions, deep experiences, myths, stories and affection. The absence of these foci leads some organizations to present narratives that age in view of new contexts and therefore it is necessary to discuss new communication strategies – new narratives – in organizational communication and, even in internal communication.

Literature Review

Nassar (2013) characterizes our informational society as producing social paralysis upon contextualizing the excess of communication in our society and adapting the concepts of hypnosis and numbing of the senses from contemporary media overstimulation introduced by McLuhan (1964). In other words, the excessive information about individuals leads us to be living a life without history or geography, thus distancing us from our personal and social memories and resulting in a context where identities are absent and current narratives cannot be sustained or communicated¹ (NASSAR, 2013).

The current context suppressed the wealth of profound experiences and, as a result, the way of creating, receiving and above all, feeling communication. People and organizations are saturated with information, weakened in terms of experiences and in need of feelings and affection. To Larrosa-Bondía (2002), experience is what happens to us, what takes place in our lives and what touches us. However, in view of this context of information overload, many, many things take place in our lives and barely anything touches or affects us on a deep level.

Larrosa-Bondía's text features important points about the weakening of experiences, reflections on a context where people have no time, mainly for speaking and listening, in other words for communicating. Individuals are more concerned with being informers and informed than being willing to cultivate the art of meeting; they are less prepared to affect and be affected and less willing to make space and time for experiences:

¹ (Verbal information). Discussion brought up by Prof. Dr. Paulo Nassar during a meeting of the Grupo de Estudos de Novas Narrativas, Escola de Comunicações e Artes da Universidade de São Paulo, on February 27, 2013.

Experience, the possibility that something will happen or touch us requires a gesture of interruption, a gesture that is almost impossible in today's world; it requires stopping to think, stopping to listen, thinking more slowly, seeing more unhurriedly, and listening more steadily; stopping to feel, feeling at a slower pace, lingering on details, delaying opinion, holding off on judgment, postponing will, interrupting the automatism of action, cultivating attention and delicacy, opening eyes and ears, talking about what is happening to us, learning slowness, listening to others, cultivating the art of meeting, keeping silent often, becoming patient and opening space and time (LARROSA-BONDÍA, 2002, p. 24).

When claiming about the impoverishment of experiences before a dynamic and uninterrupted world, the author is especially talking to us about the weakening of relationships, that is, the absence of time and space for affection between people, changes in feeling and communication. Memory does not have the time to undergo profound experiences. Today there is neither space for sustainable and long-lasting relationships, nor for valuing the individual as these have been replaced by mediated and trade relations. Now, emotions have given rise to the rational mode of being, communication has lost ground to simple information and building relationships has taken on new forms and meanings. What occurs in the context of abundant information, speed and ephemerality is a constant movement towards disenchantment, since the magic that touches the being grows weak and feeble in the face of new stimuli that rapidly replace them. Currently, concerns are about an individual who is served by new technology and new ways of being and interacting in the world, about an individual who is served by a multitude of symbolic choices, by abundance and automation (PINK, 2007). We are living at a time of weakening experiences, of diffuse attention and little affection, of speed, ephemerality and ambiguity.

To Benjamin, this poverty of experience reflects sad men who are dispirited, tired and lacking energy, because they do not concentrate all of their thoughts into simple and grand plans to be achieved one day, instead, they devour everything, all information, all "culture," and remain sated and exhausted (BENJAMIN, 1986, p.118).

Benjamin draws a picture of modernity through Baudelaire (GATTI, 2008), writing about the transitory nature of things, of a fleeting moment, of a world of rapid and transient visions, of magical instances that disappear rapidly. This new view also suggests a new way of perceiving the world such that man disconnects from his memory and lives in a state of shock in the present, his awareness connected to the everyday and not to facts. Man is no longer immersed in his subjectivity, thus generating change in the creation of memories and, consequently a crisis in narratives.

This thought serves as the basis for Sennett (2010) to address the question "How can a human being develop a narrative from an identity and life history made up of fragmented episodes?" (SENNETT, 2010, p.27). And it is precisely on this point that organizational communication must also be considered according to this dynamic context of constant restructuring, where the long-term is not desired, thus encumbering dialogues and relationships where communications also become disenchanting and objective, in other words, neither affective, nor effective.

A context that is fragmented, abundant and constantly exposed to insignificant messages, lacking enchantment, and rapidly made commonplace, rarely achieve a level deep enough for exchanging and engaging. Communication channels and content producers change, since they are already uncomplaining about the industrial pace of at which messages are produced in large machines for producing emptiness.

Emptiness, the product of the absence of an affective narrative in communication, in other words, the absence of a vision that implies the ideas, practices, habits, and dreams of people who make up an organization (BOFF, 2012). Narrative is what enables explaining origins, evolutions and purposes, whether they belong to the individual's personal or professional life, to his/her stories, of his/her place as a human being in the world, even in the organizational world.

This all means that the speed of the changes, the uncontrollable recording of life out of fear of losing the present, the weakening of personal relationships, the information overload, and the multitude of symbolic choices made possible by digital technology and social networks, by the complex and ephemeral world and the mass production of messages fired off on all media have disturbed our sight, as if it were covered by a constant cloud, undifferentiated and insensitive. Blindness about inexistent communication.

In order to exist, communication must understand this new way of feeling the world, and based on this understanding, be differentiated. It requires a view that can interrupt the continuum and change it into discontinuity, diversification, explanation, representation. It needs to be able to create really profound experiences that stir emotions, where subjectivity surpasses objectivity and rationality.

Otherwise, organizations simply create make-believe communication, where the main roles are filled by content with no identity and the main scenes dissolution of meaning and the violence unleashed on affection, so that "information is increasingly invaded by this type of ghost content, of homeopathic transplant, of sleep awaken by communication" (BAUDRILLARD, 1981, p. 105). And it is precisely because of this new context that we must conceive new narratives.

New narratives

From a theoretical and practical point of view of organizational communication, we live in a phase where we must seek new paradigms to base communication strategies on so that they can be effective. Considering all the points addressed up to this point, we can bet upon the development of the so-called "narrative paradigm" for the re-enchantment of organizational communication, and even of internal communication and the consequent engagement.

By appropriating these concepts, we can consider "narrative" as a differential for the professional in communications, not just from the perspective that he/she is considered a story-teller, or an analyst and interpreter of narrations about the organization, but also, in a broader sense, as a spokesperson of discourses, whether it be for transmitting ideas, concepts, the attributes of a product, of a service or brand, or to impart stories, memories, traditions, beliefs, values, myths, organizational rites and rituals, which build the reality of the company, its narrative reality.

Cogo (2012, p.80), in conformity with this thinking, reveals that narrations are what enable the liberation of opinions, feelings and intentions, the production of meaning for its world, as well as the organizational influence in this definition. This shows that human beings need to have symbols to help them understand and interpret the world (SNUNWOLF, 2005, p.305) and that these symbols, lost in post modernity, can be recovered, can be recovered by the stories told and the discourses upheld by organizations and by the those involved in organizational narrating. Reviving fascination for the world, organizational communication and internal communication is therefore reflected in this new paradigm, in the construction of new narratives, which are capable of “serving as a bridge to connect the different dimensions and conspire to recover meanings, which make people more human, honest, solidary, tolerant, compassionate and able to be one with themselves and with others.” (BUSSATO, 2006, p.12). These are ideas that are connected to the emotions, set aside by organizations in a rational world:

If facts are easily and greatly available, they lose some of their worth. What starts to become more important is the ability to weave these elements into a coherent whole – attaining not just the context, but the emotional impact, as well. [...] And that is the essence of the capability of stories – context enriched by emotion (PINK, 2007, p.100).

The new narratives of communication founded on this so-called narrative paradigm need to seek this appearance of human awareness, sharing a community of purposes, which are able to create identification, engagement and an organizational culture that is reconstructed with human values, symbols, stories, heroes, myths, rites, rituals, styles, metaphors revealed at that exact moment experienced by the people of the organization (MARCHIORI, 2009).

Focused on humanization and its values, these narratives should be able to overcome subjectivities, as well as respect for internal audiences. One must know how to analyze and work with contexts to create space for dialogues and relationships (OLIVEIRA, 2009) where the feelings and dreams of the individuals can flow freely, providing a space for participating, sharing ideas, discussing and co-creating the new world.

To Nassar (2007), in a world in which everything rapidly becomes banal due to mass production, information bombardment and scattered attention, a differentiation that emerges through the history of an organization with its personnel, as well as of those people with the organization, is an attribute that few organizations still possess. In this context, a Danish researcher, Jensen (2006 apud NASSAR, 2007, p.186) believes in the trend of a society in the near future, where consumption will have to be a lot more emotional than rational. And companies will have to connect their values and history to their products if they want to win the hearts of their clients. And the same applies to communicating with any audience, including the internal one.

It is upon this backdrop that Pink (2007) reveals the fact that we are no longer an economy and society “based on logical, linear, cold and objective abilities of the information age transitioning to [...] the creative, empathetic and systemic abilities – the conceptual age” (PINK, 2007, p.1). In order for this to happen, this author points to the development of capabilities related to issues

about new ways of transmitting messages, which are narrated for the purpose of being personally gratifying and especially emotional, connected to subjectivity, yearning and affective memories. He believes that logic and rationality are not ideal in this new context, “limiting oneself to the appeal of the rational, logical and functional needs is vociferously insufficient.” (PINK, 2007, p.33) in this new conceptual age. New narratives must understand behavior, establish relationships and be concerned about people lightly and humorously, understanding their aspirations and seeking interaction and the sharing of their ideas.

The author also makes a statement about the importance of constructing meaning, in the transcendence, to reach the essence of life – unattainable values – those that are not possible through information but rather, through communication and sharing of those who, in fact are relevant and create an identity for the audiences of interest to the organization. Society increasingly seeks more values, such as: simplicity, instead of complexity and overloading; creativity instead of standardizing and humanizing against mechanization; time and space so that affective narratives can be interesting stories, which reconcile integration and participation to overcome hollow meanings.

To Pink (2007), the old narratives would be exactly those connected to a society of excess and abundance, which he conceives as being developed upon High-Tec abilities, that is, objective, logical and rational needs. What he believes is that these narratives no longer work with people nowadays, who need narratives developed upon two other abilities connected to the emotional and the creation of feelings, empathic and comprehensive links: high concept and high touch.

High concept is the ability to create artistic and emotional beauty, of perceiving patterns and opportunities, of conceiving interesting narratives and joining apparently disconnected ideas in order to create something new. High touch is the ability to create empathic connections, understand the subtleties of human interactions, find joy and provoke it in others, and look beyond the surface in search of purpose and meaning. (PINK, 2007, p.48)

These concepts can be considered to be the foundations for new narratives. This can also be associated to a new “way of being present, in which the imaginary, the oneiric, the playful, rightly, occupy a fundamental space” (MAFFESOLI, 2010, p.27) and can create narratives that are able to affect, change and inspire.

Micro narratives

In “The Postmodern Condition,” Lyotard (1989) points out the changes suffered by narratives in post modernity. In modernity, the great narratives had a significant power in people’s lives, they gave meaning to the past, present and future of humanity. Plots promised a positive view of the individual in relation to society, with ideas of freedom, transformation and evolution. Narratives are what upheld patterns, beliefs, security and hopes, in struggles against the challenges for a positive future.

However, these major narratives, which provided explanations about the world and served as references for society started to become weaker starting in the twentieth century and were lost in post modernity, a concept that Bauman (2001) calls Liquid Modernity, when speaking of a world in which all existing references have been liquefied. In other words, an agile, fluid, mutant reality characterized by constant restructuring in which the possible “patterns, codes and rules we could agree with, that we could select as stable landmarks and by which we could be guided, [...] are becoming increasingly rarer” (BAUMAN, 2001, p.14). In other words, the macro narratives are increasingly being fragmented and losing their larger meanings.

Bauman (2001) believes that in a liquid world, power “shifted from the “system” to “society,” from “politics” to “politics for life” – or descended from the “macro” level to the “micro” level for social coexistence” (BAUMAN, 2001, p.14). Touraine (1998 apud BAUMAN, 2001, p.14), discusses the “defense by all social actors, of, their cultural and psychological specificity (...) that can be found within the individual and no longer in social institutions or in universal principles.”

Along the same lines, to Pérez (2008), the complex and postmodern context surrounding globalization brings with it a uniformity of products, cultures, values, management models, yet at the same time reaffirms the preservation of individual values.

Thus, in view of the growing globalization that recently has been made feasible through the rise of new media, which promote the constantly growing flow of information, ideas and knowledge, which promotes the constant updating of concepts about every aspect of our reality, examines the reliability of the principles and identities of institutions from traditional society (BAUMAN, 2001), removing our major references, our dominant meanings, our main stories and our greatest heroes. Therefore, we fear that a relevant difference between modernity and post modernity is found in the development of narratives. In post modernity “the role of the narrative loses the major hero, the huge risks, the fantastic travels and the grand goals” (D’ALMEIDA, 2012, p. 90). It is the end of the major narratives, which could provide comfort with their explanations about life.

As a result, “in individualized society, the individual must learn, under penalty of an irreversible loss, to recognize him/herself as the focus of the action.” (BECK, 2010, p. 199). The loss of holistic meaning of references and identities leads individuals to start understanding themselves as being “the first.”

Therefore, Lyotard (1989) defends smaller stories instead of large narrations, where we can reclaim a more relational and relative man. There is a contradiction between the global and the local: if on the one hand we have global corporations and brands, we have strategies for miniaturization, micro segmentation, micromarketing and all the other “one-by-one” techniques on the other (PÉREZ, 2008, p. 582).

It is upon these aspects, which, as an example of new narratives, on the narrative paradigm and the strength of the “micro” of today, is where we can work with the concept of micro narratives. These would be, in the context of internal communication, statements by the small parts of an organization, of its target audience, fragments of personal stories to which everyone can contribute with their ideas and feelings, reinforcing the links of empathy and raising intangible values so necessary for the rekindling the charm of communication.

Providing a voice to individualities enables the creation of interesting and affectionate narratives

based on the understanding of high concept and high touch (PINK, 2007), in other words, on the emotion, creativity and humanization able to create interactions and collaborations. Narratives are what make space for cognitive and affective expression and reception, for participation. They affect audiences to create a change in them, a reconstruction of their fragmented identities and a new meaning regarding their actions in the world. Therefore, due to this affective and transformative aspect, the concept can be broadened to “affective micro narratives.”

This concept is also in conformity with the considerations by Paulo Nassar (2012) who introduces the idea that there are two opposing narratives in the organization: the organizational macro narrative, which is connected to major pillars of business, mission, vision and values and micro narratives related to the narratives about the experiences of the organization’s target audience. These two ideas are extremely important for the concept of affective micro narratives, since the organization relies on macro narratives being known by their audiences. However, increasingly more so, communicators must pay attention to the micro level of communication to build the macro narratives, especially considering that if the organizational ideas do not communicate with the personal values of everyone who has a relationship with the organization, they will probably stop seeing a reason for continuing such a relationship. Therefore, we are afraid that personal narratives could be considered to be more important than the macro narratives, since

We are our stories. We condense years of experience, reflections and emotions into synthetic narratives that we share with other people and repeat to ourselves. It has always been like this. Yet, personal narratives are now more important, and perhaps more urgent in a time of abundance, where so many people have greater freedom to seek a deeper meaning about themselves and their lives and life goals. (PINK, 2007, p.111).

Therefore, affective micro narratives must be able to create engagement and identification by those who receive and interpret them and, as well as touch people, at the point when these short speeches can be creative, unique and intimate, working off of not just the needs of the individual, but their dreams and wishes, with their motivations and fears. They are fun, heroic and evocative anecdotal autobiographies of the individuals in relation to the organization, stimulating the sharing of their experiences, passions, affection and feelings, making up the reflection of their criticism or involvement and of their pride in being part of a larger narrative and can thus lead to understanding themselves and their goals in life.

Methodology

The main objective of this empirical research, based on the methodology of Laurence Bardin (2001), content analysis, that is to verify whether employees, carrying out their daily work in organizations (regardless of their positions, titles, ages or gender), expose - or not - the following categories when they describe their experiences and memories in relation to the organizational

world: emotions, subjectivity (dreams and beliefs), feelings of belonging and recognition of themselves, the mythological values of the organization, heroic acts, the spreading expertise of their work, their vulnerabilities and their identification with organizations, whether positive or negative.

Bearing that in mind, this research seeks to understand the strength and wealth of information that may exist in the reports of small parts that make up the organization - in micro narratives - to describe, explain and understand the content displayed in these narratives. This enables them to reflect on how public relations can work more effectively to generate the involvement, engagement, recognition, identification, understanding and action of an organization's employees. The study is qualitative, based on interviews – micro narratives in a storytelling format (life testimonials) - of workers drawn from 8 different Brazilian organizations, regardless of age, gender, position or current activities.

Results and conclusions

Analysis was performed on 10 categories identified with the following codes:

- 1) externalization of feelings (laughs, reflexive pauses, positive feelings and negative feelings),
- 2) manifestation of subjectivities (dreams and wishes, uncertainties, intuitions, likes, beliefs, secrets and guesses),
- 3) humor (irony, diminutives, metaphors and fun facts),
- 4) mythological presence (origins, mythological figures, myths transformation, rituals, humanization and spiritual act),
- 5) heroism (common word/call to adventure, help something or someone, way of tests/difficulties, overcome, apotheosis/be an example and returns),
- 6) detailed memories (time records, first memories, social/historical memories and cultural matrixes),
- 7) recognition (feel proud, feel motivated, recognize your opportunities, recognize their actions, recognize the organization and having recognized family),
- 8) sense of belonging (connections with colleagues, belonging to a project, workplace environment, changing attitudes because of an organization's values and identification with the organization's values),
- 9) dissemination of knowledge (trends of the period, problem solutions, technical words, explanation concepts and explanation process/project),
- 10) vulnerabilities (something that did not work, out of a job, preconception, did not reach goals yet, something that is not remembered, chaos/confusion and something that is unknown).

The importance of considering the micro level of the organization: It's intended to observe and describe mainly the results on the idea that no matter what type of work done by an employee, or his seniority, everyone can be engaged. To tell their personal life stories in relation to their daily

lives in the organizational world, all these categories are present in their content and have a good chance to emoting and engage people in a disengaged world, which usually do not value and the importance for the information of life histories of each employee.

The power of small: also reveals how much Power there is in the small parts that make up or build up an organization. One must think about how much each of these parts have affects, desires, opinions, criticism and positive or negative images about various organizational aspects and that these small parts themselves have their own human networks and relationship capital (inside and out of the organization they belong to), and they can have an influence on other people, leading these ideas and views about the organization.

Unhappy organization that does not produce its heroes: although there are so many differences and complexities between one individual and the next, the stories bring elements of identifications through the cultural-representative signs that are able to affect people's imagination, that of those who narrate and those who listen, thus, involving them. In this way, a strategic point in internal communication is the transformation of the "common person," a participant in the organization, into an everyday hero as a result of his daily activities at work, which is in conformity with the new feeling of the modern man, who needs acknowledgment of his individuality. Today's heroines are people who struggle, meet challenges and survive in this chaotic world. In the organizational and work world, relationships must take place upon these aspects. Organizations must keep their macro narratives alive, but need to give them new meanings, reinforcing their references based on micro narratives, acknowledging all the memories and stories of its members, creating its heroes from daily life, surrounded by feelings of acknowledgment and belonging, as well as their emotions, subjectivities and vulnerabilities.

The richness of details: the grain is what makes things grand. The life that people have is not made up of major moments all the time. The small things we experience are what make up our greatness. Therefore, it is important to value the wealth of day-to-day details that are essential for building our being and meaning of life. Naturalization of routine, information overload, high-speed facts, often make "these small miracles in of our lives insignificant." When we realize this phenomenon, the communicator must know how to value and see how great the small details narrated from daily experiences of the internal audience really are.

Every micro narrative has relevant information: from the overall results of the study, every micro narrative presented both positive and negative citations, even if the latter were significantly less in number. Internal communication must reveal that, depending on the purpose of the actions to be created through the micro narratives, it is important to consider both the positive citations to encourage acknowledgment, a sense of belonging, creativity about the mythologies and the organizational heroes, as well as the negative ones, to reconsider some processes or even use them as a source of identification. The presence of categories in the analyzed interview content shows

their relevance to the extent that the reception and encouragement of internal communication are connected to affective and cognitive issues (PIAGET, 1969), which are dependent on cultural standards, individual experiences, interpretive experiences, interactions, perceptions, imagination, memories and even the intensity of these memories in each individual. This is why it is so important for communicators to understand the wealth of information that comes from these memories. Moreover, it is for this reason that in order to understand all of these characteristics in the micro narratives it is necessary for the communicator to have a discriminating eye for the details in the what each employee says. The micro narratives enable democratic spaces for the exchange of ideas, for listening to the polyphony in the organizational world, even creating an environment that enables creativity, humor, emotion and desire for the development of new narratives. It also enables, if it is well done, the creation of a habitats for revealing negative aspects, bad feelings and vulnerabilities, which are important for re-thinking some organizational processes, avoiding loss of talent and even allowing for more precise feedback. Micro narratives are therefore important for: the communicator, to understand the feeling in the organizational environment and to re-think communication actions to generate engagement; for narrators, to feel acknowledged when receiving a space to be heard to the extent that he/she feels that his/her memories and stories are important to the organization and to the spectator, who can identify him/herself and be moved.

Micro narratives, as an example of how to use organizational storytelling makes the most of understanding that telling a story can be considered to be a new communication logic to be used strategically in accordance with new contexts where it is necessary to reconsider the logic of humanization, engagement, subjectivity, acknowledgment, of the mythical, the comical, the collaborative, the dialogue, the individual, the affective, the symbolic, against the saturation, rationality, superficial experiences, standardization and lack of references and meanings.

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A Co-created Network Community for Knowledge and Innovations – Promoting Safety and Security in the Arctic

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Abstract

The cooperation between Arctic states – Russia, the United States, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Finland – has been particularly peaceful while geopolitical tensions have risen elsewhere (Pezard et al., 2017). Discussions on prospecting Arctic natural resources (Haftendorn, 2016., p. 133) have raised new challenges also to knowledge and information management. Therefore, this paper argues that there is a need to develop a co-creation network among higher education and key end users, for knowledge and information sharing and promoting innovation, which will contribute on safety and security in the Arctic domain. The research question for this paper is: How can end users be involved in the process of creating a co-creation network for knowledge and information sharing to contribute on innovations to Arctic safety and security?

The method focuses mostly on the third phase of the Engeström's (2007) expansive learning process, *modeling a new solution*. This is a participatory work in progress. Beyond the desk review, the notes from co-creation network partner communication and meeting discussions have been and are gathered under the Chatham House rule (Chatham House, 2016) to ensure anonymity of all people participating in the process. Creating a new long-term co-operation program of higher education and end users, a co-creation network will attempt to engage a still disengaged field by affecting change to currently scattered and unlinked programs and systems, and build alignment of best practices. This co-creation network needs to be multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional to bring disparate security and safety management and other researchers and experts together with both one another, and with end-users. Online platforms can facilitate

the information and knowledge sharing, as well as enable the co-creation of innovations among the network community. This paper provides a suggestion of the process for co-creation and knowledge exchange between the network members.

The enhanced Arctic research and study community aims to contribute to a safer, more secure and cleaner domain. Developing insights on sustainable economic growth, international processes and best practices, may lead to increased situational awareness as well as supports decision-making – for the benefit of the Arctic.

Key Words: Co-creation of knowledge, Innovation, Co-creation Network, Knowledge, Arctic Security

Introduction

The Arctic is the northern circumpolar region and its ice covered ocean (Heikkilä & Laukkanen, 2013). Economic and human activity is increasing there, partly because the climate of the Arctic is warming. The Arctic Ocean is projected to become nearly ice-free during the summer times within the next 30 to 40 years. Thus, global climate change is opening new Arctic possibilities, such as drilling for natural resources and new sea routes that cut distances between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. But, these also present new challenges. *“Regardless of the risks involved, these Arctic routes and possibilities are a hot topic and shipping in the Arctic will most likely increase in the future”* (Salokannel, Knuuttila & Ruoslahti, 2015: p. 2).

The Northeast Passage between Europe and Asia is 30 – 40 % shorter than the route through the Suez Canal (Guy & Lasserre, 2016). There is still little traffic on the Northeast Passage, but it is constantly increasing. There is a growing need to cooperate and share information that benefits the security and safety of living, transport, and economic use in the Arctic environment (Ruoslahti & Knuuttila, 2016). *“The regulations concerning the safety of shipping, Arctic navigation services, and the readiness to prevent various accidents and to act in accident situations are badly inadequate... Surveillance arrangements in the Arctic sea area and cooperation between the authorities can be seen as an area of development ...”* (Finland's strategy for the Arctic region, 2010, p. 28).

Also beyond the national strategies the necessitated additional multilateral strategies have been argued to ensure stable and harmonized priorities (Haftendorn, 2016. p. 134). European Maritime development, for example, seeks to respond to challenges facing the entire European maritime domain in an integrated and cross-sectorial way (European Coast Guard Functions Forum, 2014), which can serve as a working example also for the Arctic regions. The agreement of the Arctic Council on Cooperation in Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic (Arctic Council, 2011) and the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Guidelines for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (IMO, 2010) are important indicators of development towards proactive safety and security and coordinated coast guard functions related activities in the Arctic domain.

End users in this context are the affected communities living in the region, key political decision makers, private sector companies, shipping and drilling industries, with a presence on the Arctic seas; as well as the coast guard functions, who oversee security and safety in the region. Denmark, Norway, Russia, United States, and Canada have Arctic coastline. Also Sweden and Finland have Baltic Sea coast-line that becomes ice covered during winter months.

The focus of this paper is to investigate the process of involving public and private institutions, and, in particular of end users, in creating an enhanced Arctic research and study community. A network for knowledge and innovation contributing to Arctic safety and security that will involve the actors in active communication. A network of co-creation to promote safety and security on the Arctic domain (later: co-creation network) can add communication and new forms of cooperation through cross-sectorial and regional research and development in issues such as: common awareness, risk pictures, preparation against disaster, joint capacity building, resource pooling and innovations. Built network cooperation will benefit and add value to all sectors working towards a safer and more secure Arctic maritime domain.

This research question for this paper is: How can end users be involved in the process of creating a co-creation network for knowledge and information sharing to contribute on innovations to Arctic safety and security?

2. Literature review

2.1 A Safety and Security Gap in the Arctic

For a long time, the Arctic has been seen as an exceptional space, “an apolitical space of regional governance, functional co-operation, and peaceful co-existence” (Käpylä & Mikkola, 2015, p. 5).

The last decade has seen the Arctic re-emerge as a political component, due to the exceptionally rapid warming and reduction in the Arctic sea ice cover, which is especially noticeable during the summer months. The Arctic is opening up “and substantial natural resource bases as well as new maritime routes in the area were becoming more easily exploitable” (Käpylä & Mikkola, 2015, p. 6).

The Arctic includes the Northern fringes of Europe, Asia, and North-America. Besides the increasing economic and human activity in the Arctic regions, about 4 million people live there permanently. Research shows that the climate of the Arctic is warming (Heikkilä & Laukkanen, 2013). Between 2005 and 2010 was the warmest period ever measured in the Arctic and the extent of Arctic sea ice has never been recorded as low as it was in 2012 (European Commission, 2012).

The rate of the warming of the Arctic, and the decrease of the ice-cover have been surprisingly rapid. There is a great deal of pressure and increased strategic, political, and economic interest to the area. A future, where the Arctic Ocean could, much like the Baltic Sea around Finland today, freeze in winter and melt in summer is easily imaginable (Heikkilä & Laukkanen, 2013; Gascard, 2014). Russia, for example is building an Arctic gateway of its sea route, the Northeast Passage. Its traffic

is increasing and is expected to continue increasing (Zalyvsky & Eduardovna, 2015; Guy & Lassarde, 2016). Vessels are aided by nearly two dozen Russian icebreakers and protected by a string of 10 up-to-date search-and-rescue centres along the route. Continued increase in the near future on this Arctic gateway that the Russians are building between European and Asian ports is predicted. “...to reduce risks, Russia imposed a mandatory piloting scheme along the northern sea route (NSR)” (Guy & Lassarre, 2016; Gascarde, 2014).

Over 200 transit traffic vessels have passed through the Northeast Passage on Russia's Northern Sea Route between 2010 and 2014, with 71 in 2013 alone (Guy & Lassarre, 2016). Besides transit traffic, there are additional traffic, within the Arctic that load or unload cargo to and from the region, and transport of supplies to local communities or industry.

“For the first time ever, an ice class 1A bulk carrier “Nordic Orion” 225 m long from the Nordic Bulk Carriers A/S Danish company, is using the North West Passage in September 2013 as a transit trade lane when transporting 75000 tons of coal from Vancouver, Canada to the port of Pori in Finland” (Gascard, 2014, p. 13).

As activity in the Arctic is increasing, the discussion on the safe use of Arctic resources is a very contemporary topic. This paper argues that there is a need to develop a co-creation network to increase knowledge and innovation, and to promote and ensure safety and security in the Arctic domain.

Fees paid by shippers, help cover costs of improvements to the sea route. This busier maritime transportation corridors are also starting to stimulate inland development; a railroad is planned to connect Russia's mineral-rich interior to its Arctic coast and liquid natural gas facilities on the coast are scheduled (Heininen, et. al., 2014; Lipponen, 2015).

The US Geological Survey (2011) estimates that the Arctic holds 30 % of undiscovered oil and 30% of undiscovered gas supplies, offshore and in depths of under 500 meters. This creates an increasing presence and development possesses specific safety and security challenges for maritime safety and security and Coast Guard functions (Guy & Lassarre, 2016; Salokannel, Knuutila & Ruoslahti, 2015): Increasing economic activity and Arctic sea traffic may cause safety and environmental impacts. Arctic tourism, involving cruise ships in particular is increasing; and yet there are very limited monitoring and surveillance capabilities (Gascard, 2014).

Possible rescue operations will be extremely difficult in case of accidents and emergencies, as the northern coast of Russia, Alaska, and Canada are largely uninhabited and have few harbours. Possible oil discharges could inflict large areas while there is no real oil destruction response capacity available. Due to the lack of a regulatory framework, uncontrolled fishing may occur. There is a lack of international navigation aids and of common Risk analysis in Coast Guard Functions (Salokannel, Knuutila & Ruoslahti, 2015; Ruoslahti & Knuutila, 2016).

2.2 Knowledge and Innovations

Knowledge is an important source to competitive advantage and “a key to the success of modern organizations and creative higher education” (Pirinen, 2015, p. 1). The capability to create organizational knowledge is a key to innovate. The dynamic interactions among all level roles lead to creation of new

knowledge instead of individuals. Knowledge creation leads to continuous innovation and finally to competitive advantage. (Nonaka, I. & Takeuchi, H. 1995. p.6).

Co-created knowledge, knowledge from sharing experiences and knowledge with reflection, is a process of participation in work and social communities. These networks use common information sharing environments and build trust and confidence in one another through interactions between them. A collective responsibility to facilitate a collective R&D progress results in investigations; inventions and innovations (Pirinen, 2015). Co-creation feeds from common objectives and it can occur in both physical and digital arenas. (Bhalla, 2014), where the collaborators can share tools and collaborative processes. There should also be a structure of formal contracts between the collaborators. Valkokari et. al. (2012, p. 27), note that: "... a strategic approach to knowledge management is a key element of success within networked innovation, both in the theory and in the practices...".

The issue arenas model for organizational communication (Vos, Schoemaker, & Luoma-aho, 2014; Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010) explains multi-stakeholder communication, while Galvagno & Dalli (2014) note that co-creation is useful in promoting innovation, as is a strategic approach to knowledge management. A strategic approach is a key element of success in networked innovation, according to Valkokari, et. al. (2012).

Online platforms provide secured online possibilities for needed common information sharing environments, co-creative knowledge creation, and for sharing information and finally research results (Bhalla, 2014; Saarinen, 2012; Hosie, et. al., 2003). The computers made the delivery of education possible and the material were able to deliver both print and electronical media (Moore, 1990). The critical components of successful integration of technology innovations within education and training settings and influences the adoption rate of such technologies are transparency in user interface design and Human Computer Interaction (HCI) (Charalambos, 2004.). Shared information are needed in externally funded projects and innovation networks; participation in which is an important channel of knowledge transfer (Pirinen, 2015; Di Cagno, et. al., 2014); and where combining management of projects, networking, and learning is challenging (Ruoslahti, et. al., 2011).

3. Methodology

To build a basis for the creation of the co-creation network this study uses Engeström's (2007) expansive learning process together with the understanding of Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) Knowledge Creation model to support innovations. The expansive learning process consists of the following phases: (1) Questioning existing practices, (2) Analysis of existing practices, (3) Modeling a new solution, (4) Exploring the new solution, (5) Adopting the new solution, (6) Evaluating the process, and (7) Solidifying and expanding new practices.

This paper focuses on the third phase of the expansive learning cycle, modeling a new solution. The method is participatory and a work in progress. Conclusions from co-creation network partner

communication (meetings, discussions, workshops, events) are gathered under the Chatham House rule (Chatham House, 2016) to ensure anonymity of all people participating in the study. The data is collected from public sources, and from work completed 2011 – 2016. The data consists of the conclusions from discussions with policy maker representatives, and from the Laurea UAS internal documentation (documentation of European CISE (Common Information Sharing Environment roadmap and CISE Education Network). It also includes the notes from a cooperation workshop with World Maritime University in August 2014 and European Maritime Day 2015, and from Center for Island, Maritime, and Extreme Security – CIMES meetings 2011 - 2014. The data includes also the work conducted in ShipArc 2015.

4. Results

The results of this paper focus on the possible actors needed to a co-creation network in Arctic domain with its main aim. As this is still a work in progress, this paper is limited to the current situation and knowledge.

5.1 Coordination Structures on the Arctic Research and Development Actions

5.1.1 The Arctic Council

The Arctic Council is the most important international forum for cooperation in the region. The Arctic Council is formally established in Ottawa Declaration of 1996 as high level intergovernmental forum which aims to provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States (Arctic Council, 1996). The particular issues concentrate on sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic. Canada, United States, Russia, Denmark (Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Finland are member states of the Arctic Council together with permanent participants of six councils representing indigenous peoples of the Arctic. The Arctic Council promotes various forms of collaboration in the Arctic Region (Arctic Council, 1996).

The Arctic Council has a very broad scope, but the Agreement on Cooperation in Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (Arctic Council, 2011) demonstrates that safety and security in the Arctic domain are an important part of it. The co-creation network will be able to raise topics to the attention of the Arctic Council decision making and, thus increase awareness of safety and security related issues and solutions, and cooperation among its member states. The decision making may benefit from the work of co-created network community.

4.2 Networks of Researchers and University of the Arctic

An important form of collaboration are scientific research networks on Arctic issues; notable networks of Arctic research and education are the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), providing guidelines for international science policy and research cooperation on the Arctic; the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS), promoting cooperation between students and researchers in

the early phase of their careers; and University of the Arctic, a network of close to 140 institutions from Arctic countries, enhancing research and student exchange, training between participating universities (University of the Arctic, 2013).

“The University of the Arctic (UArctic) is a cooperative network of universities, colleges, and other organizations committed to higher education and research in the North. Our members share resources, facilities, and expertise to build post-secondary education programs that are relevant and accessible to northern students” (University of the Arctic, 2013). To promote focus the UArctic has thematic networks. An alternative is, that the co-creation network be structured into a thematic network under the University of the Arctic.

5.3 Safety and Security on the Maritime Domain and Coast Guard Functions in Europe

European Maritime Policy seeks to respond to challenges facing the European maritime domain in an integrated and cross sectorial manner. Issues, named Coast Guard Functional activities, have been defined by the European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF) (European Coast Guard Functions Forum, 2014): The European coast guard functions are maritime safety and vessel traffic management; fisheries control; maritime border control, surveillance, security, customs activities, and law enforcement; also maritime environmental protection and response; accident and disaster response; and search and rescue at sea; plus other related activities (Figure 1).

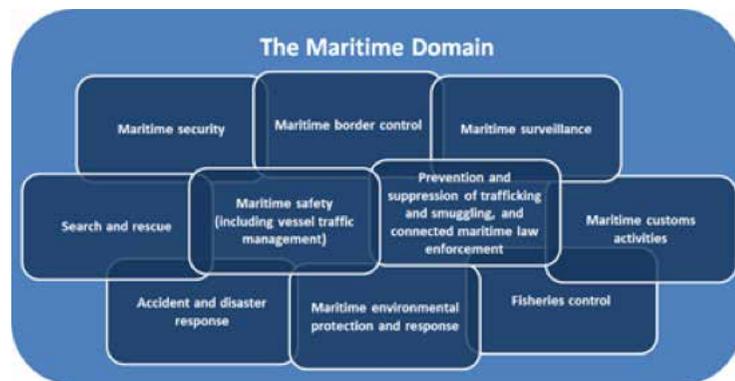


Figure-1: The Constructive Manner of the Terms of Reference (TORs) of Coast Guard Functions (European Coast Guard Functions Forum, 2014)

The European Union and its Member States are working towards a future of integrated non-military maritime surveillance and deeper Coast guard functions related coordination. This development will improve coordination and the wider implementation of platforms, such as EUROSUR (Frontex, 2015) and CISE – Common Information Sharing Environment, for example (European Commission, 2015). Present national Coast Guard education systems mainly serve operational targets and are regulated by professional and organizational purposes; thus post-graduate, and post-doctoral, levels of education

are not included.

A Co-creation Network could promote more unified requirements to educational institutions in the field (coast guard and other actors on the maritime domain). National authorities use, their own educational resources, and also those of other public and relevant private actors. To fully exploit the potential of an integrated maritime policy, the Coast Guard Functions approach could be extended to the academic and educational sectors (WMU Workshop, 2014).

Coast Guard Cooperation Networks

Coast Guard Cooperation Networks include: the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation (BSRBCC), the Northern Atlantic Coast Guard Forum (NACGF), the Black Sea Littoral States Border/Coast Guard Cooperation Forum (BSCF), the Mediterranean Coast Guard Services Forum (MEDFORUM), and the North Pacific Coast Guard Forum (NPCGF). They all have a regional maritime focus in maritime safety and security, environmental protection, combat of cross-border crime, and enhancement of information exchange (PERSEUS, FP-7 Project, 2013).

These networks represent the different authorities in charge of Coast Guard functions in each country. Thus each of these member organizations will also have educational and research structures and institutions such as mentioned above. The relevant coast guard cooperation networks for the arctic are the Atlantic, Baltic, and Pacific Coast Guard Forums (Figure 2), which cover the entire Arctic domain.



Figure-2: Relevant Northern coast guard cooperation networks for the co-creation network on the Arctic Domain

Today national Coast Guard educational institutions form bodies of knowledge through their interaction with practitioners on the field. Professional best practices are transferred from generation to generation both inside and outside of existing formal curricula. A coordinated, genuinely open and coast guard functions focused post graduate study environment for authority officers is now missing. For example, active coast guard personnel are not always as free, to address and discuss professional problems and lacking solutions in an open academic manner, as retired officers are (Third European Maritime Domain Security Planning Meeting, 2013).

5.5 The Added Value of an Arctic Co-creation Network Community

The Arctic co-created network community would benefit and add value to all sectors aiming towards a safer and more secure Arctic domain. As stated earlier current coast guard education systems lack post-graduate, and post-doctoral, levels of education, as well as matching levels of basic and applied

research and study. The co-creation network aims to be a multi-disciplinary cooperation body, bringing now disparate researchers and institutions together with other security and safety management, and coast guard functions oriented researchers and institutions. Thus, the co-creation network would have a clearly broader focus than existing coast guard institutions; but also a much more defined scope and focus than the University of the Arctic (Second European Maritime Domain Security Planning Meeting, 2012).

The purpose of this co-created arctic network community could add communication and new forms of cooperation through cross sectorial and regional research and development in issues such as common awareness, risk pictures, preparation against disaster, joint capacity building, resource pooling. All these developments will require open study and common mechanisms, such as the co-creation network would provide. One purpose is to complement existing coast guard forms of cooperation, one of the main ones being the European Coast Guard Academies Network Project initiative (Third ECGFF Secretariat Meeting, 2013).

The co-created arctic network community can broaden the focus of today's defined training oriented National Coast Guard Institution educational programs; while bringing focus to very broadly defined academic basic research and study networks, such as the University of the Arctic. Most added value will come from a cooperation and study platform for individual students and researchers interested in a multi-disciplinary approach toward security and safety of transport, and human and economic activity in the Arctic environment. The co-creation network will enhance information exchange and participation possibilities in EU and Government Agency funded research and development projects.

5.6 Participation and involvement

The co-created Arctic Network Community key participants will be institutes that either educate coast guard personnel or participate in research and development in topics, which are (loosely) under coast guard activities and processes topics as discussed above. Many educational and research institutions will not be official coast guard authority institutions, but have related programs to safety and security, maritime domain, and coast guard development and education issues. Potential institutions are those which focus on IMO based maritime safety aspects, security management focused institutions, relevant technological institutions, environmental research institutions, and those of customs authorities, etc. (WMU Workshop, 2014).

The co-creation network can help create long term involvements such as information and knowledge sharing which affect change into the current status quo of scattered and unlinked programs and systems. It can demonstrate new knowledge on how a cooperation should work in the future (e.g. in SAR) – not only technically, but also as a process to change the current mind-sets to cooperate more and share information to benefit the security and safety of living, transport, and economic use in the Arctic environment.

One working group of Arctic network community may focus on building the networks around research and studies that aim to lead to safer, more secure and cleaner seas, through sustainable economic growth. Better information and knowledge sharing will lead to better situational awareness and sound to decision-making – for the benefit of the Arctic seafarer. If the route of R&D related learning can be extended and generalized, higher education institutions will face new opportunities from their networked expertise (Pirinen, 2015): "... higher education institutions can increase their contribution to the innovation system; higher education institutions can keep co-creation and innovation processes alive at the regional, national and global levels;..."

Arctic network community development should also lead toward Arctic security related online education. Education programs, which provide learning possibilities that are not tied to time or place. An as flexible of an approach as possible will empower students "to choose their own learning curriculum according their own interest. That is the benefit having so many universities and institutes on board" (Heinonen, 2016).

Arctic safety and security education can be facilitated as online basis among and between network members. The platform can provide secured online possibilities for sharing the information and research results and related to the issued topics as well as facilitate the online learning. To integrate the social dimension into the pedagogy of online learning environments, Felix (2005) has proposed the synthesis of the cognitive constructivist and social constructivist approaches. This online learning will follow constructivist understanding and the constructivism can be manifested in online settings; e.g. as defined above (Hosie, Clifton, & Joe, 2003).

In a role of an individual expert (researcher, student, other expert), the expert will have the wide selection offering the various participating institutions sharing research results, created knowledge and information and finally study curriculum based on individual and professional preferences to result in a PhD or a multi-disciplinary Master's or Doctorate of Business Administration. Authority officials will have a broader venue of advancing their knowledge and education (Third European Maritime Domain Security Planning Meeting, 2013; Gröndahl, et. al., 2014).

The research of co-creation range between the smallest collaborative innovation in new product development processes to a wider theory of co-creation research stream (Galvagno & Dalli, 2014), and a co-creation network can be active throughout this spectrum. A co-creation network will need common objectives to work towards, it will exist and operate in both digital and physical arenas, share cooperation tools and collaborative processes, and we shouldn't forget contracts between the collaborators (Bhalla, 2014).

Conclusions

Creating a new long-term co-operation among Arctic experts, a co-creation network community can engage a still disengaged field by affecting change to currently scattered and unlinked programs and systems, and build alignment of best practices. New knowledge and more effective future cooperation, technically and as a process, may bring about a change of current mind-sets and provide further innovations to meet with the set objectives. This research aims to provide insights on ways to involve end users in the co-creation process. This could help other collaborative problem solving processes that need input of end users.

This co-created Arctic network community needs to be multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional, bringing disparate security and safety management and communication researchers together with both one another, and with end-users. An online platform will serve learning online and sharing research results and co-creation information between the network members and experts.

The co-creation network aims to broaden the focus of today's defined training oriented national coast guard institution educational programs, and create broadly defined academic basic research networks and larger community bringing all end users to the same network. This should provide an opportunity to experience a multi-disciplinary approach toward security and safety of activities in the Arctic. The enhanced Arctic research and study society aims to contribute to a safer, more secure and cleaner domain, and develop insights on sustainable economic growth, international processes and best practices, leading to increased situational awareness and decision making – for the benefit of the Arctic.

Also, the education programs in this context can provide learning possibilities that are not tied to time or place. A flexible approach may enable students across the network to choose a learning curriculum based on content and interest. This paper suggests that the co-created Arctic network community should also award higher levels of post post-graduate and post-doctoral education. The network can be a UArctic thematic network, having a much more defined scope and focus on coast guard functions, security, and safety on the Arctic maritime domain than the University of the Arctic itself; while also having a clearly broader higher education focus than any coast guard institution or their cooperation networks.

Further work will focus on the process of co-creation and knowledge exchange between the network members to identify ideal modes of cooperation.

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 6

Challenges of Branding in Post-Conflict Countries – The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

Country branding, by which the authors imply the management of identity and image, that is, strategic communication with the global audience, is an omnipresent phenomenon, and numerous studies have confirmed that a country's good image is reflected in its international economic and political position. Accordingly, various communication strategies, techniques and branding tools have been developed and have been applied in practice by many countries throughout the world. However, theory and practice in this area are rather lacking when it comes to branding divided and post-conflict countries. For this reason, the paper is concerned with the challenges, opportunities and methods of communication and branding Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, even twenty years after the end of the war in that country, is still synonymous with an unstable state and a divided society in Europe. This paper provides an adjusted branding methodology, relying on an analysis of the elements of identity around which there is a consensus of all three ethnic groups - Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs, and reveals the potentials upon which the modern brand of a European Bosnia and Herzegovina can be built. The authors especially observe the role of the domicile inhabitants and argue that their perceptions and attitudes towards Bosnia and Herzegovina – as well as their mutual communication – have significant, if not crucial, role in the development of a branding strategy. Their starting point and hypothesis indicates that foundation in branding post-conflict and multinational countries should be determination of the discordance among perceptions of ethnic groups. Furthermore, the authors point out the necessity to achieve a consensus on the key elements that make a country's identity and to establish attractive factors for the foreign public. The authors present results from several research projects and bring the key elements of

branding strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Key words: Bosnia and Herzegovina, branding, war, country, conflicts, divisions, image, identity

Introduction

In the globalized world of today, every country is trying to win international attention and respect and a good image in the eyes of international audiences in order to attract as many tourists, investors and gifted future citizens as possible and ensure better placement of its products in the international market. To that end, countries mostly use the synergy of international public relations, public diplomacy and marketing. Due to the growing competition among countries, the strategic country identity and image management (branding) – and management of their communication to the world – is not an asset any more. It is a necessity.

“Nations are making increasingly conscious efforts to hone their country branding in recognition of the need to fulfil three major objectives: to attract tourists, to stimulate inward investment and to boost export“ (Dinnie, 2008, p.17). Some authors, like Simon Anholt (2006, 2007), believe that the strategic management of identity and image can certainly help undeveloped, transition and less known countries to strengthen their respective economies, to create their own brands and find an easier way to reach consumers around the world without mediators.

Many European transition countries whose reality changed dramatically (e.g. due to the fall of communism) started seeking ways to present their tourism potential, attract investment or develop their own brand for both the domestic market and export. (Hall, 2004; Kaneva, 2014). After the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989, many newly established countries in Central and Eastern Europe have relied on public relations to create and communicate the identity that could be “sold“ to the rest of the world. Such examples are Estonia and Czech Republic, which have successfully positioned themselves as independent, democratic and dynamic countries (Szondy, 2006, p. 113). As regards former Yugoslavia, without doubt, Slovenia and Croatia have made the greatest progress in creating their own brands. „In both cases, as recently emergent independent states formerly of the Yugoslav federation, their use of branding has positively attempted to assist the creation of a new national image, and negatively, to distance themselves from the Yugoslav past“ (Hall, 2004, p. 117).

In order to emphasize its differentiation compared to other former Yugoslav republics, Croatia began its strong international tourism promotion even while Croatia's Homeland Defense War was going on in 1994. Highlighted is its natural beauty, the Adriatic Sea with its thousand islands and its rich cultural and historical heritage, as well as long tourist tradition, by which it emphasized its uniqueness and advantages in relation to its neighbors. Diverted in this manner was a part of the attention on the war, which awakens for the most part negative associations, regardless of compassion. After the end of the Homeland Defense War and the liberation of occupied territories, Croatia, with its natural advantages and cultural wealth, invested additional efforts in promotion and development of tourism, which positioned it as one of the leading tourist destinations in the Mediterranean. (Skoko, 2016, p. 71) During the last two decades, Croatia has

successfully repositioned its image, from newly formed Balkan state, burdened with the legacy of war, conflict and socialism – to a beautiful and attractive Mediterranean tourist destination. Although in the public domain of some countries (especially countries in northern Europe), Croatia is still somewhat associated with the war and the legacy of former Yugoslavia, this perception has substantially changed over the past two decades (Miličević, Skoko, Krešić, 2013, p. 236).

Independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a former Yugoslav republic that has undergone a bloody and devastating war (1992 – 1995) and some twenty years of instability and political crises, is also trying to become a brand among the countries of the modern world. However, unlike Slovenia and Croatia which have developed as stable democracies in the past years, Bosnia and Herzegovina is still an unstable country and a divided multiethnic society. “The Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs still have not reached the minimal consensus on the fundamental values and standards of their coexistence – a necessary basis for establishing and functioning of a democratic political order” (Kasapović, 2005, p. 15-16). The central issue this paper addresses is, therefore, how to brand the conflict and post-conflict multiethnic countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina which, on the one hand, have the need for such a breakthrough and, on the other, lack basic preconditions advocated by branding scholars (e.g. a common national identity).¹

Let us remind here that Bosnia and Herzegovina has past the most arduous road to independence of all former Yugoslav countries and has remained to the present day an undefined and non-established country made up of two entities and three nations with differing interests and expectations. “Not even local authors hesitate to say that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country under an international protectorate or trusteeship” (Kasapović, 2005, p. 15). The signing of the Dayton Accord in 1995 ended the war, but the country was irrationally divided in two territorial entities – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (where Bosniaks and Croats live) and Republic of Srpska (ethnically cleansed during the war and populated mostly by Serbs). In reality, the two entities – plus Brčko District – function separately, with but a very little consent about common interests of the state. At the same time, Croats in the Federation – as the smallest constituent nation – are not really able to decide on their own destiny due to the overruling by the Bosniak majority. The country has seen the bloodiest of wars, with massive loss of lives and property, including the Srebrenica genocide – the biggest individual atrocity in Europe after World War II. There were armed conflicts between Serbs and Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats, Bosniaks and Croats, even Bosniaks and Bosniaks. The country still functions on ethnic principles instead on political or social ones. Due to the failed economy, unemployment, inflation and general lack of social development, the country ranks far behind other transition countries. The unstable political and economic situation has reduced to a minimum its chances of joining the EU and NATO anytime soon. Still, in June 2008, Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union, thus making its first step on the road to European integration

(Skoko, 2010, p. 36).

Despite the international community's efforts to help the country overcome its divisions and differences, ethnic tensions are still present, there is a very little cooperation between members of the three nations, and they have no common position on both the past and future of the country. It is therefore only logical to conclude it will be very difficult to implement the long announced constitutional amendments and reforms and ensure the desired coexistence of the three nations without being familiar with their mutual relationships, accumulated stereotypes, open wounds, reasons for distrust and their mutual perception. Clearly, the negative attitudes about each other, often escalating into hatred and preventing the strengthening of mutual trust cannot simply be “swept under the carpet”, as the representatives of various international institutions have tried to do so far. Analyzing the causes of Yugoslavia's disintegration and the bloody wars that ensued, David MacDonald (2010, p. 376) claims it was the unhealed traumas from the past that helped create in the late 1980s an emotional climate that helped encouraging negative myths and the readiness to believe in them. In order to avoid the history repeating itself in their country (troubled by similar ethnic problems and traumas from the recent war), the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina – and its three nations in general – should learn how to deal with the past, learn and accept the truth and get the feeling that the justice has been served. On the other hand, the international representatives creating the future of this country should keep in mind the views and feelings of its citizens if they really want to succeed in their mission. This is why the branding process is a useful tool on this path: it requires questioning of the Bosnians' own identity and their common future.

However, one of the obstacles to the branding of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the negative perception of the Balkans, where the country is located. „Positioned on the western edge of the Islamic world, the Balkans, a term loosely conterminous with South-eastern Europe, is a region that has been subject in recent history to largely pejorative image constructions in the West“ (Hall, 2004, p. 117).

Owing to the bloody history of the region and the wars during and after the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the century-old stereotypes associated with the Balkans have come to life again and are still dominant in the collective memory of the Europeans. Dictionary definitions of „balkanize“ tend to emphasize diversity, conflict and fractionalization (Todorova, 1994; Hall and Danta, 1996), and the recent history of South-eastern Europe has done little to persuade potential tourist markets that this subregion should be perceived otherwise. It has therefore been one role of tourism marketing for destination countries on the fringe of South-eastern Europe to distance themselves from „Balkanness“ and to employ branding to this end (Hall, 2004, p. 117).

Bosnia and Herzegovina started the process of branding itself as a tourist destination in 2008. With the support of USAID and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the slogan “Enjoy life” has been adopted, a logo has been designed and Brand Toolkit with instructions has been printed. However, systematic tourism promotional activities and the unique visual identity have become a reality only in some parts of the country. On the other hand, the impossibility of reaching a consensus when it comes to the country identity is best reflected in the

¹ Dimensions of national identity by Smith (1991) are: a historic territory, or homeland; common myths and historical memories; a common, mass public culture; common legal rights and duties for all members; a common economy with territorial mobility for members.

fact that, after years of debates and disagreements, the international community had to impose the official flag and national anthem (with no lyrics, in order to avoid different interpretations and associations with one ethnic group or another).

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Until recently, the image of a country and its influence on its political and economic position in contemporary international relations remained a rather neglected area of scholarly research. However recent years have witnessed the publication of a significant number of research papers dealing with these issues, showing that the power of image becomes increasingly important in the globalized society through communication networks, and has a direct impact on the success of a country and the achievement of its national goals.

The explosion of nation branding practices since the mid-1990s has coincided with an explosion of publications – churned out by academics and branding practitioners alike – which attempt to theorize, codify, and legitimize these practices. The majority of scholarly work on nation branding to date has been produced within the field of marketing and tends to focus on instrumentalist concerns, related to advancing branding applications. Nation branding has also attracted the attention of public relations scholars (Dinnie, 2008) and is further discussed in reference to international relations (Gilboa, 2008; van Ham, 2002) and public diplomacy (Szondy, 2008; Wang, 2006, 2008) (Kaneva, 2014, p. 4).

In addition to studying national identity as the basis of a nation brand, modern nation branding relies on several theoretical concepts. One of the most researched areas related to the power of image is the so-called ‘country of origin’ concept. The literature in this area shows that consumers develop stereotypical images of countries and/or their products, which consequently influence their purchase decisions (e.g. Nagashima, 1970; Terpstra, 1988; Chao, 1989; Hong, Wyer, 1990; Wall et al., 1991; Baughn and Yaprak, 1993; Heslop and Papadopoulos, 1993; Johansson et al., 1994; Jaffe, Martinez, 1995; Liefeld et al., 1996; Li et al., 1997; Saghafi and Rosa, 1997; Papadopoulos, Heslop, 2000). Research by Papadopoulos and Heslop on the country-of-origin effect was published in 1993. In 1994, Robert A. Peterson and Alain J. P. Jolibert found in academic journals 184 articles dealing with the country-of-origin effect (see Kotler, Gertner, 2004, p. 43). The findings kept confirming the fact that consumers had been using the country-of-origin information as a quality indicator. It was observed how simple manipulations with such information or with the “made in” designation influenced people’s attitudes, even when they could see, feel, try and taste the physical products themselves. Joseph Nye (1990, 2002, 2004) was the first one to analyze the soft power phenomenon when he wrote about U.S. world dominance. In Nye’s opinion, that dominance was based not only on military and economic power, but also on the so-called third dimension – the one he named soft power. Nye defines soft power as the capability of convincing others to want what you want. “A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries – admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness – want to follow it” (Nye, 2003, p. 8). Thus, both concepts clearly

highlight the strength of image in international relations.

In international relations, image plays a significant role, and this is directly reflected in the political and economic position of the country or other subjects in international relations, as well as others toward them. “The reputation of a country has a direct and measurable impact on just about every aspect of its engagement with other countries, and plays a critical role in its economic, social, political and cultural progress” (Anholt, 2007, p. 9). This is confirmed by numerous authors, such as Keith Dinnie (2008), Eugene D. Jaffe and Israel D. Nebenzahl (2006), Michael Kunczik (1997), Ingrid M. Martin and Sevgin Eroglu (1993), Nicolas Papadopoulos and Louise A. Heslop (1993) and others.

“A positive place brand encourages inward investment, and tourism is a magnet for talent (both new immigrants and returning members of the diaspora), and if properly managed can create a renewed sense of purpose and identity for the inhabitants of the country, region or city” (Anholt, 2004, p. 28).

Forming of a national image is a rather complex process. It is influenced by numerous factors, from the level of available information and ways in which a country communicates in international relations, to its charm or people’s emotional feelings about the country. Stereotypes may play an important role in creating a national image, since these tend to linger for decades and even centuries. (Anholt, 2007) „A country’s image results from its geography, history, proclamations, art and music, famous citizens and other features. The entertainment industry and the media play a particularly important role in shaping people’s perceptions of places, especially those viewed negatively“ (Kotler and Gertner, 2004, p. 42).

Changing the image of a country is a much more demanding and complex project that changing the image of a product or a corporation. Philip Kotler and David Gertner (2004, p. 43) hold that images can be long-lasting and hard to change, but they also add that they can be evaluated and measured, and that marketing experts can manage and influence them. It seems logical when we know that images are created artificially and that people act on the basis of what they believe is the truth, not on the basis of real truth. “Most country images are stereotypes, extreme simplifications of the reality that are not necessarily accurate“ (Kotler and Gertner, 2004, p. 42).

As a result, the “objective reality” is less relevant in human life than the “perception of reality” (Papadopoulos, 1993). This is why exceptional importance has been given to the “creation” of image in the past years – of a desirable picture in public which is often far from reality, but people, nevertheless, believe in it. According to Boorstin (2000), image can be more or less successfully produced, improved, polished, renewed, refreshed.

The concept of brand management or country branding originated from management of commercial brands and corporate branding, which have functioned in the market for over a century. „Nation branding can be provisionally defined as the result of the interpretation of commercial and public sector interests to communicate national priorities among domestic and international populations for a variety of interrelated purposes“ (Aronczyk, 2013, p. 16). “The application of branding techniques to nations is a relatively new phenomenon, but one which is growing in frequency given the increasingly global competition that nations now face in both their

domestic and external markets“ (Dinnie, 2008, p. 17).

Nation branding is a very long-term thing and it involves a very comprehensive strategy bringing in all players' governments whether it's city governments, national governments, tourism authorities, inward investments, outward –any force, including private companies, who help to define the way all those billions of people out there, in particular the several millions who really, really matter, view your place (Aronczyk, 2013, p. 67).

If we observe nation branding through the prism of public relations, we can see that the PR relies on two-way symmetrical communication in its performance. Although countries very often have tourism branding as their primary goal, a growing number of countries have in the past years carried out overall branding of countries as tourism, economic, cultural etc. brands,² which requires strategic communication, and surveys and two-way communication with target audiences. Kotler et al. (1993, p. 142) argue that strategic image management is a continued process of surveying a country's image among its audience, disintegration and targeting of its specific image and its demographic audience, positioning its advantages in such way that they support the existing image or create a new image, and communicating these advantages to the target audience.

At one time, tourism managers predominantly used promotional techniques, which are a function of public relations, to attract travellers. Therefore, in the past they spent more time engaging in Grunig's press agency model. However, the industry, as a whole, has realized that its key public needs to feel „connected“ to the various organizations that they patronize. Travel is a personal activity; an important aspect of a vacation is the overall experience that it provides. For that reason, the two-way symmetrical model is increasingly being practised as relationship management continues to become a heightened focus in this industry (Fall and Lubbers, 2004, p. 143).

As a communication strategy, nation branding promises to generate international awareness of a national client, using proven marketing techniques to break through the clutter of a saturated and fragmented global media environment (Aronczyk, 2013, p. 17).

Challenges of Post-Conflict Country Branding

There are various concepts of country branding, but they all have the defining of a country's identity as their starting point. In his *Conceptual model of nation-brand identity and image*, Dinne (2008, p.49) sees the following components as crucial for the nation-brand identity: history, language, territory, political regime, architecture, sport, literature, art, religion, education system, icons, landscape, music, food & drink and folklore. Communicators of nation-brand identity are: branded exports, sporting achievements, the diaspora, marketing communications, brand ambassadors, cultural artefacts, government foreign policy, tourism experience, prominent

personalities... Audiences of nation-brand image are: domestic consumers, external consumers, domestic firms, external firms, inward investors, governments, media (Dinne, 2008, p.49).

National identity plays a key role in nation branding. An awareness and understanding of the core features of national identity is prerequisite for developing nation-branding campaigns, as the essence of any nation-brand derives not only from the country's companies and brands but also from its culture in the widest sense – language, literature, music, sport, architecture and so on all embody the soul of nation (Dinnie, 2008, p. 111).

Anholt also writes about the importance of national identity. In his opinion, „national identity and nation brand are virtually the same thing: nation brand is national identity made tangible, robust, communicable, and above all useful“ (Anholt, 2007, p. 75).

Morgan and Pritchard (2004, p.71) use their „benefit pyramid“ to explain visitors' expectations from a destination that wants to become a tourism brand. The pyramid has five levels and the expectations grow with every next level. The first level defines what are the tangible, verifiable, objective, measurable characteristics of this destinations. The second level defines what benefits to the tourist result from this destination's features. The third level – what psychological rewards or emotional benefits do tourists receive by visiting this destinations? How does the tourist feel? The fourth level – what does value mean for the typical repeat visitor? And finally – what is the essential nature and character of the destination brand?

There is no universal template for nation-branding strategy, as nations have only relatively recently engaged in nation branding and are exploring different strategies for achieving their nation-brand goals. (Dinnie, 2008, p. 219) However, Dinnie (2008, p. 220) does mention some of the principles of the strategy, such as: strategic analysis (internal and external) – Where are we now?, strategic planning – Where do we want to go? and strategic implementation – How do we get there? As crucial branding tools he mentions: nation-brand advertising, customer and citizen relationship management, nation-brand ambassadors, diaspora mobilization, nation days, the naming of nation-brands and nation-brand tracking studies.

The process of branding, carried out by professional consultants, is observed by Aronczyk (2013) as having several steps. The first step in a branding process is one of evaluation. (What are the current perceptions of the nation by domestic and foreign audiences, and which elements of the extant national identity require particular scrutiny?). Once an evaluative portrait has been made, a working party is convened by the branding consultancy from among private and public sector stakeholders to assist in the selection, implementation, and stewardship of the brand vision for the nation. The third step in a nation-branding project is to develop a „brand essence“, also called a „core idea“, accompanied by a brand strategy or vision that will animate this idea. As a point of differentiation, the brand essence must distinguish its object from its counterparts to allow it to emerge from a cluttered and competitive environment. Aronczyk (2013, pp. 69- 75) Then follow the communication and implementation of the brand.

Branding strategy of Kotler and Gertner (2005, p. 52) has five steps: The country needs to carry out a SWOT analysis to determine its chief strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; The country then chooses some industries, personalities, natural landmarks and historical

² British „GREAT“ campaign is a good example of such an approach. See more at: <https://www.gov.uk/britainisgreat>

events that could provide a basis for strong branding and story telling; The country should then develop an umbrella concept that would cover and be consistent with all of its separate branding activities. Among the possible concepts would be a country of pleasure, quality, security, honesty or progress, or other concepts; The country then allocates sufficient national funds to each branding activity deemed to have a potentially large impact; The country creates export controls to make sure that every exported product is reliable and delivers the promised level of performance. Clearly, there is a rather strong agreement about the steps of the country branding process. Different branding strategies mostly contain the following strategic starting points: formulating the identity of country, defining the image of a country, defining the architecture of the brand, identifying the most important moments of truth of a brand and creating the communication strategy for the new brand. However, it is perfectly clear that the branding process, regardless of the specific steps and techniques that it uses, also implies certain preconditions such as a consensus on national identity, citizens' similar views on the past and present, common values, distinctive export products etc. Bosnia and Herzegovina and many other post-conflict countries lack a number of these preconditions, which makes the process of their branding seemingly impossible.

Unfortunately, research and studies on the phenomenon of the branding of post-conflict countries are scarce. On the other hand, the branding of such countries has become a pressing need.

Whether the newly independent countries of the Balkans will effectively move beyond their histories of violence and succeed in establishing successful, sustainable tourism industries, depends greatly on the degree to which all participants are fully and collaboratively engaged in the branding process – an option that remains problematic for economies and political systems still in transition from socialism and the terrorism of war to tourism (Ringer, 2004).

Destination branding has become a strategic marketing component with considerable importance in promoting the (re)discovery of tourism destinations severely impacted by global crises, including war, genocide, ethnic and political conflict, disease, poverty, and international terrorism in the post- 9/11 world. In these communities, it is a critical tool in resurrecting international travel to countries who seek social security and economic recovery through tourism, and must rely upon a uniquely identifiable brand attraction and targeted visitor niche in the initial stages of market development and recovery (Vitic and Ringer, 2008).

Since we are aware that classical branding models fail when it comes to post-conflict countries, the question arises: Is it possible to brand a country in a situation like that (torn apart by social and territorial divisions)? It certainly is, but it requires showing much more sensibility for the views, opinions and feelings of individual nations or groups formerly in conflict and establishing if there are common identity elements on which the country's future brand could be built. On the other hand, what seems to be important in such cases is the "view from the outside" – the neutral opinion of tourists, investors, diplomats etc. on what is the best and most competitive that the country has and on what its international distinction could be built.

Since the international public tends to remember countries by the latest major event they have

heard of (Anholt, 2007), it is essential for the branding of post-conflict countries to offer to the world a new, different image of such a country – an image that would redirect the attention from war and conflict associations to the country's specific advantages and special qualities. „The image of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the world is still undermined by the recent war, while its multicultural spirit, natural beauties, film, sports and its historical heritage are not utilized enough” (Pulic, 2015, p. 313). We should also not hesitate to use commercialization of war memory: “Even war memories are encouraged to be repackaged and sold as tourist practices to strengthen the local economy which is viewed as intrinsically tied to social betterment.” (Volcic et al., 2013, p. 739). But it is certainly much more important to recognize the potentials which are positively perceived by both national and international audiences and present them through a whole new story.

Methodology

Since a consensus of Bosnia and Herzegovina's three nations is required for the beginning of the branding process, we focused on the separate views of the country's three constituent nations and tried to identify the common ground between them – how they perceive their country and its future. In this regard, we defined the starting points for branding Bosnia and Herzegovina:

1. Defining such elements of the country's identity on which there is a consensus between all three constituent nations.
2. Defining the elements of identity that each nation feels to be their own (close to them) and that they feel proud about.
3. Determining integrative factors and communication channels intended for strengthening of unity and cooperation on the creation of the new brand.
4. Identifying the items bringing about substantial divisions and disagreement between three constituent nations (taboo themes).
5. Joint defining of the desirable future image of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
6. Testing the relevance of particular elements of identity as regards target audiences, competition, developmental strategies and the desired future image.

1.1 The Sample

The research was conducted on three levels. Using random sampling, information from 1,200 respondents (citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats) was gathered on the first level. The sample was taken from the population of the citizens above the age of 15. At that, it was also kept in mind that all three nations should be proportionately represented in the sample.

On the second and third level, purposive sampling was used for selecting 12 Bosnian experts for tourism, marketing, economy, culture, public relations and media and 11 foreign experts – tourist agents, investors, journalists and officials from political institutions.

1.2 Methods and Procedures

In order to obtain results and input elements, the following methods were used:

- A telephone survey among members of all three nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, asking them about their mutual relationships, their views of the country and the key elements of their identity and the desired image³.
- The second level research was conducted with focus groups which were consisted of experts from different parts of a country that represent and promote BH⁴.
- The third level research (focus groups) included foreign experts who have experienced Bosnia and Herzegovina, to determine which parts of the country's identity are attractive to foreign publics⁵.

Bosnian citizens' perception was analyzed through four crucial segments: 1. Perception of one's own country – the key determinant of identity, 2. The best integrating factors for bringing together and cooperation of the Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs for the benefit of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 3. The best factors for restoring the lost trust between the Croats, Bosniaks and Serbs in BiH, 4. Bosnia and Herzegovina's major assets for creating a new brand in terms of its identity potentials. When the data were processed, the frequency of answers was analyzed, as well as their correlation (consent) as regards their age, ethnic background and education.

The main intention of the first focus group was to create a list of notions – as extensive as possible – by which Bosnia and Herzegovina should become recognizable internationally and define what is it that symbolizes the best the identity of the country and its three nations and that could at the same time attract foreign audiences. The key intention of the second focus group was to discuss with foreign experts and evaluate the elements determined during earlier research (their attractiveness, relevance and special qualities for foreign audiences).

Given the complexity and differences in the identities of the three constituent nations on one hand and the complex identity of Bosnia and Herzegovina (denied by many due to deep divisions in the society and the fact that elements of the identity have been imposed by the international community) on the other, we have created the "Identity Triangle of Bosnia and Herzegovina". It shows that three separate identities of Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs are the country's asset; in the areas where they touch, overlap or are identical, we find the basis for the future brand of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

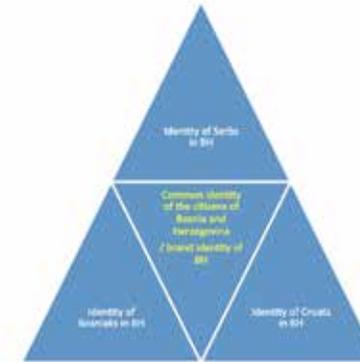


Figure 1 – Identity Triangle of Bosnia and Herzegovina

We then tested the overlapping, adjacent and shared elements of identity on domestic experts, who present and „sell“ Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of their daily work. This was done in order to determine the most useful and attractive elements of that identity. On the third level we tested them on foreign experts who know Bosnia and Herzegovina (some of them work there, some do business with its corporations, some got to know it as journalists or diplomats etc.). We used their opinion as the final test when choosing the country image that would attract the most attention of foreign audiences. The transcripts of the discussions of both focus groups underwent a qualitative analysis and the most represented subjects were identified.

Research Results

The surveys conducted among the citizens have indicated rather dramatic relationships between the three nations and a pessimistic perception of their own country. These can be summarized in the following points: lack of consensus on the past, present and future of Bosnia and Herzegovina; dissatisfaction with the functioning of the country as it is; lack of a common goal and vision; a high level of mutual distrust; mutual perception encumbered with stereotypes from the past and the recent war. For example, when it comes to defining their country, two pictures are predominant (Table 1): a state of three constituent nations (38% of Bosniaks, 32% of Croats and 36% of Serbs) and a divided state with no future (24% of Bosniaks, 37% of Croats and 31% of Serbs). Bosniaks mostly consider it a multiethnic European state (27%) and Serbs see it as a state under the care of the international community (20%).

3 The survey was conducted in October 2015, using a sample of 1,200 respondents.

4 The focus group was organized in Banja Luka in February 2016.

5 The focus group was organized in Sarajevo in May 2016.

Table 1. Perception of one's own country – the key determinant of identity (N=1200)

%	Bosniaks	Croats	Serbs
A multiethnic European country	27%	14%	12%
A state of three constituent nations	38%	32%	36%
A divided country with no future	24%	37%	31%
An Islamic state in the heart of Europe	6%	2%	5%
A state under supervision of the international community	12%	16%	20%
Other	1%	1%	3%
I don't know	1%	7%	5%

However, despite all the obstacles, the surveys indicate there is a will among the respondents from all three nations to overcome the divisions and strengthen the cooperation. For example, the survey has shown (Table 2) that the best integrating factors for bringing Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs closer to each other and making them cooperate are trade and international business (41% of Bosniaks, 37% of Croats and 40% of Serbs) and collaboration at work and making friends (45% of Bosniaks, 37% of Croats and 40% of Serbs).

Table 2. The best integrating factors for bringing together and cooperation of the Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs for the benefit of Bosnia and Herzegovina (N=1200)

%	Bosniaks	Croats	Serbs
Trade and doing business together	41%	42%	48%
Culture and cultural cooperation	22%	25%	21%
Tourism and travels	11%	11%	10%
Politics	16%	10%	10%
Sports	19%	13%	10%
Joint cooperation at work and making friends	45%	37%	40%
Other	5%	5%	5%

The two determinants around which there is a consensus are considered as the best factors for the restoring the lost trust between the three nations (Table 3): better politicians on all sides and Bosnia and Herzegovina's admission to the European Union. There is no consensus around other factors. For example, while Bosniaks think their country would have a better future if the entities were abolished and the state strengthened, Serbs and Croats believe the better future lies in federalisation and creation of three separate entities with distinctive ethnic majorities.

Table 3. The best factors for restoring the lost trust between the Croats, Bosniaks and Serbs in BH (N=1200)

%	Bosniaks	Croats	Serbs
Efforts of ordinary people	13%	16%	12%
Better legislature and a more equitable constitutional system	20%	17%	15%
Better politicians on all sides	37%	41%	34%
Abolishment of entities and strengthening of the state	29%	4%	14%
Creation of Croat, Bosniak and Serb entities	1%	11%	12%
BH's accession to the European Union	29%	23%	35%
Other	1%	2%	5%
I don't know	2%	4%	5%

However, despite all the differences, we have established through the work of the focus groups that there are elements of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian identity around which there is a consensus, which all three nations consider theirs and are proud of, and which could at the same time be attractive to foreign audiences (something we found through the work of the focus groups):

- Natural attractions and natural diversity,
- Rich cultural and historical heritage,
- Local mentality and way of life, straightforwardness and hospitality,
- Local cuisine,
- "Common" greats (mostly in literature),
- Multicultural society (where three religions and cultures meet),
- Joint Antifascist struggle (some of the most important battles that Partisans fought in WWII took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

The following Bosnia and Herzegovina's greatest assets and identity-related potentials for creation of a new brand (as perceived by the citizens, Table 4) asserted themselves: the mentality of local people, hospitality and straightforwardness. They were chosen by 24% of Bosniaks, 29% of Croats and 21% of Serbs, as the respondents believe that the mentality aspect is the same for all Bosnian citizens, regardless of ethnic background. Ranking second are natural attractions and natural diversity (19% of Bosniaks, 21% of Croats and 25% of Serbs) because they are evenly distributed throughout the country (mountains, lakes, waterfalls, rivers, canyons...). There is also a rather strong consensus around the country's multicultural nature (a meeting point of Christianity and Islam, of Catholicism and Orthodoxy) and rich and underexploited cultural and historical heritage (from medieval Bosnian Kingdom to Ottoman Empire to modern achievements) as great assets.

Table 4. Bosnia and Herzegovina's major assets for creating a new brand in terms of its identity potentials (N=1200)

%	Bosniaks	Croats	Serbs
Mentality, hospitality and straightforwardness	24%	29%	21%
Natural attractions and natural diversity	19%	21%	25%
Multicultural society – a place where different religions and cultures meet	18%	10%	12%
Geographical position	5%	7%	6%
Rich and underexploited cultural heritage	12%	8%	9%
Tourism potentials and attractions	6%	7%	7%
Friendly neighboring countries – Serbia, Croatia...	16%	18%	19%

The correlation analysis (Table 5) indicated a high positive correlation of the respondents' (Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs) perceptions, with 1% significance level. The high correlation coefficients confirm that the research has identified the key elements of the consensus between three nations, based on which Bosnia and Herzegovina can be branded. The analysis of the answers (N=41) entered into the questionnaire by the respondents (N=1,200) shows that – as far as ethnic background is concerned – the opinions of Croats and Serbs correspond the most (0.955), while Bosniaks' correlation with the other two nations is negligibly lower (Croats - 0.919; Serbs - 0.890). The departure of the Bosniaks' perception from that of other nations can perhaps be explained with the assumption that Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only homeland for Bosniaks, while Croats and Serbs have their „real“ or „spare“ homelands – Croatia and Serbia, respectively (Kasapović, 2005), and thus have a slightly different perception of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Table 5. Similarities and differences in respondents' perceptions in terms of ethnic background (Croats, Bosniaks and Serbs) (N=41)

Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	Coefficient	Significance
Bosniaks and Serbs	0.890	p<0.01
Serbs and Croats	0.955	p<0.01
Croats and Bosniaks	0.919	p<0.01

The results of the correlational research show a high positive correlation with 1% significance level as regards the age of the respondents, too (Table 6). The respondents' age did not substantially

influence their perception of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The highest correlation coefficient can be found between the group of respondents from 31 to 44 years of age and the group of those from 45 to 59 years of age (0.965). As for the lowest correlation coefficient, it can be found between the group of respondents from 31 to 44 years of age and the group of those above 60 years of age (0.843). It may indicate that the “older ones” and the “younger ones” – due to their different perspectives – may have different visions of Bosnian future.

Table 6. Similarities and differences in respondents' perceptions in terms of age (N=41)

Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	Coefficient	Significance
18-30 and 31-44	0.937	p<0.01
31-44 and 45-59	0.965	p<0.01
45-59 and 60+	0.957	p<0.01
60+ and 18-30	0.843	p<0.01
31-44 and 60+	0.920	p<0.01
45-59 and 18-30	0.905	p<0.01

By analyzing the transcripts from the session of the focus group of local experts, we isolated 12 areas within which the participants had specified the elements of the country's desired identity and the notions that should make it distinctive in the world. Some of the presented arguments referred to the obstacles to branding. We included them in a separate group. There is a number in brackets for each area, specifying around how many elements – or great assets – some kind of consensus was reached in the discussion.

1. Cultural destinations (locations, museums, galleries, religious buildings, institutions etc.) important for the identity and, potentially, for the promotion of Bosnia and Herzegovina (42)
2. The greatest figures from Bosnian past, who could serve as a basis for the country's distinctiveness in the world (41)
3. Individuals or groups (regardless of their field) who could best represent modern Bosnia and Herzegovina and promote it to the global audience (35)
4. Major natural attractions of Bosnia and Herzegovina that should be better promoted and that should make the country distinctive in the world (31)
5. Events regularly taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina (cultural, entertainment, religious, traditional etc.) which could potentially grow into regional and global events (31)

6. The main symbols of Bosnia and Hercegovina that could be a long-term distinctive feature of the country and its people as perceived by the international public (30)
7. The most specific qualities (comparative advantages) of Bosnia and Hercegovina in comparison with other European countries (27)
8. Historical sites in Bosnia and Hercegovina that should be additionally protected and promoted as they could contribute to the country's global distinctiveness (26)
9. Bosnian products that could become competitive in the global market and thus contribute to the promotion of Bosnia and Hercegovina (26)
10. The epithets that best describe Bosnia and Hercegovina (21)⁶
11. The most important elements of Bosnia and Hercegovina's identity that can be perceived as common for all three nations (17)
12. Bosnian cities offering the highest-quality tourist supply or having a potential for its improvement (11)
13. The main obstacles for possible branding of Bosnia and Hercegovina and for improvement of its image in the world (61)

The first focus group helped us gain insight into the specific identity-related "supply" of Bosnia and Hercegovina and its greatest assets for branding. Interestingly, cultural destinations account for the largest number of notions; they are followed by great historical figures and well-known persons and natural attractions.

Although the participants were experts – and they took part in the discussion regardless of their ethnic or regional background – we should assume that even their bona fide approach was rather subjective. This is why the second focus group consisted of foreign experts: the idea was to additionally "filter" the above mentioned potentials and advantages.

In the discussion, we selected from the notions obtained in the first focus group the most significant elements of identity and symbols (around which there is a consensus among Bosnian citizens and between domestic and foreign audiences)⁷. Then we grouped all the obtained arguments about

6 resilient, poor, devastated, solidary, relaxed, unknown, innovative, beautiful, natural, spontaneous, straightforward, hospitable, sociable, entertaining, laid-back, quarrelling, undeveloped, Balkan, multiethnic, slowed-down and coarse

7 These are the fifty most attractive brands of Bosnia and Herzegovina, obtained through a discussion: traditional Bosnian dishes – čevapi (from Banja Luka, Sarajevo and Travnik) and burek; medieval gravestones (stećci); the Old Bridge and historical core of Mostar; Bašćaršija in Sarajevo; Blessed Virgin Mary's sanctuary in Međugorje; Olympic Games in Sarajevo 1984 and the mountains where the Olympic events took place (Bjelašnica, Jahorina, Igman); old fort Kastel in Banja Luka; sevdalinke (specific traditional love songs); Sarajevo Town Hall; Turkish bridge in Višegrad (described in Nobel laureate Ivo Andrić's novel *The Bridge over the Drina*); Gazi-Husrev Beg Mosque in Sarajevo; Franciscan monasteries throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina; „Pyramids“ in Visoko; Tuzla salt mines; special types of cheese (Livno and Travnik cheeses and the one made by Trappist monks in Banja Luka); Bosnian humor; Sarajevo music scene; film industry of Bosnia and Herzegovina; blend of cultures – mosques, Catholic and Orthodox churches and synagogues (Sarajevo dubbed as „European Jerusalem“); Partisan battles and German offensives from World War II – memorial sites surrounded with beautiful nature (Neretva, Sutjeska, Drvar, Igman and Kozara); Sarajevo Film Festival; traditional jumps from Old Bridge in Mostar; World Youth Festival in Međugorje; Jajce – former royal city and the birthplace of Socialist Yugoslavia in 1943, with a unique waterfall; Travnik – the old Ottoman town; Perućica Forest – the largest preserved virgin forest in Europe; the canyons of Rivers Neretva, Vrbas and Tara; Lake Rama; writers Ivo Andrić, Branko Ćopić, Meša Selimović, Antun Branko Šimić, Mak Dizdar, Aleksa Šantić and

Bosnia and Hercegovina as a potential brand and defined six crucial theses put forward by the participants. The numbers in brackets indicate how many times was a particular thesis repeated in that or similar form. Next to each thesis are given some interesting quotes that illustrate it.

- Bosnia and Hercegovina is an undiscovered and unknown European country (31); "The war has eclipsed all of its advantages and potentials. Europe Europe's perception of Bosnia and Herzegovina is full of stereotypes, without really knowing the country. The potentials of this country are hard to find elsewhere in Europe. European politicians think they can become acquainted with Bosnia and Herzegovina just by reading the Nobel Prize laureate Ivo Andrić. When I took my London-based friends to Herzegovina, they were totally surprised with its beauty. The war is still the first thing that comes to one's mind upon hearing the country's name. People think that the war is still going on here; instead, the country is on its way to become a tourist destination. Too bad Brussels is not aware of everything this country has..."
- The diversity of religions, cultures and identities, abused for new divisions and conflicts during the war, should be turned into Bosnia and Herzegovina's key asset (27); "It is hard to find another European country where three great religions would meet and coexist for centuries. Bosnian citizens should be taught that multicultural is nowadays "in"! Until recently they fought against each other and today they cooperate again. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a unique mosaic of religions and cultures."
- Bosnia and Herzegovina is a beautiful country, with exceptional natural attractions and diversity. (26); "Rarely will you find such a natural diversity elsewhere! A surprisingly beautiful country. This country is perfect for adventure tourism. I was amazed with its beauty. Its rivers and canyons are unique on the global level. Very few people in Europe are aware that Bosnia has its plains, mountains and sea..."
- Bosnian people, their mentality and their way of life are the country's special quality and asset (23); "First I was afraid to come here and now I don't ever want to leave – because of the great people who live here. The life here is totally without stress. People are very hospitable in all parts of the country. No one seems to be in a hurry here and they all have time for a cup of coffee. They know how to enjoy life. Although ordinary people are far from wealthy, they will readily share what they have with a perfect stranger. They live a primeval, healthy and natural life. Their humor is captivating..."
- Bosnian politicians, the way the country is organized and the wrong moves of the international community are the major hindrance for its potential branding (22). "For years I have witnessed the dissatisfaction of all three nations with the country's internal organization! The country is run by an irresponsible and incompetent government who couldn't care less about the people. They only care about their positions! They are neither aware of nor are interested in the importance of image. Bosnian diplomacy is disastrous because there is no common foreign policy. The international representatives have done more

Petar Kočić; painter Gabrijel Jurkić; autochthonous Herzegovinian wine sorts žilavka and blatina; Kupres Field and nearby ski runs; Hutovo Blato Nature Park – the last remaining Mediterranean swamp; medieval castle in Blagaj; source of River Buna and the Dervish monastery; medieval Bobovac Castle near Vareš – the capital of Bosnian kings; Roman settlement Mogorjelo near Čapljina – the most beautiful ancient site in Bosnia-Herzegovina; stone town of Počitelj; Bosnian mountain horses and wild horses of Livno; Troy in Gabela (alleged site of Homer's Troy – according to Mexican archaeologist Roberto Salinas Price); Vlašić Mountain; Kravice Waterfall near Ljubuški; Bosnian rugs; century-old mining tradition.

harm than good: they behave like British governors in India, regardless of their ignorance about this country. Political patronage is omnipresent and professionals never get a chance. Public sector and government are very inefficient in attracting new investments, particularly the ones in environmentally friendly projects of sustainable development...“

- Underdeveloped infrastructure and tourist supply and the citizens' low awareness of environmental protection and protection of cultural heritage are thwarting the efforts to increase the distinctiveness of Bosnia and Herzegovina (18); “The national roads are in poor condition, although new highways have been under construction for years. As the citizens are totally unaware of ecology, many beautiful rivers are full of garbage. The awareness of the necessity to protect cultural and historical heritage is inadequate on all levels. Bosnians always underestimate their own values, traditions and potentials and believe that everything is much better abroad. Members of different ethnic groups must start cooperating and eradicate jealousy and divisions. There are too few good hotels. They have no idea what they have and they do not know how to sell it. Some of the most beautiful monuments have been devastated beyond repair.”

Conclusion

Very little research has been conducted about the possibilities of branding of post-conflict countries – the ones that until recently have only been mentioned in the context of wars, ethnic strife and the like. Even after a conflict, most of these countries are still characterized by divisions in their societies, non-functioning of state institutions and, often, deep wounds resulting from ethnic or political conflicts. Bosnia and Herzegovina is an example of a post-conflict country. Deep divisions between its three constituent nations and non-functioning of the government and political institutions are still present, even twenty years after the bloody war. At the same time, the need for branding is growing on a daily basis because private entrepreneurs are trying to sell their products in international markets, tourism organizations want to attract new tourists and the government wants to attract investments etc. Moreover, in such post-conflict countries, the branding process could boost an optimistic trend of rethinking and defining a new identity, focusing on crucial advantages and potentials etc. and thus contribute to the creation of new ties among the citizens and strengthening of the state.

However, due to tense interrelations and the citizens' sensitivity on their own and other identities, this process should be approached with much more caution than normally. This is why, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was important to find common ground between three nations, as well as such elements of identity that they all share and on which a new brand could be created. This led us to a model we named “Identity Triangle of Bosnia and Herzegovina”. It explains not only the complex nature of identity in this country, but also the possibilities. Although seemingly non-existent, exceptional potentials for creating a new Bosnia-Herzegovina brand were discovered in the second and third phases of the research. They primarily rest on the local mentality and way of life, straightforwardness and hospitality of the local people, natural attractions and the cultural and historical heritage that reflects the country's multicultural nature (Bosnia and Herzegovina as

a place where Christianity meets Islam). It was also important to “isolate” the subjects on which there was no consensus between three nations, so that they could be avoided when creating a new brand (e.g. the responsibility for the war and its consequences), thus not hindering the efforts. It was also necessary to establish the preconditions and possibilities for the strengthening of mutual communication and cooperation, since they are the very basis for the strengthening of political, cultural, economic and all other relationships between the citizens, nations and entities, respectively. Based on the research conducted, we came up with proposals for identity potentials and key footholds for the creation of a new brand of Bosnia and Herzegovina, attractive enough to neutralize the effects of war on the country's image and present it in a whole new light.

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A Lasswellian Framework for the Analysis of Messages on the Enterprise Social Network

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Abstract

Recent research has shown the uptake of Enterprise Social Software to be considerably slower than the diffusion of social media in the private sphere (Cardon & Marshall, 2015). The hesitancy to implement these new digital tools could be related to existing doubts over their advantages and fear of employees wasting their time. An increasing number of organizations do adopt these platforms, which means that hard data about user behavior is becoming available. However, our literature review revealed that only a handful of studies have focused on what actually happens on Enterprise Social Networks (ESNs). With this paper, we want to propose an easy to use theoretically sound framework to facilitate content analyses of these platforms. Based on Lasswell's (1948) communication model, and recent empirical insights with regard to ESN, we developed an analytical instrument consisting of fourteen parameters. Theoretically, this paper fills a gap that existed at the intersection of PR studies and social media scholarship. Practitioners on the other hand might be interested in using our instrument to determine the extent to which the ESN is used for professional communication.

Keywords: Enterprise Social Network, Enterprise Social Software, Theory, internal communication

Introduction

The increasing popularity of social media in people's daily lives has triggered debates about the impact of these tools inside organizations (Huang, Baptista, & Galliers, 2013; Schmidt, 2016; Treem & Leonardi, 2012). The wide accessibility of mobile devices that are connected to the internet have made it virtually impossible for IT departments to block access to social media during "office hours". Efforts to "control" employees' social media use have therefore tended to become less of a technical and more of a social issue. Telling in that respect are the calls to develop and implement social media policies that need to guide employees' online behavior (Meister, 2013). Some authors have linked

the debate on "control" to managers' fear to embrace social media in the workplace (Bradley & McDonald, 2011, p. 48; Postman, 2009, p. 37).

A few years ago, Solis and Breakenridge (2009, p. viii) pointed out that "many executives still view blogs as random musings, social networks as places where people troll for friends, and other social places as founts of pure narcissism". How these perceptions evolve is a question that forms part of an ongoing research agenda. Empirical evidence on how employees use social media both inside and outside organizations is likely to shape the future of how managers perceive these digital platforms. Today, the current stock of knowledge does not yet offer definitive answers.

With this theoretical paper, we want to propose a framework that can be used to study interactions on Enterprise Social Networks (ESN). Unlike other authors, who often approach this topic from an Information Systems (IS) perspective (Riemer & Tavakoli, 2013; van Zoonen, Verhoeven, & Vliegthart, 2016) the application of popular social networking techniques to the workplaces of organisations, is an increasingly common phenomenon. But its nature, benefits and proliferation are not yet fully understood. In this study we investigate ESN communication at the micro-level. We focus on the role of the group feature in structuring and providing context for communication in large ESNs. Our case study is Yammer at Deloitte. In contrast to previous studies we carry out an analysis of communication at the thread (conversation, we used a communication approach to inform the structure of our framework. We have chosen to use Harold Lasswell's (1948) communication model to distinguish between communicator, message, medium, receiver and effect as our principal theoretical building blocks. Throughout this paper we show how the existing literature fits this meta-theoretical model.

We look specifically at what has been defined in the literature as an "Enterprise Social Network" (ESN). Popular brand names include 'Yammer', 'IBM Connections', and 'Mumba Cloud'. In the words of Riemer et al. (2015, p. 199), these platforms "mimic the features of Twitter and Facebook, but are designed for application within organizations". Analyzing interactions on a "domesticated" social platform such as an ESN is interesting because, unlike public social networks, "internal social media" create a public sphere only accessible to members of the community and therefore provide us with more focused data on intra-organizational dynamics.

Our first intent with this paper is to fill a void in the existing literature on employees' use of social media. In a recent systematic literature review, El Ouiridi et al. (2015) conclude that, thematically, the number of studies with an explicit communication approach are rare in this field. In terms of methodologies, these authors argue in favor of more theory-based publications. We believe our paper to address both of these concerns. Similarly, Welch and Jackson (2007, p. 178) pointed out the existence of "considerable gaps in internal communication theory". As such, we contribute to theory development in what is seen as one of the "fastest growing specializations in public relations and communication management" (Verčič, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2012, p. 223).

For practitioners, our theoretical framework can be used as a practical tool to analyze the content on ESNs. We made sure to keep our framework sufficiently general in order to allow for possible adaptations to the analysis of content on specific software platforms. Due to the fact that all elements of our framework are grounded in the existing literature, we argue that our instrument boasts a high degree of construct validity. Future research will need to validate the instrument on other scientific quality criteria. If the outcomes of these tests are positive, the scale could be used to develop computer algorithms that may drive automated analysis of ESN content.

Literature review

The hype and reality of employees' social media use

Definitions and main research areas

As we outlined in the introduction, our goal is to propose a theoretical framework that can be used to analyze User Generated Content (UGC) on ESNs. Before we start, we deem it important to clarify the main concepts that are used in this study. As such we will briefly discuss how social software in the workplace has been conceptualized in the existing literature.

Given the popularity of the topic, it is no surprise that numerous authors have come up with definitions of what social media are. Based on the number of citations, we can argue that the most popular definitions are the ones of Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61) and Boyd and Ellison (2007), with the latter preferring to speak of "Social Networking Sites" (SNS). In the field of Public Relations (PR), Solis and Breakenridge (2009, p. xvii) keep their definition very general by arguing that a social medium is "anything that uses the internet to facilitate conversations". What most definitions have in common is their focus on interaction and UGC.

In the literature, some authors have made an analytical distinction between "Public Social Networking Sites" and "Enterprise Social Media" (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014; Leonardi, Huysman, & Steinfield, 2013, p. 2). Leonardi et al. (2013, p. 2) define the professional variant of these tools as:

"Web based platforms that allow workers to (1) communicate messages with specific coworkers or broadcast messages to everyone in the organization; (2) explicitly indicate or implicitly reveal particular coworkers as communication partners; (3) post, edit and sort text and files linked to themselves or others; and (4) view the messages, connections, text, and files communicated, posted, edited and sorted by anyone else in the organization at any time of their choosing".

To this definition we need to add that some authors refer to these same platforms as Enterprise Social Software (Christidis, Mentzas, & Apostolou, 2012; Kügler, Smolnik, & Raeth, 2013; Zhang, Zhu, & Hildebrandt, 2009) or Enterprise Social Networks (Ellison, Gibbs, & Weber, 2015).

Now that we have defined our main concepts, we can more clearly analyze the existing research on employees' use of social media in the workplace. Our aim is not to replicate the systematic literature review of El Ouiridi et al. (2015), who provided us with an overview of what has been written about this topic across different scholarly fields. Instead, we will zoom in more specifically on what recent research has to say about the impact of social media on the organization's internal processes in general and employees' work performance more in particular. Secondly, we will discuss literature about manager perceptions of social media impact in the workplace. Lastly, we compare both streams of literature in order to determine whether empirical evidence is in line with management perceptions.

Some authors have long argued that employees' social media use carries both risks and opportunities for organizations (Turban, Bolloju, & Liang, 2011). Therefore, empirical research is needed. Although some lament that research is not keeping up with evolutions in the professional field (Macnamara, 2010), an increasing number of studies is getting published. There are, as the systematic literature review of El Ouiridi et al. (2015, p. 460) revealed, nevertheless subject areas (such as communication) where reports of empirical data are scarce.

Studies about the impact of social media use on organizations have covered a wide range of topics, including "learning and development" (Breunig, 2016; Shepherd, 2011; van Puijenbroek, Poell, Kroon, & Timmerman, 2014), corporate reputation (Miles & Mangold, 2014) and internal hierarchy (Kai Riemer et al., 2015). We additionally look at what has already been published with regard to the impact of social media on work performance. This is important because it outlines the context against which the development of our instrument must be situated.

Social media and employee productivity

The fear of employees wasting their time online, something that has been called "cyberloafing" in the literature (Lieberman, Seidman, McKenna, & Buffardi, 2011; Motowidlo & Kell, 2013; Ng, Shao, & Liu, 2016), offers a plausible explanation of why so many organizations are introducing written policies that define the boundaries of social media use during office hours (Olmstead, Lampe, & Ellison, 2016). At this point, the debate about the impact of social media use on work performance has still not been settled. Some have argued that the effects on productivity are mainly positive (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014). The survey results in the study of van Zoonen et al. (2014, p. 852) even suggested that "(...) employees use their personal social-media accounts selflessly to contribute to organizational goals". Others have come to less positive conclusions and found that social media use did not benefit, or even hampered, work performance (Landers & Callan, 2014). Some of the most recent studies avoid brass statements and argue that social media use in the workplace has both productive and unproductive effects (Carlson, Zivnuska, Harris, Harris, & Carlson, 2016) or is mediated by other factors like knowledge transfer (Gao, Guo, Vogel, & Zhang, 2016) as well as the underlying mechanism for how they create value at work. Design/methodology/approach – Based on media synchronicity and social capital theories, the authors propose that social media

can foster employees' social capital and subsequently facilitate knowledge transfer. Both social capital and knowledge transfer help promote work performance. Specifically, the authors adopt shared vision, network ties and trust to represent, respectively, the cognitive, structural and relational dimensions of social capital. The research model is tested using data collected from 379 Chinese working professionals.

Findings– The empirical results reveal that social media can promote the formation of employees' social capital indicated by network ties, shared vision and trust, which, in turn, can facilitate knowledge transfer. Shared vision and knowledge transfer positively influence work performance. Although network ties and trust do not have a direct impact on work performance, the influence is partially mediated by knowledge transfer.

Practical implications– For organizations that wish to build knowledge networks in the workplace, connecting experts with various social media can effectively complement other knowledge management technology. Further, managers should encourage employees to consciously exploit the byproducts created via social media, e.g., social capital, to promote knowledge exchange.

Originality/value– The integration of media synchronicity and social capital theories offers a new theoretical lens and reasonable explanations for investigating communication performance. The research offers empirical evidence regarding how the influence of social media on work performance is transmitted through social capital and knowledge transfer. The authors quantify social media's benefits for organizations, providing managers an impetus to deploy them in the workplace with optimistic expectation.

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Scholars who study manager perceptions of social media use at work generally report a positive attitude towards these new media. In their research on the opinions of senior managers, Sedej and Justinek (2013) found this group to be particularly enthusiastic about the use of social media for internal communication. Research focused on the attitudes of professional groups that deal with social media as part of their everyday activities, like PR managers (DiStaso, McCorkindale, & Wright, 2011) and social media managers (Parveen, Jaafar, & Ainin, 2015), equally report these executives to be generally positive but still unsure about many aspects related to employee social media use. Taylor and Kent (2010) add the critical note that these positive attitudes could be the result of intense "socialization" within the professional group. As a result of their content analysis of the professional PR literature, they found the belief in the potential of social media to outrun hard evidence of the tools' effectiveness. A recent study reporting the results of a survey has again found that communication professionals are convinced of the positive effects of social media on the organization in general and employees more specifically (Cardon & Marshall, 2015) survey results from 227 business professionals are presented that address three areas: frequency of use of social networking for team communication compared to other communication channels, perceived effectiveness of social networking tools for team communication compared to other communication

channels, and attitudes toward social networking for team communication. Generally, the results show that traditional communication channels are used more frequently and considered more effective for team communication. However, the results also indicate that Gen X and Gen Y business professionals are quite likely to consider that social networking tools will be the primary tools for team communication in the future. The article concludes with recommendations for how business communication scholars can advance, define, and set apart the field by focusing on business communication via enterprise social networking platforms.

,"DOI": "10.1177/2329488414525446", "ISSN": "2329-4884, 2329-4892", "language": "en", "author": [{"family": "Cardon", "given": "P. W."}, {"family": "Marshall", "given": "B."}], "issued": {"date-parts": [{"2015", 7, 1}]}, "schema": "https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json" .

What people say on the Enterprise Social Network

Although managers generally express themselves positively about social software in professional settings, a recent report of the Pew center for internet research showed that more than half of all employees indicate that their employers have rules about social media at work (Olmstead et al., 2016, p. 3). Being positively disposed towards social media therefore does not mean that there are no attempts to control employees' behavior. Although further research on this topic is needed, we argue that it is at least plausible that corporate social networks were designed to harness the power of social media while avoiding the loss of control. Regarding adoption rates there have been mixed reports on the success of these platforms, with some authors shattering the myth that the technology alone will suffice to steer users' behavior (Li, 2015; Pontefract, 2015).

To use the words of Riemer et al. (2015, p. 199), Enterprise Social Networks "mimic the features" of popular public platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Does this mean these organizational networks are used to share the same content as we see on their public counterparts? At this point there are only a small number of authors who have addressed this issue.

An extensive overview of the literature on ESNs can be found in Stei et al. (2016), who identified user behavior and the effects of ESN usage as two valuable venues for future research in the field. Some authors have focused on the use of an ESN for learning (Scott, Sorokti, & Merrell, 2016) and knowledge management (Mäntymäki & Riemer, 2016). The author most associated with content analysis of ESN data is Kai Riemer. Together with his colleagues, Riemer has focused on the effects of ESN use on an organization's formal hierarchy (Kai Riemer et al., 2015) and the role of groups as local context for users in large ESNs (Kai Riemer & Tavakoli, 2013). His typology of communication genres (Riemer & Tavakoli, 2013) preceded, and also deeply informed, the development of our own analytical instrument. In what follows, we will explain how existing theory was used for the development of this central theoretical framework. Each of the steps in Lasswell's (1948) communication model will therefore be translated into conceptual blocks that are grounded in typologies as developed in recent research focusing on the content found on ESNs.

Development of the research instrument

The goal of this theoretical paper is to establish a framework that can be used to study interactions on ESNs. Existing typologies that come close to what we need can be found in van Zoonen et al. (2016) it is important to gain understanding of these online behaviors as they might have consequences on the individual and organizational level. We provide a typology for work-related Twitter use based on a large-scale content analysis (N = 38,124 and Riemer & Tavakoli (2013). Just like ours, the framework of van Zoonen et al. (2016) it is important to gain understanding of these online behaviors as they might have consequences on the individual and organizational level. We provide a typology for work-related Twitter use based on a large-scale content analysis (N = 38,124 is developed based on the existing literature. What is nevertheless different is that these authors focus on work related messages on Twitter, a Public Social Network. Riemer and Tavakoli (2013) do focus on the context of ESNs but ground what they call “genres” and “sub-genres” in their empirical data. As such they use an inductive approach to develop their categories. What both typologies miss is a clear link with a meta-theoretical communication model that helps to distinguish between different analytical levels in the social interaction process. Because of this complexity, categories in these typologies are likely difficult to translate into automated analysis. Another limitation of the existing instruments is that they do not allow to clearly separate “work related” from “non-work related” content, which makes them less suited to assess the extent to which ESNs are used for professional communication.

On a meta-theoretical level, we have used Lasswell’s communication model as the backbone to our own framework. Following the logic of this model, we decided to build a first group of parameters around the notion of the sender. Next, our attention shifts to the message itself, the second element in Lasswell’s model. Channel and receiver, respectively third and fourth elements in the communication flow, are constants in our instrument because of our focus on one specific channel (the ESN) with a well-defined audience (the employees). The last element in Lasswell’s model is “effect”. We have chosen to make an analytical distinction between “actual effect”, in this framework limited to the measurement of engagement, and what Braddock (1958) in his extension of Lasswell’s model called “purpose”, being the “intended effect”. Conspicuously absent from many communication models, including Lasswell’s, is what psychologists would call the “valence”, better understood as “tone of voice”, of a message. This is all the more surprising given the observation that emotion, or to use another term “affect”, is likely to play a considerable role in how the receiver decodes the message.

These different elements have led to the creation of fourteen variables that together make up our empirical instrument. This means that, in future research, our typology can be used as a codebook with which to analyze ESN content. In what follows, we will clarify the theoretical underpinning of each of our conceptual blocks.

The participatory forces of the ESN

The affordances of social media imply that every employee theoretically has the same opportunity

to take part in the public digital sphere of the ESN. However, at this stage it is difficult to draw conclusions about the participatory effects of these digital organizational communication platforms. It is nevertheless important to investigate who communicates on the ESN. Is it really only 1 % as implied by Nielsen’s 1-9-90 rule (Nielsen, 2006)1,15]]]]],”schema”:”https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json”? And of those who participate, where can they be situated in the organization’s formal hierarchy? This debate is very much alive since some argue that social media “are firmly rooted in an ideology that values hierarchy, competition, and a winner-takes-all mind-set” (van Dijck, 2013, p. 21) while others found evidence of social media’s “flattening effect” on the organization (Kai Riemer et al., 2015).

In order to enable our instrument to bring additional empirical evidence to the table, we decided to create a new variable capable of assigning people who initiate a new conversation to one of three categories, being (1) employee (non-management), (2) line management and (3) higher management. These categories broadly reflect the three existing layers in the hierarchical structure of most organizations. We decided to add an additional variable that serves the purpose of indicating whether the internal communication professional is the one initiating the thread. This way, empirical analysis allows for easy comparisons between the posts of the internal communicator and those of other employees. This could prove interesting for PR researchers who are interested in analyzing the conversations between “the organization”, as embodied by the internal communicator, and other employees.

A typology of work related content

Trying to categorize the content of the posts on the ESN does imply some form of interpretive process. Some of the studies that we have already mentioned accomplish this task by using genre analysis as their main research method (Kai Riemer, Overfeld, Scifleet, & Richter, 2012; Kai Riemer & Richter, 2010; Kai Riemer & Tavakoli, 2013; K. Riemer, Altenhofen, & Richter, 2011)Slovenia”,”page”:”1-17”,”event”:”23rd Bled eConference”,”event-place”:”Bled, Slovenia”,”abstract”:”With the advent of Twitter, Microblogging has become increasingly popular. The service is simple, easy to use and its success has company executives wondering if using the short message service in their Intranets would benefit organisational information sharing and communication. At the same time, others have cautioned against transferring social media inside the \ncorporation as this might lead to importing unwanted procrastination behaviours. Against this backdrop, our case study explores communication \npatterns in a team that has adopted Enterprise Microblogging. By applying genre analysis, find that microblogging in this corporate context is vastly different to its public equivalent. We discuss our findings in light of contextual differences and the open nature of communication platforms, which impact on user appropriation. Moreover, we \nargue that decision makers should vest trust in their employees in putting microblogging to productive use in their group work environments.”,”author”:”[”family”:”Riemer”,”given”:”Kai”],”family”:”Richter”,”given”:”Alexander”],”issued”:”[”date-parts”:”[”2010”]]”,”label”:”page”,”id”:”1928”,”uris”:”[”http://

zotero.org/users/986735/items/EBWJ7BG5"],"uri":["http://zotero.org/users/986735/items/EBWJ7BG5"],"itemData":{"id":1928,"type":"article-journal","title":"The role of groups as local context in large Enterprise Social Networks: A Case Study of Yammer at Deloitte Australia."},"container-title":"Business Information Systems Working Paper Series","abstract":"Enterprise Social Networking, the application of popular social networking techniques to the workplaces of organisations, is an increasingly common phenomenon. But its nature, benefits and proliferation are not yet fully understood. In this study we investigate ESN communication at the micro-level. We focus on the role of the group feature in structuring and providing context for communication in large ESNs. Our case study is Yammer at Deloitte. In contrast to previous studies we carry out an analysis of communication at the thread (conversation. Existing typologies, developed for the purpose of content analyses of Public Social Networks, have also been used to inform our own framework (Crijns, Hudders, Cauberghe, & Claeys, 2016; van Zoonen et al., 2016)"container-title":"Tijdschrift voor Communicatiewetenschap","page":"39-63","volume":"43","issue":"1","abstract":"This study used a quantitative content analysis to investigate how 12 reputable Belgian companies use Facebook as a corporate communication tool. Findings indicate that companies use Facebook more often to post public relations than marketing communication content. The former is also more often shared than the latter. However, the latter creates more engagement in terms of reactions of the company on comments of users. Furthermore, about one fourth of the company posts did not generate any written reactions from users and can be classified as one-way communication. Almost 40 % of the posts generated reactions from the users. To conclude, in one third of the cases companies reacted on these reactions of users, and results reveal that this is more often the case when it concerns public relations content than marketing communication content. Reputation score was not able to predict the communication strategy used on Facebook."},"author":[{"family":"Crijns","given":"Hannelore"},{"family":"Hudders","given":"Liselot"},{"family":"Cauberghe","given":"Veroline"},{"family":"Claeys","given":"An-Sofie"}],"issued":{"date-parts":[["2016"]]},"label":"page"},{"id":1927,"uris":["http://zotero.org/users/986735/items/GG25NXDN"],"uri":["http://zotero.org/users/986735/items/GG25NXDN"],"itemData":{"id":1927,"type":"article-journal","title":"How employees use Twitter to talk about work: A typology of work-related tweets"},"container-title":"Computers in Human Behavior","page":"329-339","volume":"55","source":"CrossRef","abstract":"In organizational research employees' use of personal social media for work remains an understudied phenomenon. Yet, it is important to gain understanding of these online behaviors as they might have consequences on the individual and organizational level. We provide a typology for work-related Twitter use based on a large-scale content analysis (N = 38,124. Since we already discussed the different categorizations for the people who post on the platform, we will now focus on the categories we use to organize the message content.

People looking into what is being said on an ESN will notice that employees discuss a wide variety of topics. Constructing a codebook with variables that would capture the entire spectrum of these conversations is near impossible. However, for the purpose of this research, we only want to know whether what is being said relates to work or the organization. To this end we create four

dichotomous variables, each of which will be discussed briefly.

Closest to the professional activities of the individual are posts that have a direct link with the work being done. Included in this category are those messages related to objects, processes and incidents that directly impact the work tasks of the employee. As such, this category is similar, albeit somewhat broader, to what van Zoonen et al. (2016, p. 331) it is important to gain understanding of these online behaviors as they might have consequences on the individual and organizational level. We provide a typology for work-related Twitter use based on a large-scale content analysis (N = 38,124 define as "work behaviors". Coders who are not familiar with the work context might need to run an online background check to determine the poster's profession. The reason for this is that ESNs seldom state the professional title of the poster. Usually we only see a name and a profile picture.

Having established a variable to account for work related posts, we quickly found ourselves in need of a different parameter that could integrate messages about employees' jobs that do not directly relate to the work itself. The most obvious example are posts regarding compensation and benefits. We decide not to include benefits that only result from being a member of the organization since these are not tied to the individual job related compensation packages that may differ according to the kind of work being done. Our new parameter, not found in existing typologies, fully integrates the first variable. All work related messages are therefore logically also job related.

Not all messages are related to someone's professional tasks or broader job context. However, this does not mean that they are completely disconnected from the organization. Quite to the contrary, people are often found talking about the organization as an entity in itself. For this reason, we create, similar to van Zoonen (2016, p. 331) it is important to gain understanding of these online behaviors as they might have consequences on the individual and organizational level. We provide a typology for work-related Twitter use based on a large-scale content analysis (N = 38,124, a third variable to register whether posts have a clear link with the organization. This variable spans the first two variables. All work and job related posts are therefore automatically categorized as organization related.

Our first three variables can be visualized as concentric circles that indicate the degree to which the content on the ESN connects to the employee's professional context. However, posts may also be related to the sector without having a direct link with work, the job or the organization. A logical step is therefore to introduce a new variable that is able to capture this content. Unlike the first categories, this variable does not constitute a new layer of the concentric circle because not everyone's work in an organization is directly related to the sector in which the organization is active.

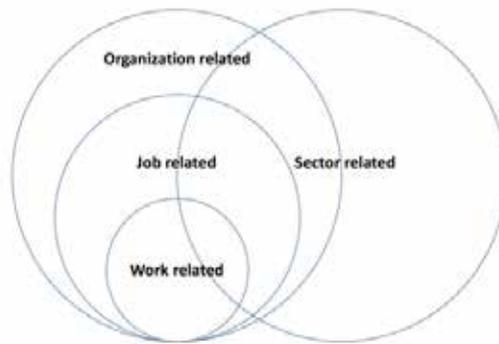


Figure 1: typology of work related content on the ESN

Effects of communicating through the ESN

In this paper we limit the study of actual effects to the measurement of how actively employees engage with the content on the ESN. This way we are able to determine which posts trigger the highest levels of engagement. The reason why we ask this question is because employee engagement has been identified as “one of the hottest

issues in practice” (Verčič et al., 2012). Numerous scholarly contributions equally stress the importance of internal communication in fostering employee engagement (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014; Ruck & Welch, 2012; Welch, 2012; Welch & Jackson, 2007)2007. However, critical voices have argued that social media are not being used to their full dialogic potential (Grunig, 2009), which implies that organizations are missing an important chance to foster employee engagement.

Similar to the study of Crijs et al. (2016), we define engagement in terms of objectively measurable parameters like the number of likes and reactions. In some cases, a small number of people might engage in what we would call an “online conversation”, leading to numerous reactions to the same post. Therefore, we decide to integrate in our analytical framework a parameter that records the number of unique people that post reactions. We further added a variable capable of capturing whether the authors of the main post also react to their own message in the thread’s “comments section”. By doing this, our instrument is able to test whether the employees who initiate a thread also join the discussion after having posted.

Categorizing intended effect

We can assume that employees who post on an ESN do so with a certain purpose. In order to define categories with which to classify messages in terms of their intended effect, we found the four models of PR, as developed by Grunig and Hunt (1984), particularly useful. Although these models were developed as a typology for PR messages, analogies can be drawn with the intended effect of messages on an ESN. We will discuss how each of these models relates to one of the four values in the variable we created. This way, our instrument is able of categorizing messages according to their intended effect.

The first of Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) models is the “press agency” or “publicity” model. It mainly revolves around persuasion, hence the name of our first category. Included in this category are

all messages that have the explicit “aim to induce behaviors in the reader” (van Zoonen et al., 2016, p. 331)it is important to gain understanding of these online behaviors as they might have consequences on the individual and organizational level. We provide a typology for work-related Twitter use based on a large-scale content analysis (N = 38,124. Examples include calls to action or messages containing opinions backed with arguments to support these opinions.

The second form of one-way communication is what Grunig and Hunt (1984) call the “public information model”. Core to this model is the sender’s intention to share information. We therefore decide to categorize posts as “information sharing” when they do not contain questions or are not backed with arguments in order to convince the reader of a certain statement. We can find the same category in the typology of Riemer and Tavakoli (2013, p. 10). However, these authors define additional genres such as “problem solving and advice” or “social and praise” that are too detailed for the purpose of our analysis. We argue that the categories of these authors are thematic subthemes that are congruent with our proposed classification.

Some posts on the ESN have the clear intent to trigger a communicative reaction from the audience. These actions mostly take the form of written comments that can be found below the initial post. In these cases, one-way communication makes room for two-way communication. In the two-way asymmetrical model of Grunig and Hunt (1984), the communicator gathers information through the communicative loop (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 2013, p. 13). As such, we label as “information seeking” those posts who’s first purpose is to get answers to a question. The authors of the posts that are labeled “information seeking” do not have the intent to persuade the reader or start a discussion.

A final type of intended effect is what we call “discussion”. We argue that it is precisely this element that leads to balanced forms of two-way communication. Therefore, it is central to Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) fourth and final model, also called “two-way symmetrical model”. Threads we label as “discussion” elicit others’ opinions without intent to receive a definite answer. We find a similar category in the work of Riemer and Tavakoli (2013, p. 10).

Tone of voice

Often it is not the content but the tone of voice that determines how a message is received. For this reason, we deem it necessary to include in our instrument a category able to measure what is called “valence” in the social psychological literature. Following Crijs et al. (2016), we use the labels “negative”, “neutral” and “positive” to map the tone of voice of the main message. We find van Zoonen et al. (2016, p. 331)it is important to gain understanding of these online behaviors as they might have consequences on the individual and organizational level. We provide a typology for work-related Twitter use based on a large-scale content analysis (N = 38,124 to be using the same typology but calling it “sentiment” instead of “valence”. Since we want our framework to have

the power of mapping the tone of voice found in reactions to the initial post, we need to add “no reactions” and “mixed” as additional categories to account for posts that do not receive reactions or where comments contain both positive and negative statements at the same time.

	Variable Name	Variable Label	Values
Sender	Post Number	Unique Identifier (UI) of the thread	[1, n]
	Position in hierarchy	Position of the author in the organizational hierarchy	1: Employee (non-management) 2: Line management 3: Higher management
	Internal communicator (lead)	(Internal) communication manager is the main poster	0: No 1: Yes
Message content	Work related	Post is directly related to the work tasks of the poster	0: No 1: Yes
	Job related	Post is directly related to the job of the poster	0: No 1: Yes
	Organization related	Post is directly related to the organization	0: No 1: Yes
	Sector related	Post is directly related to the sector	0: No 1: Yes
Engagement parameters	Internal communicator (comment)	(Internal) communication manager is present in the reactions	0: No 1: Yes
	Likes	Number of likes	[1, n]
	Reactions	Number of reactions	[1, n]
effect	Intended effect	Intended effect of the poster	1: Persuasion 2: Information sharing 3: Information seeking 4: Discussion
Valence	Valence main	Tone of voice of the main post	0: Negative 1: Neutral 2: Positive
	Valence reaction	Tone of voice of the reactions	0: No reactions 1: Negative 2: Mixed 3: Neutral 4: Positive

Table 1: Analytical framework to study content found on Enterprise Social Networks

Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to develop a theoretically grounded framework with which the UGC content found on ESNs can be analyzed. We did so in light of ongoing debates about the use of these platforms for organizational communication purposes (Leonardi et al., 2013; Turban et al., 2011). Surprisingly, only a handful of studies have focused on the development of typologies for the categorization of content on ESNs (overviews can be found in: Riemer & Tavakoli, 2013; Stei et al., 2016). We decided to address this issue as part of our effort to understand what employees actually do and say on these new digital platforms. We believe our framework to be useful for scholars who

seek to add empirical evidence to existing discussions. Later work might include the organizational context in order to develop the link between what people say online and how this can be understood in terms of the social environment. This might certainly be of interest to authors who argue that it is not the technology itself, but social factors such as management support and organizational culture, that define the successful implementation of social media tools in professional environments (Huy, 2016; Pontefract, 2015).

Current research on ESN has been published in journals such as *Computers in Human Behavior* (van Zoonen et al., 2016) it is important to gain understanding of these online behaviors as they might have consequences on the individual and organizational level. We provide a typology for work-related Twitter use based on a large-scale content analysis (N = 38,124 and the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* (Leonardi et al., 2013). As is apparent from these titles, the topic is popular among Information Systems (IS) scholars. In the fields of PR and organizational communication, interest in social media applications has mostly focused on communication between the organization and external stakeholder groups (cf. Crijns et al., 2016). A recent systematic review of the literature further allowed us to identify two gaps in social media scholarship that we wanted to address. First, El Ouiridi et al. (2015, p. 459) found there to be a lack of studies linking social media with internal communication. Secondly, these same authors (2015, p. 460) argue that, if the field wants to evolve, more efforts need to be taken in terms of theory development.

In this paper we focused on advancing the field through the development of an analytical instrument that builds on existing communication theory as well as recent empirical findings. Central to the structure of our framework is Lasswell's (1948) famous communication model, allowing us to make analytical distinctions between different phases in the communication processes that characterize the social interactions on ESNs.

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Stakeholder Networks as Scopes of Responsibility: A Long-Term Study on the Individual Engagement of CEOs and Managers in Austria (1995-2012)

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Abstract

The social transformation of media relations is closely related to reciprocal actions that primarily affect the areas of media technologies, communication structures as well as communication processes. Recent developments, such as the mediatization, digitization and a high-degree of interconnectedness contribute to the rationale of a “network society” (Castells, 2001). The network society’s dynamics are produced and reproduced through verbal practices, especially in form of public communication processes. As enterprises qualify as publicly exposed entities (Dyllick, 1989) and are required to explain and legitimize their actions, communication presents the means of shaping formal and informal, internal and external relationships amongst organizations and their actors (Weder, 2007a). Thus, communication is a way of integrating enterprises into society as well as vice versa, meaning that society is put into relation to enterprises through communicative processes.

There is always a relational component associated with CSR (Jarolimek and Weder, in press). CSR prevails to organizations taking responsibility, whereby an organization is subject to accepting responsibility for numerous issues as uttered by its diverse stakeholder groups (European Commission, 2001). The communication of CSR engagements then is concerned with providing both internal and external stakeholders and other publics with relevant information on said issues, allowing recipients to form opinions and about and evaluate these projects (Weder, 2010; Weder, 2012; Jarolimek and Weder, in press).

Located at the interface between a communicative and a rather economically-driven approach is

the idea of Stakeholder Management, which is crucial to the area of entrepreneurial responsibility or corporate social responsibility (CSR). Within recent years, it has been more frequently addressed in communication sciences (Karmasin 2007; Karmasin and Weder, 2013) where more advanced and communicative definitions of CSR have been developed and employed (for example, see Ihlen et al., 2011; Raupp et al., 2010; Karmasin and Weder, 2008; May et al., 2009), leading to extended perceptions of CSR. Broadly speaking, CSR describes “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis environment” (European Commission, 2001: 8). Today, CSR communication has developed into a transdisciplinary research agenda, with theoretical and empirical approaches increasingly focusing on the ‘communicative elements’ of CSR concepts (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012; Ihlen et al., 2011). This being the case, CSR communication holds the potential to “strengthen the social reputation and consequently the entire reputation of an organization” (Röttger and Schmitt, 2009: 43), rendering it a business goal worth striving for.

The research presented herein is based on a theoretical model of CSR Communication that tries to overcome the managerial or technical approaches to organizations and their effectiveness as well as the linear understanding of CSR Communication as an external process of communicating social, economic, and environmental responsibilities (Golob et al, 2013: 178). As both CSR and Stakeholder Management are considered participatory and relational processes (Sorsa, 2008; Jarolimek and Weder, in press), Stakeholder Networks are conceptualized as so-called ‘scopes of responsibility’ that are related to corporate engagement are put at the center of the present investigation.

Recent data derived from a long-term study (qualitative survey, conducted from 1995 to 2012) examined both Austrian managers’ (n = 150) and the general population’s (n = 1000) attitudes towards corporate social responsibility. The study outlined herein revealed interesting results: First, interviewees were well aware of organizations’ networked embeddedness within society and their resulting responsibilities; and second, they were conscious of the relation between the implementation of corresponding structures in Austrian enterprises and individual decision-making processes. In addition, an individual commitment to get engaged in ethical issues is required; yet, it does not serve as a sufficient precondition for realizing responsibility. Furthermore, it was determined that responsible stakeholder relations were perceived as a pre-condition for and outcome of corporate CSR activities. CSR can then be seen as both a strategy and framework of internal and external communication processes and structures. Finally, in order to succeed, a more differentiated organizational coverage in terms of ethical engagements together with the commitment of all stakeholders was perceived as mandatory.

Keywords: Stakeholder, Stakeholder Networks, Longitudinal Study, Individual Engagement, Institutional Engagement

Stakeholder Networks as Scopes of Responsibility: A Long-Term Study on the Individual Engagement of CEOs and Managers in Austria (1995-2012)

Introduction

The social transformation of media relations is closely related to reciprocal actions that primarily affect the areas of media technologies, communication structures as well as communication processes. Recent developments, such as the mediatization, digitization and a high-degree of interconnectedness contribute to the rationale of a “network society” (Castells, 2001). The network society’s dynamics are produced and reproduced through verbal practices, especially in form of public communication processes. This is the case as enterprises qualify as publicly exposed entities (Dyllick, 1989) that are required to communicatively explain and legitimize their actions. Nowadays, society must not only be grasped technologically, in the sense of globalized accessibility, but also communicatively as a network society (Castells, 2001). This means that “we are now connecting all the knowledge centers on the planet together into a single global network, which [...] could usher in an amazing era of prosperity, innovation, and collaboration by companies, communities and individuals” (Friedman, 2006: 8). The dynamics of the network society are constituted through communicative practices and, as such, also enterprises’ communication politics – or, more broadly speaking, enterprises’ organizational communication practices (Weder, 2010) – are presented with new challenges. “[I]f we could somehow remove communication flows from an organization, we would not have an organization” (Rogers and Argawala-Rogers, 1976, 7). This statement grasps the essence of communication’s contribution to organizational theory, pinpointing that relationships are constituted by communication and, thus, organizations also define themselves by way of communication networks, spanning within, from and around their core business. As a result, communication presents the means of shaping formal and informal, internal and external relationships amongst organizations and their actors (Weder, 2007a). Thus, enterprises integrate themselves into society by means of communication as well as vice versa, meaning that society is put into relation with enterprises through communicative processes.

Located at the interface between a communicative and a rather economically-driven approach, the idea and conceptualization of Stakeholder Management is crucial to the area of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Freeman’s original idea (1984) was expanded recently by use of new terminology, such as multi-stakeholder networks, (Roloff, 2008a; Roloff, 2008b; Rowley and Moldoveanu, 2003) and was also adapted to the field of communication sciences (Karmasin 2007; Karmasin and Weder, 2013), where researchers have started to employ more advanced and communication-centered definitions of CSR (for example, see Ihlen et al., 2011; Raupp et al., 2010; Schmidt and Tropp, 2009; Karmasin and Weder, 2008; May et al., 2009), leading to new and improved perceptions of CSR. Thereby, the relationships between organizational perceptions of responsibility and stakeholders’ views of the same concept warrants further investigation.

Consequently, most of the article’s attention will be dedicated towards socio-ethical questions by working out the role of organizational communication for respectively in business-ethical matters;

as part of the corporation’s responsibility management, the authors also want to introduce the term Corporate Communicative Responsibility (CCR) (Karmasin and Weder, 2008; Weder and Karmasin, 2009). However, the term CSR warrants to be introduced first. Broadly speaking, CSR describes “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis environment” (European Commission, 2001: 8). The concept does not only present a central component of a business’ operative mission, but is also meant to illustrate its “contribution [...] to society” (Crane et al., 2008: 3f.). With CSR being on the rise throughout academic disciplines, numerous new and related terms have been coined, such as “corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship, corporate philanthropy, corporate giving, corporate community involvement, community relations, community affairs, community development, corporate responsibility, global citizenship, and corporate social marketing” (Kotler and Lee, 2005: 2).

Within recent years, CSR communication has become more established as a transdisciplinary research area, with theoretical and empirical approaches increasingly focusing on CSR concepts’ ‘communicative elements’ (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012; Ihlen et al., 2011). CSR communication holds the potential to “strengthen the social reputation and consequently the entire reputation of an organization” (Röttger and Schmitt, 2009: 43) and, thus, is a goal worth striving for. An increasing number of Special Journal issues (Podnar, 2008; Golob et al., 2013) as well as handbooks (Ihlen et al., 2011; Raupp et al., 2010; May et al., 2007) indicate that CSR communication is significant in both practice and academic research. So far, however, most of the research has focused on the fields of management and communication; besides marketing communication, public relation and corporate communication research, organizational communication studies have only recently started to stress the “important role of communication for CSR” (Golob et al., 2013: 178).

The European commission’s perception of CSR marks a transition towards a stakeholder management approach (Karmasin & Weder 2013). In their latest publication Karmasin and Weder (in press) extend previous concepts of CSR and derive a list comprising 6 aspects that characterized successful CSR concepts: (1) the inclusion of social and ecological aspects into business operations, (2) a self-commitment, which drives companies to integrate their CSR practices on a voluntary basis; (3) a clear stakeholder orientation, (4) a notion that CSR is concerned with creating an added value for society; and (5) the conscious acceptance of responsibility in both economic, ecologic and social terms (Weder and Karmasin, in press). If responsibility is institutionalized, CSR can take numerous forms, comprising codices, officers; ideally, also stakeholders respectively their needs receive consideration, with companies hosting stakeholder meetings and/or dialogues on a regular basis. Taken together, these aspects present the pillars on which successful, integrated CSR is built on (Weder and Karmasin, in press).

The research presented herein is based on a theoretical model of CSR Communication that tries to overcome the managerial or technical approaches to organizations and their effectiveness as well as the linear understanding of CSR Communication as an external process of communicating social, economic, and environmental responsibilities (Golob et al, 2013: 178). Recent data derived from a longitudinal study investigating both Austrian managers’ and Austrians’ general population’s

attitudes towards stakeholder networks as scopes of individual responsibility indicate that the debate about entrepreneurial responsibility and CSR conceptualizations can (and needs to be) extended to an individual-ethical dimension. Results allow for the conclusion that responsibility's organization in the sense of self-regulation (internal) and third-party regulation (external) can only be complemented by accepting individual-ethical responsibility, especially on behalf of business managers. Thus, CSR is seen as a participatory process (Sorsa, 2008), in which stakeholder networks are conceptualized as so-called scopes of responsibility that are related to corporate engagement; these will be further elaborated in the following section.

Stakeholder Networks as Scopes of Responsibility

There is always a relational component associated with CSR (Jarolimek and Weder, in press). CSR prevails to organizations taking responsibility, whereby an organization is subject to accepting responsibility for numerous issues as uttered by its diverse stakeholder groups (European Commission, 2001). The communication of CSR engagements then is concerned with providing both internal and external stakeholders and other publics with relevant information on said issues, allowing recipients to form opinions and about and evaluate these projects (Weder, 2010; Weder, 2012; Jarolimek and Weder, in press). Stakeholder networks, stakeholder dialogues and corresponding communication channels, multi-stakeholder networks – these are only some of the terms used to describe the integration and organization of scattered resources in the context of appropriate and recent communicative strategies. These considerations are part of an economic-ethical discourse, which identifies companies' responsibilities in a given relational patterns and establishes potentials for realization. Hence, from a communicative perspective more basic questions arise:

1. To which extent do responsibilities arise in the first place due to enterprises' social embeddedness and which role do stakeholders play in this context?
2. Which role does individual-ethical behavior occupy in and for this particular kind of relationship management?

The authors base their argumentation on the previously developed two-dimensional concept of Corporate Communicative Responsibility (CCR; Karmasin and Weder, 2008; Weder and Karmasin, 2009), which perceives communication as central to the process of creating values, of "sensemaking" (McPhee and Zaug, 2009: 22). However, this concept does not comprise an enterprise's acceptance of responsibility alone. In fact, "[d]oing good and talking about it is not easy at all" (Friedrich, 2007: 18) as communication alone does not suffice; only professional communication makes social responsibility a factor of added value (see Finkernagel, 2007: 64). Thus, it is also about the perception of responsibility by way of communication. As a result, from a converged standpoint of CSR and organizational communication, the following two dimensions of a Corporate Communicative Responsibility (CCR) can be derived:

Communication by way of taking responsibility: it is a quite common strategy, whereby the coordination and use of responsibility in favor of society occur through corporate communication activities.

Communication management as responsibility management, in which ethics function as a procedural

product of organizational communication (Weder, 2012; Weder and Karmasin, in press).

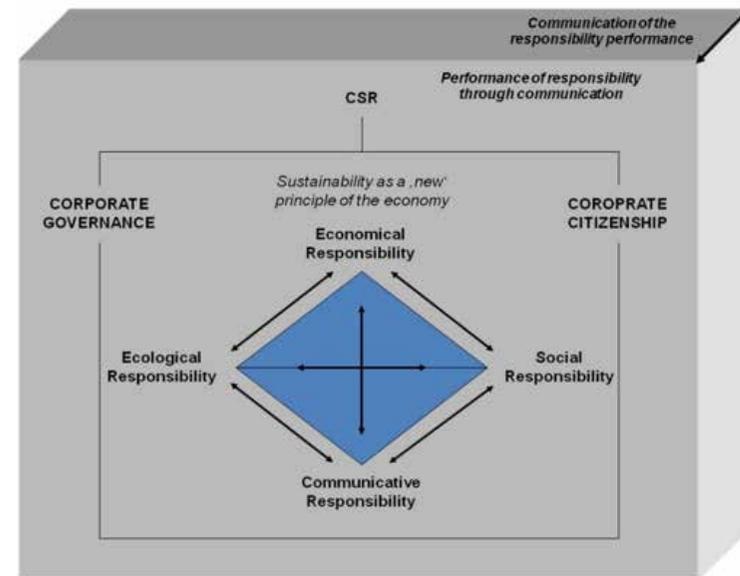


Figure 1: Conceptualization of CCI (Weder and Karmasin, 2009)

In general, information is a special way of communicating, a kind of interaction. It is understood as a form of social action, for which "the behaviour of individuals directly communicating with each other is respectively oriented at the other's behaviour, assumed motivations and expectations, his/her desires or reactions" (Türk, 1984: 64). It is thus not only about the publicity-effective and image building activities of the organization and its positioning within society (in the sense of good corporate citizenship or social responsibility etc.), the preservation of core corporate values or securing of executives' reputations, and satisfying communication demands (in the sense of conducting stakeholder dialogues, stakeholder assemblies etc.), but it is about a communicative restructuring of the organization - or rather the reorganization of communication. Only on the basis of these considerations it becomes possible for organizations to plan responsibility management as communication management. In this sense, the established triple bottom line of responsibility is extended towards a quadruple bottom line (see Figure 1). CSR communication then holds the potential to improve stakeholder relationships and a firm's image in the long run (Porter and Kramer, 2007).

Thereby, CSR communication is perceived as part of a corporate responsibility management – both structurally and procedurally. Structurally, the communicative tackling of responsibility becomes manifested either by a reorganization of existing organization structures (e.g., a decentralization of

decision-making processes in support of one's own initiative and motivation, in support of information and group processes, or in favour of an improved quality in decision-making etc.) or by organizing structures anew and thus introducing new, additional pillars (e.g., a standardization of ISO norms, SA 8000, social/ecologic product labels, systems for the management of ethics or values, the establishment of ethics commissions or an ombuds(wo)men as well as guiding codices). Procedural changes, which center on individuals and are usually ascribed particularly to executives/managers, refer to the implementation of communicative responsibility. In detail, this might involve the planning of organizational communication as stakeholder management or the establishment and stabilization of value structures, which allow for self-reflective communication (e.g., feedback possibilities, trainings, gender and diversity programs etc.). Thus, organizational communication is to be perceived as a structure-building and structure-keeping, values-integrating and culture-creating practice.

This conceptualization does not only encapsulate that fact that firms feel responsible for society at large but also, and more importantly, it does also refer to the actual communication of responsible actions as part of their organizational communication efforts – both on an intra-personal and inter-personal level. The second question addresses the interrelationship between social and individual ethics or, more concretely, looks at the interplay between an ethical institutionalization on an organizational level and individual-ethical behavior. From a social-ethical perspective, stakeholder approaches afford corporations with the possibility to both substantiate and describe responsibility's organization on a structural level. As such, the assumption that responsible stakeholder management involves two important claims, becomes central: the first claim involves the strategic and operative design of both the production and utilization of real and social capital in cooperation with stakeholders in individual relationships. The second claim deals much less with the integration of stakeholder and/or shareholder interests, but focuses on the communicative relations with those groups instead (for instance, see concepts by Rowley, 1997; Roloff, 2008a; Roloff, 2008b; Frooman, 2010). Subsequently, organizations are perceived as „normative communities where members share conceptions of the organization and its environment, as well as values and norms for what should be done“ (Brunsson and Olsen, 1998: 17, see also Selznick, 1949), implying a common conceptualization of responsibility respectively its perception. Thereby, the following questions are meant to be answered: To which degree should responsibility be institutionalized on a corporate level? How much responsibility is attributed to individual-ethical action and/or behavior? And do institutional-ethical and individual-ethical behavior have to be perceived as substitutes?

When locating ethical responsibility on the continuum of (individual) responsibility, it is usually ascribed to the persona of the manager, who is called upon in the process of communicative stakeholder management. Executives act as central points of reference, rendering ethical behavior a crucial part of 'managerial ethics'. Actual data derived from Austria reveals that the general population as well as executives from firms of different size and with varying foci increasingly emphasize individual-ethical responsibility, especially on behalf of managers; concepts of stakeholder-integration, value-based dialogues as well as corresponding forms of institutionalization (e.g., codices, standards or ethical management systems located on an organizational level), are related to one another as well as part of an

individual-ethical Integrity Management. This trend will be illustrated in the following by use of data won from a longitudinal study (1995, 2006, 2012), covering both perceptions uttered by executives as well as the country's general population.

CSR Implementation in Austrian Enterprises: Stakeholder's Marginal Relevance

The following elaborations refer to the results obtained from a cross-sectional comparison which was meant to determine the manifestations of value systems in both the general Austrian population and Austrian executives with regard to Corporate Social Responsibility from 1995 (Karmasin and Hrubic, 1996a; Karmasin and Hrubic, 1996b), 2006 (Karmasin et al., 2007) and 2012 (Karmasin and Weder, 2013; the collected data about scopes of responsibilities was first debated in Weder and Karmasin, 2013). In 1995, 180 Austrian executives were inquired, and in 2006 as well as 2012 150 managers were consulted respectively. Executives are described as people who hold leading positions, are authorized to issue directives, supervise specific areas of activity, and further possess decisional or particulate responsibilities. In all years under investigation, a representative sample of the Austrian general population (n = 1,000) was examined in parallel and with almost identical questionnaires. As a consequence, relevant alterations in the perception, reception and execution of individual-ethical and institutional-ethical responsibility can be unraveled, and have been included as part of this cross-sectional comparison examining both individual and public notions of CSR and its communicative implementation in Austrian enterprises.

CSR as Responsibility Management



Figure 2: Institutionalization of ethics in Austrian Enterprises; Managers n (1995) = 180, n (2006) = 150, n (2012) = 150, Values in %

In the present study, Corporate Social Responsibility has to be perceived as a concept that has to be differentiated from the rather general concept of sustainability, the ethical concept of social as well as shared responsibility. CSR is understood as responsibility management, describing the totality of all strategic processes and operative actions related to a business' acceptance of responsibility. On the one hand, corporate values become a firm's central resource; the ethical principles on which they are based mark the rules and regulations that are meant to be followed, influencing the behaviors and processes between interacting parties. On the other hand, behaviors themselves structure and re-structure values, with particular principles being modified or dissolved in the process of actual actions and dialogic exchanges. Thereby, the concept of CSR has to be distinguished from other basic principles of sustainability, (social) decision-making, and corporate engagement (Weder, 2012a; Weder, 2012b). Companies have numerous regulations and guidelines at their disposal to become socially, economically, and ecologically active (Karmasin and Weder, 2008) and most of them are already integrated into as well as implemented in Austrian business relations (see Figure 2). These numbers can be read in support of an integrated CSR management as suggested by Weder and Karmasin (in press).

As opposed to categories that are applied to strike a balance as to a firm's responsible actions, other indicators are used to measure organizational compliance. These involve specific guidelines for ethical actions and behaviors, codices, or mission statements; all of them qualify as self-imposed regulations which have already been commonly implemented in most Austrian companies. Even though the numbers have slightly decreased since 1995, in 2012 still 77 % of all managers interviewed stated that they would turn to ethical guidelines respectively their firm's mission statement as a points of reference. In late 2008, by comparison, a project initiated by the communication agency Pleon Publico in cooperation with the METIS Institute for Economic and Political Research, was conducted in Austria, modeling a project that had already been conducted in Germany by the Centre for Corporate Citizenship as well as in the United States by the Center for Corporate Citizenship Boston in 2007 (Pleon Publico, 2009: 19). The study's most relevant study findings suggested that responsibility has managed to rise to the status of a corporate task, which firms were willing to accept and invest in, usually in form of support for social engagements and projects. Hereby, no significant differences between enterprises of varying size and from different industrial backgrounds were uncovered (Pleon Publico, 2009: 19). Hence, the following questions arise: Who is involved in the design of such guidelines and mission statements? And who has the last say in decisional processes?

CSR as Managerial Task

The stakeholder approach implies a normative understanding of stakeholders and their relation with or to the organization (Stieb, 2008); in this context, stakeholders are described as constituents with

regard to corporate success, resulting in a cooperation with them as a logical consequence. In a study on how a firm's added value contributed to both organizational communication and sustainability management, the authors cite Lintemeier et al. (2013), who take up a long forgotten work by Mary Parker Follett (1918) and her definition of an organizational and leadership theory with normative-democratic roots. Therein, she conceptualizes the manager as a person who is called upon to integrate existing interests into the immediate organizational environment for the benefit of all parties involved and, thus, attributes the responsibility of stakeholder management directly to the managerial role. Indeed, since then the stakeholder approach has evolved into a management concept which puts forward the idea of responsiveness towards social developments and requirements (Carroll, 1996) and, again, allocates this central task to the manager or business executive (Freeman, 1984; Freeman, 1999; Frooman, 2010). Nonetheless, morality is not a completely individual characteristic, rather it is a characteristic of organizations as 'linguistic communities': "Then, the communicative value of morality must be judged as being higher than individual conviction" (Priddat, 2000: 136). In the following, the current results of a study on this (communicative) sense of managers' responsibility and the potentials and limits of the so-called 'managerial ethics' in the sense of the entrepreneurial creation of values will be presented.



Figure 3a: Decision-making power within the scope of CSR management; Managers n: 2012 = 150; Values in %

As a matter of fact, the survey results presented herein reveal that the power of ultimate decision formation in terms of CSR lies, as a matter of fact, with the manager, with 80 % of respondents indicating an executive affiliation. In respondents' views, owners respectively shareholders are, besides employees, also involved in decision-finding processes and are attributed a relevance of 57 % and 51 % respectively. Customers (28 %), NGOs (17 %) as well as politics (14 %) are perceived as being less influential in this context (see Figure 3a).

1 Results indicate that respondents in Germany and the United States believed to a lesser degree that most businesses were aware of the importance attributed to responsibility; yet, only a small number of firms had been able to implement it until that day.

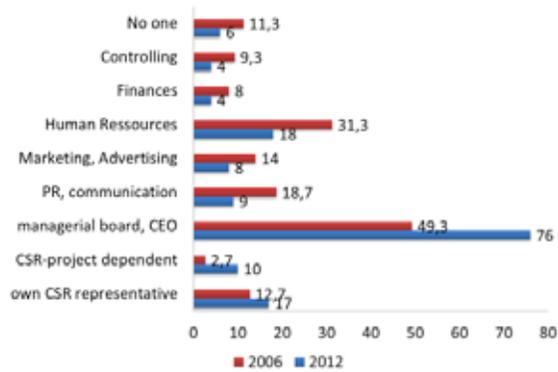


Figure 3b: (Departmental) allocation of person in charge of CSR; Managers n: 2012 = 150; Values in %

A more in-depth inquiry exhibits that the executive board is perceived as being in charge of the firm's overall CSR management. Thus, this poses the following question: Does responsibility management become "a personal choice issue for managers" (Deetz, 1999: 290)? Observed from an inside perspective, this question

can be answered with a clear "yes" (see Figure 3b).

As assumed beforehand, 76 % of all managers inquired assign responsibility to the executive board, and attribute this task in fewer instances to the responsibilities of the Human Resources department (18 %) or specific CSR departments and commissioners respectively (17 %). Communication or marketing departments are perceived to be less accountable for an enterprise's CSR management, reaching marginal numbers of only 9 % and 8 % respectively; see Figure 3b). An external perspective, nonetheless, uncovers that both soft skills and a more moral circumspection with regards to social and ecological concerns are less expected on behalf of the general public than (operational) readiness and leadership skills. Yet, 90 % of the public demands specific knowledge from managers together with extensive general knowledge.

This contradiction highlights an area of tension characteristic of the individual-ethical notion of "holding responsibility", and the expectations uttered by the outside corporate (stakeholder-)environment. Thereby, individual-ethical responsibility alludes to an acting position which presupposes "a willingness to accept responsibility" and "influences a person's normative convictions and beliefs in terms of their actions" (Bierhoff, 2000: 19). Individual-ethical responsibility is constituted of both the willingness to do right by social addressees and also presupposes personal engagement; in addition, it implies the usage of fair means and compliance with social rules and regulations. But who is in charge of issuing these regulations? Do they have to be, as might be suspected on grounds of the above-mentioned results, self-developed by managers or do they have to be institutionalized as part of an enterprise's social-ethical framework? Is a person occupying a leadership position responsible for the implementation of these regulations or solely for the organization of these rules? And which standards are these individual-ethical actions based on?

Missing regulation-guidelines for individual-ethical action

Generally, managers state that it is easier to work ethically and morally correct nowadays in a workplace setting than in was in the past (see Figure 4a). The number of managers inquired, who claim to be faced with moral and ethical conflicts in their professional lives on a regular basis, has

drastically decreased over the past years: while in 1995, 74 % of all respondents felt pressured to break their moral and ethical standards, only 50 % felt that way in 2006, respectively less than 30 % (28 %) in 2012. Correspondingly, the number of people never running foul of their own consciousness has increased reversely: in 1995, only 23 % of Austrian managers reported not to feel pressured into any kind of conflict situation as compared against roughly 50 % in 2006 and 71 % in 2012.

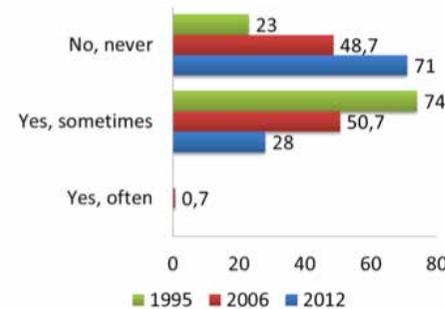


Figure 4a: Moral conflicts in a workplace setting; Managers n (1995) = 180, n (2006) = 150, n (2012) = 150, Values in %

When contrasted with data won from the general public's survey (see Figure 4b), it becomes obvious that people occupying a leading position are encountering moral conflicts and ethical dilemmas almost as equally often as general public respondents, who hardly perceive themselves to be in desperate straits (70 % of all cases).

themselves to be in desperate straits (70 % of all cases).

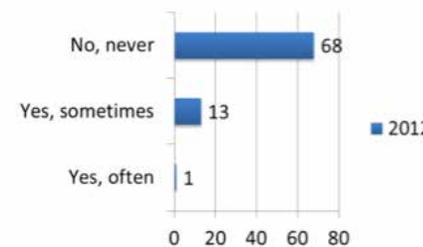


Figure 4b: Moral conflicts in a workplace setting; General population n (2012) = 1,000, Values in %

For an enterprise's individual-ethical behavior, these results suggest a current acceptance of dealing with (a) the idea of responsibility as well as (b) potential ways of and obstacles to its implementation, both on an individual-ethical and institutional-ethical level. At present, engaging in ethical business practices is not

regarded as inconvenient anymore; rather it is just that way (see Figure 5a).

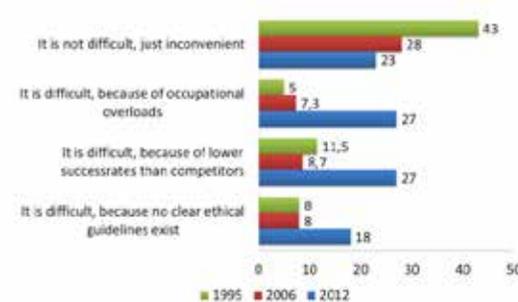


Figure 5a: Constraints of responsibility management; Managers n (1995) = 180, n (2006) = 150, n (2012) = 150, Values in %

Nonetheless, some things have changed: boundaries have shifted, and both occupational stress and pressure to succeed have increased. Reasons for this transformation are to be found in the developments leading up to the media

and information society and accompanying trends, such as an ever-increasing attention span on behalf of stakeholders; these and can be traced back to both the media and consumers alike. Enterprises' often postulated and also conceptualized 'quasi-public' status (Dyllick, 1992) does thus not only lead to an enhanced networking effort on part of organizations, especially with their numerous stakeholders, but also pressure is piled up, as enterprises have to monitor present-day developments and trends together with reactions on part of other market players in order to respond in appropriate ways. In line with this argumentation, the managers interviewed report that it is difficult for them to realize ethical principles and value-oriented approaches in the professional domain – particularly on grounds of a vocational overload and competitive pressure respectively (indicated by 27 % of all interviewees in 2012; see Figure 5a). A similar trend can be observed for the general public, who – in line with managers' responses – criticizes the lack of clear ethical guidelines (see Figures 5a and 5b).

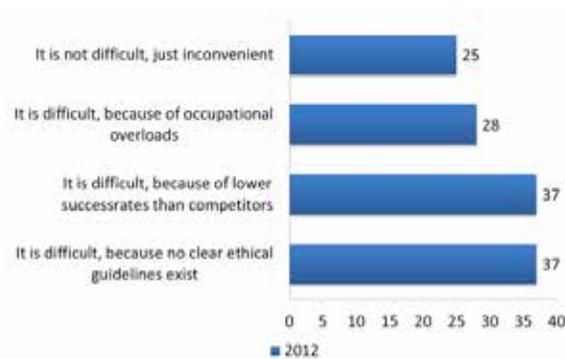


Figure 5b: Constraints of responsibility management; general public n (2012), Values in %

the managers interviewed within the last 20 years (from 8 to 18 %; see Figure 5a). Yet, this result comes as a surprise against the reason that positive developments have led to more means and instruments of implementing ethical values into business practices: here, a significant increase in codices, guidelines and corresponding programs of action in the areas of, e.g. diversity or social employee engagement, can be noted.



Figure 6: Desired CSR and sustainability standards; Managers n (1995) = 180, n (2006) = 150, n (2012) = 150, Values in %

The critique of missing guidelines thus leaves to wonder this idea's potential explanations. On the one hand, both ethical codices and mission statements have already been established and integrated into enterprises' guidelines and policies in such a way that they basically do neither 'stand out

anymore' nor are they perceived as 'specific' ethical guidelines; on the other hand, they are hardly directed towards individual-ethical behavior as, besides industry standards, requests for more binding and compulsory management and/or industry standards ('institution-ethical standards') are increasingly uttered by the managers surveyed (see Figure 6).

Drawing parallels to the idea of Corporate Governance, which is closely linked to discussions about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the concept especially takes on greater significance as cases of entrepreneurial mismanagement (e.g., the debate on managers' salaries) and misconduct are on the rise and receive more in-depth coverage by the media, attributing a higher degree of importance to CSR values such as transparency (for example, see Grewe and Löffler, 2005). Again, this alludes to managers' specific roles in this context, despite the fact that Integrity Management is characterized by a lack of structural coverage at the same time. Hence, which conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the present study results?

Conclusion: Conceptualizing Stakeholdermanagement as Responsibility Management

Responsible Stakeholder management covers, as suggested by theory, (a) a weighing and integration of different stakes, generated by society, politics, academia as well as the economy and (b) a reciprocal alignment of these stakes with business objectives, rendering stakeholder management into a sustainable relationship management approach (Weder and Karmasin, in press). Taking this assumption as a starting point, the authors developed the hypothesis that companies' relationship management is produced and reproduced communicatively (Karmasin and Weder, 2008; Karmasin and Weder, 2013; Weder and Karmasin 2009, Weder and Karmasin 2013) on both an individual-ethical and an institutional-ethical level. Hence, in the context of corporate (social) responsibility management, negotiation as well as communication processes with stakeholders,

both on the inside and the outside, become increasingly important. The power to shape these processes and corresponding discourses is located at the organizational center, where it lies with the management to be precise. At the same time, individual responsibility is located at the organizational core and serves as a precondition for the collective, the organization as a system per se. It is not until then that the separately conceptualized dynamics of individual-ethical and institutional-ethical can act in concert to reach their full potential in the context of 'social responsibility', stakeholder communication and relationship management. According to Wieland (2004: 14), who backs up this notion, an individual's virtue, their moral beliefs and values are vital pillars of a successful value management. However, they do not suffice alone: in addition, an enterprise's moral quality as an organization, plus its processes, operations, incentives and control mechanisms need to be taken into account. These aspects are essential as, without organizational backup, individual moral soon reaches its boundaries, taking the form of overload and non-feasibility.

According to Maring (2001), responsibility is split up into two separate categories, namely action responsibility (i.e. the responsibility taken for an actual action) and consequence responsibility (i.e. the responsibility taken for an implemented action and its results respectively consequences). As part of a relationship management approach, responsibility is perceived to take place after an actual action is executed, making it justifying and ex post facto; on the other hand, responsibility also consists of a forward looking dimension, setting in before an action is carried out; as such, it is legitimizing, holding the potential to open up new fields of operation and expectation (Weder, 2012a; Weder, 2012b). These two orientations (legitimation and justification) follow different dynamics: while legitimization is interested in the a priori, justification pursues an ex-post dynamic (Weder, 2012a; Weder, 2012b). Both forms perceive individual-ethical and institutional-ethical behavior in active relation to concrete expectations, needs, and situational conditions, in which individual-ethical and institutional-ethical behaviors complement each other. Yet, individual-ethical responsibility presents the centerpiece of – and therefore, also the precondition for – collective (institutional-ethical) behavior. Only if taking the individual perspective into account, the organization (as a system) can fully unfold its dynamic with regards to its "social responsibility", also engaging in an active relationship management with its stakeholders. As rules and regulations are joint creations, developed at the intersection of the organization and stakeholders (Weder, 2007), communication becomes key, whereby internal and external values are combined (Jarolimek and Weder, in press). This approach is grounded in the assumption that stakeholders are interactive and engaged (Andriof et al., 2002), interested in participation and a dialogic exchange (Jarolimek and Weder, in press). A partnership approach is thus likely to enhance relationships lastingly: if stakeholders perceive their stakes to matter, their willingness to voice their concerns and interests increases, hence benefiting corporations (Krulis-Randa, 1989).

The here presented explanations are based on an extended concept of the enterprise, so that both the formal and the informal internal and external relationships between actors, constellations of actors and organizations could be included. In this context, the communication-scientific discussion of entrepreneurial value management is not only restricted to communication management, which purposely focuses on certain groups while blending out others, but it is also a legitimization attempt

within an environment of diverging (stakeholder) interests. Hereby, it is the management which is put in charge of organizing communicative processes, satisfying the communication of demands and their implementation into the publicly-exposed environment of the enterprise. The acceptance of stakeholder interests by the organization, but also the acceptance of the organization's communicative efforts by stakeholders themselves is a precondition for building up social capital (i.e., trust, reputation, network connection, integration into the organizational field etc.); thus, it is not only ethically necessary but also economically reasonable (Weder and Karmasin, in press). Unless communication is perceived as being legitimate and authentic, stakeholder groups will not accept institutional-ethical claims and start to integrate them into and/or accord them with their individual value systems. In order to succeed, companies have to change their communication's focus to achieve of a "reorientation of communication". This "reorientation" may be realized by ways of dialogic communication, starting with consensus-oriented business politics, processes of shared decision-making as well as a bi-directional, symmetrical and communicative balancing of interests (Ulrich, 2001). Organizational communication must thus be understood as a kind of extended stakeholder management, which comprises the acceptance of responsibility by way of communication (with) in, from and about organizations. Successful communication must be directly interwoven with the enterprise's strategy, for only then will it be able to contribute to an added value, and only then will communication management will become responsibility management.

The survey results reveal the following: it is not about either individual-ethical or institutional-ethical responsibility, but about both individual-ethical and institutional-ethical responsibility. An institutionalization of corporate responsibility management proves to be fruitful in order to assign responsibility a place within the organization and to open up consecutive scopes of responsibility. Study results suggest that individual-ethical responsibility is crucial for drawing a profit from these scopes. The data allows for the conclusion that both competencies are to be regarded as necessities: the organization of responsibility as well as the (symbolic) acceptance of responsibility on the part of managers. In other words: if managers are unable to accept responsibility, the best programs and strategies prove to be useless.

Both individual-ethical and institutional-ethical responsibility do, however, not serve as substitutes for each other; an individual readiness to be committed to and to adapt one's own actions to corresponding principles or even be led by these principles presents a necessary, yet not sufficient precondition for a realization and/or implementation of responsibility. That is the moment when organizational structures and incentive systems come into play, which have the ability to link these two independent domains. Nonetheless, they do not necessarily prove to be a formula for successful CSR concepts, strategies and business responsibility per se. Rather, the symbolic as well as the real commitment of an enterprise's stakeholders is required for CSR strategies to become effective. To conclude, it can thus be said that that the debate on businesses' ethical responsibility, sustainability and CSR needs to be extended to and complemented with an individual-ethical perspective and corresponding concepts.

The survey presented herein is far from being complete. Instead, one major limitation lies in the study design itself: surveys cannot provide strong evidence of cause and effects; in addition,

social desirability about the constituents of corporate and individual responsibility might have shaped interviewees responses. For future studies, also the access to the study population as well as Austria's very specific business structure – with more than 98 % of all businesses being small- or medium-sized – has to be considered. For deeper insights into the topic it would also be recommendable to include more qualitative approaches to individual decision-making in the CSR context and the influence of individual moral perceptions. Without question, companies' major challenges lie in responding to demands uttered by its numerous stakeholder groups, which do not only become more diverse but also more information-savvy, utilizing numerous channels when trying to find enabling information (Jarolimek and Weder, in press). If companies want to be successful in the long run, though, they have to ensure that all voices are heard and they do not neglect the numerous groups that make up society (Jarolimek and Weder, in press) for CSR is concerned with "the organization's status and activities with respect to its perceived social obligations" (Beckmann et al., 2006: 17).

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CSR Communication in the Energy Sector: Message Positioning and Ambiguity in Corporate Messages

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Abstract

Media ethical discourses on corporate behavior – both sustainably and ethically – are usually negatively connoted, focusing on (managerial) misconduct. Hardly, positive contributions are put at the center, making accusations of “greenwashing” sound rather warranted and legitimate. Recent years, however, have led to a change in argumentation, which has forced corporations to rethink their scope of activities. One crucial question directed towards companies today is as old as the idea of a company itself: “what is business for and what contribution does it make to society” (Crane et al., 2008: 3f.)? Apart from economic goals (i.e. increasing sales and revenues), enterprises have increasingly started to address social and environmental challenges (Karmasin and Weder, 2011). Today, more than ever, a company’s reputation in the global marketplace is related to its social as well as its financial performance. Recent research and marketplace polls have confirmed that a firm’s social actions play a significantly greater role than anticipated in forming consumer and stakeholder impressions of companies. In consequence, a purely economic form of operation does not suffice anymore; instead, firms have to align their economic efforts with social and environment concerns in order not to lose their ‘license to operate’.

CSR communication is also of relevance to the energy sector, whose motives has been often subject to public scrutiny and questioning. By use of a qualitative content analysis the project at hand intends to examine (1) how companies working in the energy sector position themselves with regard to their CSR activities in their online communication activities and (2) also intends to pinpoint potential

ambiguities in their communicative efforts (e.g., energy “saving”). When consciously communicating their CSR efforts, companies can frame their messages in a two-fold way: they can either justify their actions (usually after having been exposed as operating unethically; past orientation) or they can legitimize their actions in order to open up new fields of operation (future orientation; Karmasin and Weder, 2008; Weder, 2012). Moreover, argumentations can address two sorts of issues (ranging from extreme, moderate to neutral in emphasis): they can either center on economic topics or take an ethical/ anthropological stance.

For the content analysis put forward herein, online communication tools – comprising websites, online press releases as well as content for download, such as CSR/sustainability reports and promotional messages – were investigated along the dimensions introduced by Weder (2012). On the one hand, the challenges energy providers are facing when communicating CSR messages were examined; on the other hand, the contradictions likely to arise were thematized as well. Study results indicate that CSR has been implemented in most energy and energy-related industries; however, it receives varying degrees of attention and intensity.

Keywords: CSR communication, energy sector, framing, content analysis, qualitative study

CSR Communication in the Energy Sector: Message Positioning and Ambiguity in Corporate Messages

Introduction

Whether it concerns sustainable action or ethic behavior, media coverage regarding corporate behavior is usually characterized by negative reports that focuses on misconduct on behalf of executives. In only a few instances, positive messages become advertised; as such, corporate “greenwashing” or “whitewashing” have become widespread. It was not until recently that corporations have been forced to accept that besides economic reasonings, they also do have a moral obligation. For this exact reason, they have been called upon to reflect upon a core question: “What is business for and what contribution does it make to society” (Crane et al., 2008: 3f.)? The necessity to enrich their corporate operations with some social and environmental elements poses some challenges to companies throughout industries (Karmasin and Weder, 2011). Hence, their corporate reputation is nourished by their performances on both the business and social/ environmental continuum. In consequence, firms have to started to link their economic endeavors with social and environment concerns in order not to lose their ‘license to operate’.

With CSR rising to mainstream relevance, the role of communication must not be left out of sight. In order to not only to trigger favorable response on behalf of the public and secure its social position, firms have to demonstrate the impact they make while also consciously addressing the impact they make communicatively (Etter and Fieseler, 2011). Over the years, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been risen in relevance, perceived as “the continuing commitment by business to contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life

of the workforce and their families as well as of the community and society at large” (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 1998). CSR goes beyond compliance with legal regulations and is completely voluntary. As such, it allows firms to present themselves in a favorable light who announce support for projects out of their own accord. In the long run, CSR communication is said to pay off, positively influencing stakeholder responses (European Commission, 2001).

The relevance of CSR communication has also been pointed out by numerous research and marketplace polls, which confirmed a firm’s social engagements to influence consumer and stakeholder impressions of companies (for instance, see Nielsen, 2014 or Cone Communications, 2015). CSR has even come to be perceived as a response to social expectations (Karmasin and Weder, 2011). At the same time, public expectations mandate companies to thematize their obligations communicatively. Breitbarth and colleagues (2009: 251) emphasize that communication “is a central element of the CSR concept. This is because CSR requires the companies and its respective managers to connect and build favorable relationships with internal and external stakeholders”. Communication of social/environmental efforts can then aid enterprises in establishing a transparency of and legitimacy for their business endeavors (Coombs and Holladay, 2013). Even though CSR communication is often reported to be abused, claimed to be a sole means to improve a corporation’s image and reputation without showing any visible proof of effects (Vidaver-Cohen and Bronn, 2008), CSR has nonetheless become a must over the past years (Ihlen et al., 2011), awarding enterprises the opportunity to generate attention for their corporate and social activities (ter Hoeven and Verhoeven, 2013).

Due to the rise of the Internet, enterprises are “singing with the window open now” (Karp 2010). This has led a pseudo panoptic to emerge (Coombs and Holladay, 2003), literally forcing companies to disclose their corporate initiatives and voluntary civic engagements on a regular basis. With this transparency, also the amount of information available has grown surpassingly: besides print brochures, online communication allows firms to provide tailored materials: “Online, organizations are offering a set of tailored or even personalized tools that can include reports, brochures, leaflets, slides, presentations, podcasts, and video clips for example, for each stakeholder, which can be downloaded” (Capriotti, 2011).

Three central criteria have to be fulfilled in order for firms to be perceived as good and responsible corporate citizens (Raupp et al., 2011): CSR activities have to be (1) connected to the firm’s core business, (2) they have to be implemented on a voluntary basis, and (3) they need to be concerned with securing the preservation of resources. Jarolimek (2014: 22) stresses that the “actions reported have [...] a clear connection to the organization’s activities, but are not their objective”. As such, they can take a variety of forms, such as public communication campaigns in print magazines, on corporate websites, sustainability reports or social balance sheets (Schultz, 2011, Jarolimek, 2014). Only if CSR communication incorporates all three aspects, these communicative measures can create a competitive advantage (Gardberg and Grombrun, 2006).

Yet, effective CSR communication depends on how a corporation is perceived by its stakeholders, rendering communication a central tool in the process of creating favourable relations (Clarkson, 1995, Fombrun et al., 2000, Brammer and Pavelin, 2004). Thereby, CSR communication requires

specific communicative measures on the one hand and responsible communication on the other hand (Karmasin and Litschka, 2012). Only if enterprises embrace CSR through communication – as part of their Corporate Communicative Responsibility (CCR) – the traditional triple-bottom-line of CSR will become a quadruple-bottom-line of CSR (Karmasin and Weder, 2008).

Communication about Energy = Energy Communication

Energy communication refers to all communicative activities on behalf of energy suppliers and is part of the communication management that addresses issues like energy production and supply (Stehle and Krueger, 2010). Just like CSR has risen in importance over the past years, so has communication in the energy sector. Issues that have received the most importance are energy supply, prices, new and alternative forms of energy as well as the environmental problems that are associated with the energy industry. Reasons for energy providers to engage in sustainable and social behaviors are numerous and cover three communicative areas: reputation management (Hermann, 2012), development of a unique selling proposition for the energy sector, and a way of paving the arena and legitimizing business operations for energy providers (Lange, 2008).

Communication itself is directed at a number of stakeholder, with political parties, the media and civil society being the most important ones (Stehle and Krueger, 2010). For energy suppliers, communication with their diverse publics and stakeholders is of utmost importance (Mikulaschek 2012) since this industry relies on public approval far more than related sectors. For this reason, firms operating in the energy sector have to make sure not to jeopardize their position as responsible actors and sustainable entities; thus, they are called upon to repeatedly stress their contribution to sustainable developments in their communications.

Energy as an issue is crucial to securing public supply; yet, it also is intrusive to the environment, making it a highly controversial issue (Lehmann, 2013; Schneidewind and Rehm, 2010). Hence, it is absolutely necessary for energy providers to address CSR communicatively (Lehmann, 2013; Prexl, 2010). Energy providers’ business activities are often met with public disapproval, rendering CSR a useful strategy to counteract distrust and accusations of unsound business practices by creating transparency (Hermann, 2012). In order to appear authentic, initiatives should be aligned with their core business practices, underlining energy suppliers’ ecological responsibility (Raupp et al., 2011).

Framing CSR Messages

When looking at the literature on CSR and sustainability, two notions of corporate responsibility dominate the field. They can be classified as justifying communication on the one hand and legitimizing communication on the other hand.

Justification usually arises once irresponsible and unethical behavior has led companies to lose their credibility. In this context, past corporate actions are scrutinized in detail (Weder, 2012)

Legitimization is predominantly utilized to open up new fields of operation, creating favorable impressions in consumers’ minds (Ulrich, 2001; Dyllick, 1989; Raupp et al., 2011; Schmidt and Tropp, 2009; Karmasin and Weder, 2008; May et al., 2007).

Figure 1 illustrates how these two notions of CSR communication can be visually conceptualized:

while justifying CSR communication thematizes past experiences, legitimizing CSR communication focuses on future endeavors (Weder, 2012).

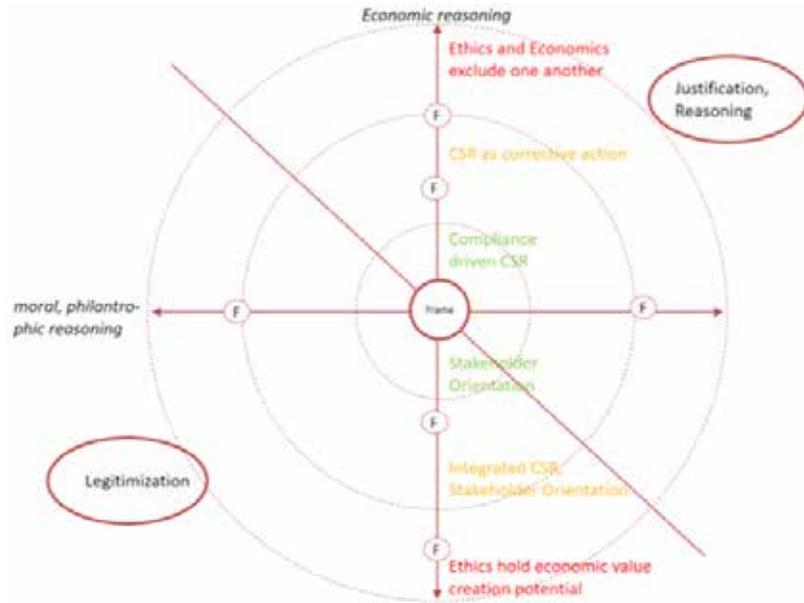


Figure 1: CSR Positionings (Weder, 2012)

In addition, CSR messages can be sub-divided into two strands of argumentation: on the one hand, arguments can be of economic nature, while, on the other hand, they can be seen as ethical or philanthropic in their argumentation. Depending on which aspects are emphasized to varying degrees in corporate messages, positionings can be either extreme (normative or idealistic), moderate or neutral. Table 1 offers a detailed overview of the different argumentations.

POSITION	EXTREME (NORMATIVE, IDEALISTIC)		MODERATE		NEUTRAL	
LINE OF REASONING	JUSTIFYING	LEGITIMIZING	JUSTIFYING	LEGITIMIZING	JUSTIFYING	LEGITIMIZING
CONT. I: economic reasoning	<i>Ethics and Economics exclude one another</i> Ethics and the logics of entrepreneurship are not compatible; hence, ethics come at too high of a cost for entrepreneurs.	<i>Ethics as economic value creation potential</i> Ethics lead to a more sustainable economic performance; holistic CSR (CSR + economic benefit)	<i>CSR as corrective action</i> Economic and NP aspects mix; CSR as a political task.	<i>Integrated CSR</i> Strategically integrated into all organizational areas; high degree of institutionalization.	<i>Compliance-driven CSR</i> CSR as part of a legal agenda; performance of duties.	<i>Stakeholder orientation</i> CSR increases future developments; outer political influence; problem: identification of stakeholder interests.
CONT. II: moral, philanthropic reasoning	<i>Save the world</i> Topics of worldwide interest are addressed communicatively. Savior-Image, no institutionalization.	<i>Illusion</i> CSR as anti-economic; anti-politics ideal, no institutionalization.	<i>Doing good</i> CSR as financial capital and beyond; firms are given decisional freedom; partial institutionalization.	<i>PR strategy</i> Communicative approach to increase corporate reputation. Contradiction between CSR rhetoric and actual behavior. „mocking“ institutionalization.	<i>Philanthropic CSR</i> Non-economic utilization of profits; minor institutionalization.	<i>Instrumentalization</i> Integration of ethical, social and economic reasonings if ROI and reputation can be improved.

Figure 2: CSR Frames (Weder, 2012)

As enterprises need to be perceived as actors that are engaging in a constant exchange and dialogue with the public, they have to accept responsibility for their corporate actions (Weder 2012). The motivation to take up CSR communication is, thereby, dualistic: from an altruistic perspective, companies proclaim their support for social and environmental projects out of their own initiative and without self-interest; they just want to “do good”. From an instrumental perspective, CSR is adopted as companies perceive CSR to afford them with a competitive advantage, positively influencing their profits (Etter and Fieseler, 2011).

CSR Communication on the Internet

“Today, the internet is the primary medium for firms operating in the international arena to communicate their practices” (Bronn, 2004: 107). While this communication channel presents corporations with a wide variety of choice, special attention should be given to corporate websites (Kotler and Lee, 2005), which “are perceived as more appropriate when communicating CSR compared to corporate CSR campaigns and other persuasive forms of communication” (Podnar, 2008: 77). Hence, these websites present ideal communication channels to create favorable images in consumers’ minds, allowing companies to disclose details on corporate projects and engage in a permanent stakeholder dialogue (Hooghiemstra, 2000; Patten, 2002; Pollach, 2003).

Also being recommended by practitioners and academics around the globe, “research suggests that companies around the world use their websites to demonstrate their CSR behaviors” (Basil and Erlandson, 2008: 125). Through websites, communication is easily accessible to the wider public, awarding firms to provide customers quick access to detailed information on CSR projects and initiatives (Moreno and Capriotti, 2009). On Websites, firms are enabled to publicly advertise

their projects; for consumers, websites are a useful point of reference, giving them the possibility to evaluate and question corporate initiatives (Bulman, 2008). Thus, websites have become the most important platform for sustainable communication (Ingenhoff and Kölling, 2011). Consequently, firms are called upon to engage in a permanent dialogue and communicative exchange with the public. Thereby, the Internet is of advantage for it is not only cost-efficient but also allows for uncensored and tailored communication with diverse audiences (Jarolimek and Raupp, 2011). This also holds true for the energy sector.

Method

The paper will set out to answer the following research question:

Which potentials and boundaries does CSR communication afford energy providers with?

This question will be answered by the following three sub-questions:

What do energy suppliers perceive as sustainable or socially responsible?

How do they address their social and sustainable engagements communicatively (both textually and visually)?

Inasmuch are those efforts related to their core business activities?

In order to provide answers to these questions, a website analysis was conducted (Burgess and Bingley, 2007; Parker et al., 2010). More precisely, energy providers' sustainability/CSR sections were analyzed in detail in order to answer the previously introduced research questions. In addition to the online content, also material for download and press releases (covering the period from January to April 2013) will be included in the corpus.

First, the website will be analyzed in terms of numerous structural components, covering both textual and visual elements. It looks at the clarity of the information presented, its comprehensibility as well as the congruence in the information's presentation. As such, it is also interested in the colors and textual styles of presentation, further paying attention the emotionalization the topic receives.

It is particularly the visual stimuli that hold the potential to trigger favorable responses: CSR respectively sustainability is usually associated with natural landscapes, emphasizing the concept's ecological dimension. Hence, magical and idealistic places are predominantly featured, offering recipients a place to escape. At the same time, these places emphasize a re-consideration to core values and principles, with which companies want to make their initiatives appear more authentic. Thereby, also natural colors - shades of blue and green - are used to underline the natural connection. In some cases, they are even integrated into the product name, such as VW's BlueMotion, Mercedes' BlueTec or BMW's Electric Blue, alluding to concepts such as freedom, air and clarity. Nonetheless, a superficial visual analysis is insufficient. In addition to dominant visuals, also peripheral elements have a story to tell (Kreeb and Wiest, 2008). Usually, these components are strategically integrated to contribute to a cohesive whole - if emotionalized, these elements can positively influence consumers' perceptions.

Apart from visual appearances (covering type faces, colors and stylistic elements), website content itself will be looked at in detail. The analysis is specifically concerned with determining the content's

credibility, degree of information, authenticity, attractiveness, (product) relevance, (product) preference, preservation etc. Special attention will be given to the ways through which companies want to guarantee authenticity and credibility - normally, by establishing relations to their core business activities. The arguments introduced on behalf of firms should, therefore, be reasonable, rational and comprehensible.

Mapping out how firms perceive the area of sustainability and CSR, it becomes also vital to have a look at the terms and labels used in this context. Potential concepts are CSR, CR, Corporate Citizenship, Corporate Governance, Sustainability etc. Moreover, the integration of the topic into the overall website will be discussed (e.g., separate tab vs. subcategory). After establishing the trend, the overall CSR positioning (with a focus on economical, ecological or social aspects) will be scrutinized and will be determined by listing individual projects and initiatives, before finally addressing the firm's overall positioning and framing strategy with regards to CSR.

Case Studies

Energy providers present a special case for their business activities require them to directly utilize scarce resources for producing their main product - energy. Hence, their every activities are closely watched by the government as well as the general public. In addition, energy suppliers have to face another challenge: even though they are doing business domestically, they are only servicing their national (Austrian) market. This focus is very narrow, though: since most companies engage in some kind of cross-border or international business endeavors, they are pressured to legitimize and justify their actions. Against this background, the disclosure of information regarding CSR is of utmost importance - yet, not an easy one.

In the following, online CSR activities by three selected Austrian energy providers (one national and two local firms) will be elaborated on in depth. Their activities will, however, not be evaluated per se but the present study rather wants to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of the companies' communicative activities, also uncovering potential conditions in the process.

Case Study 1: EVN

The EVN (Energieverbund Niederösterreich; engl.: Energy Network Lower Austria) is an Austrian energy supplier operating throughout Europe. In addition to offering energy-related products like gas, water, and thermal heat, its products also comprise effluent disposal, recycling and telecommunication and cable-TV services (EVN, 2013).

Website Analysis

The Lower Austrian energy supplier stresses its CSR projects to voluntarily implemented, bearing sustainable developments in mind - these can only be achieved when pursued on a continuous basis and with clear objectives and mind: "For the EVN, CSR means making a voluntary contribution to sustainable development. We perceive CSR as a continuous process that is linked to all corporate

activities and is based on clear objectives¹“ (EVN, 2013). Sustainability receives its own tab at the EVN-Website, which is titled „Verantwortung“ (engl. Responsibility). Even though this term is given preference, more labels are used in the different subsections. The EVN’s “CSR-Strategy” (as the section header is titled) is sub-divided into four sections: (1) Economy, (2) Ecology, (3) Employees, and (4) Society. In the economy section, business numbers are put at the center; hence, textual information falls short. Instead, short statements are put forward without referring to actual projects. Covering numerous areas, such as recycling and climate protection, the ecology section paints a more concrete picture in listing and describing actual projects. This section even sets out to draw in numerous stakeholder groups, such as customers, employees, suppliers as well as society at large. Information is also key in the employee section, where service and employee education come first. In this context, CSR serves a recruiting tool and is linked to concrete projects. Messages are particularly addressing present and prospective employees. The society section features community and social projects, as well as support for neighbors. In addition, co-operations and CSR memberships are stressed. Throughout the section, the terms sustainability and Corporate Governance are also employed, yet very selectively. Even though it appears as if the different pillars of CSR as perceived as equally relevant at first sight, a clear ecological focus prevails upon further and in-depth examination. Stressing this aspect might be an obvious choice, given the relevance of natural resources to energy suppliers’ core business activities (Raupp et al., 2011). In general, the EVN’s CSR communication appears to be professionally implemented. The company lists diverse activities to position itself as a responsible citizen to the outside world (Fembek, 2012), such as respACT and Global Compact memberships, a TRIGOS certificate (awarded for its holistic CSR concept), an annual CSR report (from 2001 onwards), together with numerous standards (ISO 14.001, ISO 9.001, and EMAS). The topics are treated rather neutral, leaving emotional aspects out of sight. CSR aspects are described in detail, with some information even being outsourced to external sites. Communication is kept sterile and clean, lacking creativity and innovation.

Visual Analysis

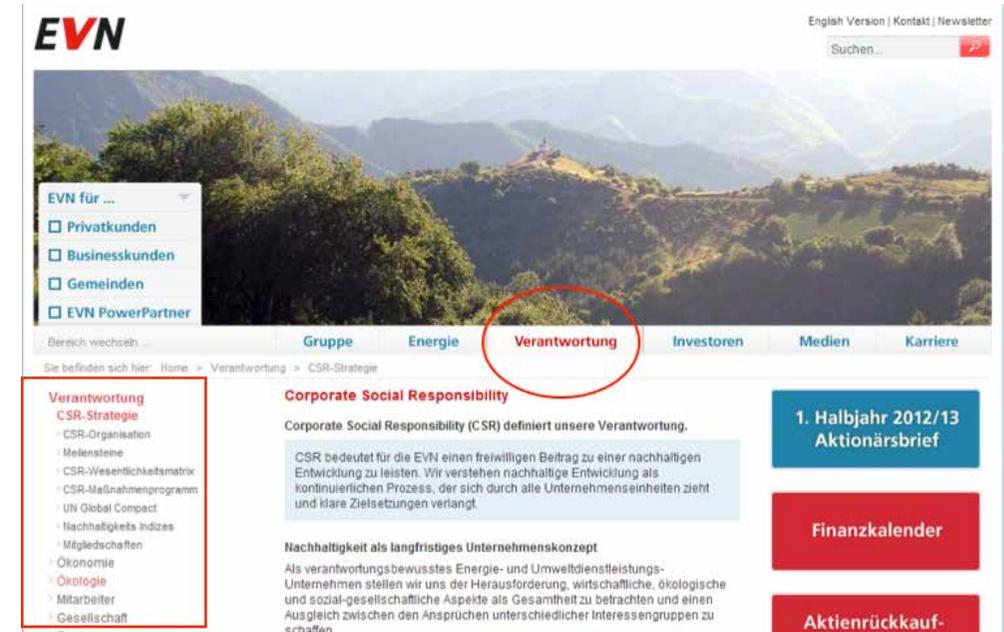


Figure 3: EVN website (textual and visual components)

Visually, CSR topics are not supported by images; the only visual that is repeatedly featured is the section’s banner. Depending on which section is selected, a different banner image appears. For the Sustainability section, a visual featuring a natural landscape was chosen (see Figure 3). The visual depicts a mountain scenery, centering on a hill on which a small building (presumably a church) is located. Emotional stimuli or humans are completely absent from the visual. It is kept discreet as the colors are dimmed. Overall, it is an unspectacular staging that does not catch the viewers’ eyes. The banner itself does support the textual elements of the sustainability section. Yet, the colors’ missing intensity and the image’s lacking depth raise some questions. Even though they clearly match the firm’s CSR initiatives, the depiction of a church presupposes a rather conservative approach to CSR; likewise, by focusing on the church as the visual’s center piece, the EVN might wish to position itself as a moral instance. Was this position chosen on purpose to receive heightened degrees of trust? The landscape itself mirrors the scenery of Lower Austria and thus stresses a regional rooting; but as a clear horizon cannot be made out and humans are completely missing, the representation becomes unfocused. If transferred to the EVN’s CSR concept, this association proves to be dangerous, rendering sustainability a topic that is addressed – but not emotionalized.

1 “CSR bedeutet für die EVN einen freiwilligen Beitrag zu einer nachhaltigen Entwicklung zu leisten. Wir verstehen nachhaltige Entwicklung als kontinuierlichen Prozess, der sich durch alle Unternehmenseinheiten zieht und klare Zielsetzungen verlangt”.

Press Releases

Besides the information retrieved from the CSR section, online press releases were collected over a four months period of time. Messages were grouped into three categories: (1) Link to core business without CSR reference (CB), (2) Link to core business with CSR reference (CB+CSR), and (3) No link to core business but clear CSR reference (CSR). The messages were retrieved from the EVN news archive and were grouped into the three categories.

In total, 15 press releases were published, of which 6 did not exceed the EVN's business activities. They announced important business news and projects, without touching the topic of CSR in any way. In addition, 4 announcements tackled both the company's core business activities, while not missing to link them to the firm's CSR activities, positioning the EVN as a good corporate citizen. Besides, 5 messages only featured CSR topics without linking them back to corporate operations² (see Figure 4). Overall, it can be said that the EVN knows how to utilize communication to position itself as a reliable and responsible corporate actor, shaping its communication with the outside world.

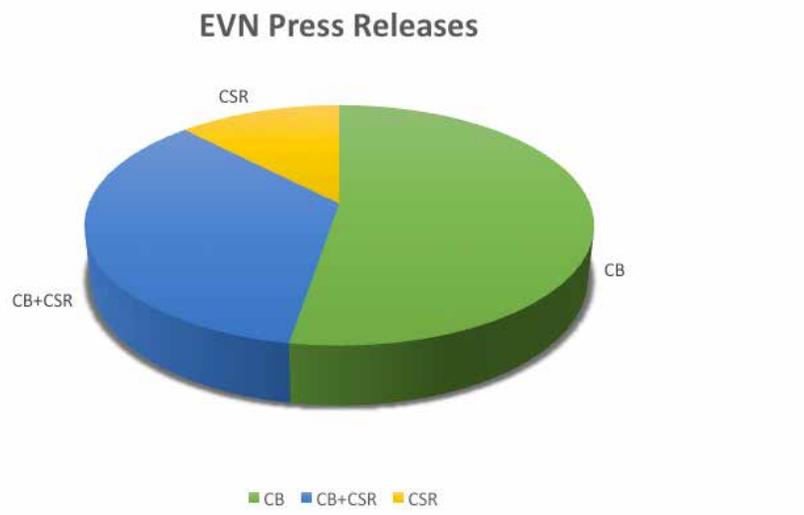


Figure 4: EVN Press Releases by Category

Contradictions

Even though the EVN appears to be very eager to disclose and communicate its CSR activities, the company's efforts are characterized by emptiness and a lack of clear vision. The firm's core business activities are hardly thematized, let alone in connection with the EVN's social and environmental

efforts. External communication activities mostly comprise a listing of projects, initiatives, certificates and awards but how these were obtained is hardly disclosed. Topics only touch CSR on the surface but do not comprise any of relevance to the energy sector. Hence, credibility of CSR communication is at stake.

Case Study 2: KELAG

Future concerns regarding economic, ecologic and social developments are summarized in the Kelag's Nachhaltigkeit (engl. Sustainability) section. "For the Kelag, sustainability comprises the integrated consideration of economic, ecologic and social concerns³" (Kelag, 2013a). In order to guarantee a lasting success, the company is eager to act as an "active partner" for its stakeholders, emphasizing it with phrases like "high appreciation of values", "social and environmental contribution" as well as "responsibility for future generations" (Kelag, 2013a). Thereby, the Kelag follows an ethical codex together with its own corporate compliance guidelines. "The Kelag has decided to bundle all existing resources and increase its communicative efforts with regards to implementing more CSR projects. This has resulted in the launch of the company-wide CSR program in late 2010⁴" (Kelag, 2013a).

Website Analysis

The Kelag's sustainability section is not very prominently placed. Originally listed as part the of the ABOUT US section, the company's concern with sustainability was not obvious at first sight. During the survey period, however, a more dominant and eye-catching position – as part of the main menu – was chosen, where sustainability is featured not only textually but also visually. Design-wise, the section is still kept very simple: visuals are reduced to a minimum, the sustainability report – which is also available for download in pdf-form – is depicted in small size. Also, the color scheme chosen for this section is not attract much attention, since it mirrors the Kelag's corporate color code (green). Hence, this suggests that the topic is seen more as a corporate endeavor than a separate topic that needs to be tackled in detail.

Labeled as a „value-based economic growth and innovation strategy“, the Kelag's sustainability program puts emphasis on four selected areas: (1) company and employees, (2) product and innovation, (3) environment and climate protection, and (4) region and society.

The company and employees section thematizes current and future trends; besides efforts to maintain economic stability, also ROIs and equity ratios are listed. Other topics in this section concern corporate approaches to demographic changes as well as diversity programs. With regard to sustainable developments, green IT and green HR are listed as current projects, while as part

³ "Die Kelag versteht unter Nachhaltigkeit die integrierte Betrachtungsweise von wirtschaftlichen, ökologischen und sozialen Belangen".

⁴ "Mit dem Ziel, bereits vorhandene Aktivitäten zu bündeln und besser kommunizieren zu können sowie weitere Nachhaltigkeitsmaßnahmen in verschiedenen Bereichen aufzugreifen, wurde Ende 2010 ein konzernweites Nachhaltigkeitsprogramm gestartet".

² A list containing the titles of news releases can be found in the Appendix.

of the “paperless Kelag”, the company sets out to reduce its overall paper consumption (Kelag, 2013a).

In terms of products and innovation, the Kelag puts a clear focus on energy production and the renovation of its corporate headquarters. It also stresses its efforts to expand existing projects concerned with smart technologies and E-mobility (e.g., by offering advanced electronic filling and/or more charging stations; Kelag, 2013a).

As part of its environmental and climate protection efforts – and while stressing the link to its core business – the Carinthian energy supplier announces its increasing investments in renewable energy, bio diversity, energy efficiency and sustainable energy production. Similar measures are taken with regards to thermal production, which is listed alongside with the implementation of an environmental management system (Kelag, 2013a).

Focusing on regional and social questions, which are also addressed in their extensive GENERATION KLIMASCHUTZ campaign (see next paragraph on visual analysis), an awareness for environmental and climate-related concerns is meant to be created. For this reason, the company praises its regional ties and supply chain, exceeding legal requirements in doing so. This is also backed by the Kelag’s membership in numerous sustainable associations. Furthermore, the company is also interested in hearing from its numerous stakeholders and, therefore, is hosting an annual stakeholder meeting (Kelag, 2013a).

Projects in support of each pillar are given in both graphic and tabular form, making the website representation rather static and boring. The projects are simply listed, with little details offered about their implementation and/or success. However, the company could exploit the website’s interactive potential by linking up the different sub-pages and visually demonstrating their economic and social impact – especially with regards to its extensive GENERATION KLIMASCHUTZ project, which will be discussed next.

Visual Analysis

For years, the Kelag has eagerly thematized the topic of climate change and protection; over the years, the project’s tag line “Verändern wir die Zukunft. Jetzt.” (engl.: Let’s change the future. Now.) has become associated with the regional energy supplier. The campaign was launched in 2010 and pushes the production of clean energy, while at the same time familiarizing society with means of how to reduce their energy consumption. This aspect is also taken up by the campaign which is disseminated across a variety of channels (e.g., print, TV, radio, online).

Albeit the Kelag’s sustainability section as well as its report are kept rather simple, this does not apply to the company’s campaign, which is very diversified. The following topics are explicitly addressed:

- Climate Change and its Consequences
- Energy Conservation
- Renewable Energy
- Electro Mobility
- Thermal Insulation and energy preservation
- District Heating

- A Look Behind the Plug
- Smart Home Living
- Future Energy Consumption (Kelag, 2013b)



Figure 5: Sample posters of the Kelag’s promotional campaign GENERATION KLIMASCHUTZ (2013)

Especially two promotional posters capture the gist of the overall message (see Figure 5). Both feature a child in front of a natural landmark: a boy is portrayed as sitting on top of a natural spring, while the girl is shown against the background of a waterfall. The scenery has most likely been chosen on purpose, establishing a clear connection to the firm’s core business and whose energy production is based on natural resources. Thereby, clear distinctions between the Kelag and the EVN become obvious, as the prior seems to be making a conscious effort to connect its sustainable efforts to its main operations and resources. The references are, however, not only made visually, but also verbally: “natural spring”, “thermal heat pump”, “air”, “soil”, “water”, “clean”, “sustainable energy” – these are all labels that are commonly used throughout the whole campaign (Kelag, 2013c). The campaign messages are also emotionalized: by depicting a child – either a boy or a girl – sustainability is seen as synonymous with the “future generation” and, thus, affects everyone. An identification with the two protagonists should thus appeal to message recipients and encourage them to take action. The personalization of the slogan – which includes a “we” reference – should underline this call for engagement. Besides the two children representing the “future” generation, the purposeful adoption of the word as part of the campaign title hints at the Kelag’s long-term orientation.

Press Releases

While the Kelag's tackling of sustainable issues – especially as part of its GENERATION KLIMASCHUTZ campaign – can be described as successful, the company's press releases are less sustainability-focused. Over the 4 months survey period, 10 news stories were released online. Half of them (5 press releases) were purely economic in focus, thematizing, for instance, the enterprise's sales volumes. Two additional stories included both economic and sustainable components, while the remaining three releases solely focused on sustainable aspects but did not connect these issues with the Kelag's core business. So while the Carinthian energy supplier might have launched a credible and far-reaching campaign, its efforts remain unnoticed in the press-release section (see Figure 6).

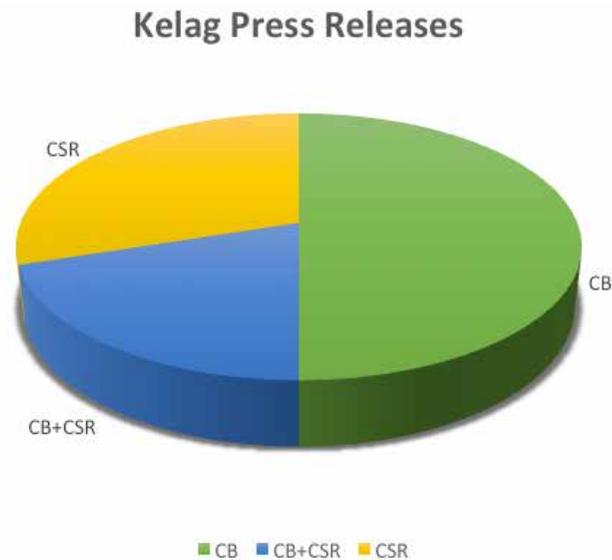


Figure 6: Kelag Press Releases by Category

Contradictions

Finally, the contradictions in the Kelag's CSR communication have to be addressed as well. These concern three areas in particular:

(1) CSR Communication: As previously introduced, the corporation's CSR activities are structured very simply and do not catch people's eyes immediately since they are aligned with the corporate color code. In the beginning stages of the survey period, sustainable topics were not prominently placed – over the time of study, however, a more noticeable spot on the cover page was assigned to this segment (coupled with a small visual). Yet, the Kelag fails to exploit the interactive potential of its website by presenting its content in a rather static manner – this might suggest that it has not

installed a professional CSR management yet.

(2) RWE Affiliation: The fact that the German RWE group, a highly criticized and debated energy supplier renowned to heavily invest in nuclear energy, holds shares as well as has stakes in the Carinthian energy supplier is obviously kept in disguise. The one instance, where its ownership is brought up, is a part of the Kelag's investment structure, which indicates a 49 % ownership on behalf of the RWE (Kelag, 2013d). Hence, the following question arises: who is in charge of the Kelag's CSR and the communication thereof?

(3) Energy Conservation: Even though the Kelag praises itself to be "Austria's cheapest energy and natural gas supplier", the topic of conservation receives extensive coverage as well. It is even integrated into the GENERATION KLIMASCHUTZ campaign. The motives for the company's concern might appear noble at first sight – nonetheless, the Kelag does not proclaim its support out of its own effort; the fact that these measures have to be announced as part of legal requirements is not publicly announced, thus contributing to the lacking authenticity of projects.

Case Study 3: OMV

The OMV is not only Austria's most important energy supplier, but also one of the most important European oil and gas corporations. It considers its main mission not to only respond to the increasing demand for energy in Austria and neighboring countries, but also to consider and maintain high environmental and social standards in the process (OMV, 2013a). The company addresses all its corporate engagement in its Nachhaltigkeit (engl.: "sustainability") section, where the topic receives wide coverage as part of the company's Resourcefulness initiative. By applying this wide-range approach, the OMV sets out to achieve "long-term growth in a responsible and sustainable manner" in order to "guarantee and secure the energy supply at present and in the future" (OMV, 2013a).

Website Analysis

Just like the EVN but very different from the Kelag, the Austrian energy provider dedicates a rather prominent positioning to its CSR efforts, which is listed in third place right after ABOUT US and FIELDS OF OPERATION. In its sustainability section, the OMV employs terms like "strong responsibility", "sustainable consciousness", "preservation" plus "sustainable action" (OMV, 2013a). In order to familiarize its customers respectively stakeholders with its Resourcefulness approach, it uses a comprehensible illustration (see Figure 7) that comprises and combines several core areas, such as Stakeholder Engagement, Business Management, HSSE (Health, Safety, Security, and Environment), Human Rights as well as Diversity. All these areas are factoring into the OMV's three core areas, namely (1) Eco Innovation, (2) Eco Efficiency and (3) Skills to Succeed. With this far-reaching approach, the firm sets out to create a win-win situation not only for itself, but also for the environment and society at large.

With regard to Eco Innovation, the OMV stresses its focus on eco innovation and renewable energy. To demonstrate the firm's impact, two projects are introduced: as an investor, the company supports a hydrogen mobility project. The firm paints a picture of a future in which "vehicles using ordinary combustion engines are losing its importance" (OMV, 2013b). Its second generation bio fuel project,

on the other hand, is more research and development oriented and conducted in cooperation with numerous universities, research facilities as well as industrial partners. The project's goal lies in generating green fuel that is produced of biogenic substances, thus reducing society's carbon footprint drastically and lastingly (OMV, 2013b).

The Eco Efficiency section emphasizes the firm's engagements in the area of environmental management, which covers a wide array of activities, such as efforts to reduce CO2 emissions, eco-system preservation activities (considering Global Compact as well as REACH and CLP statutes), and sustainable product labeling requirements.

Skills to Succeed initiatives are significantly smaller in scope when compared to the previous two sections and are split up into community projects and social projects. The prior are charity initiatives centering on health, education and environmental preservation. Examples are the OMV's Lybiy Youth center, Hepatitis B prevention in Pakistan and Children's School. Society project, on the other hand, are set up regionally, such as local educational projects and scholarships.



Figure 7: The OMV's resourcefulness concept

Overall, the sustainability page itself is very structured and consists of nine sub-sections. In terms of color, it does not strike the reader's eye since its color scheme is in line with the company's corporate color scheme. What sets the OMV apart from the other two cases is its use of visuals: each sub-section features a separate visual which does not only refer to the firm's business practices, but it also depicts culturally diverse people (either by themselves or as part of a group), contributing to the emotionalization of the CSR agenda. Besides, the OMV's sustainable communication efforts fulfil all the criteria demanded of successful CSR communication: they are put in relation to its core business, are implemented voluntarily and are concerned with preserving natural resources (Raupp

et al., 2011).

Visual Analysis



Figure 8: Visual Depictions of the OMV's Resourcefulness Strategy

As the OMV's CSR communication is heavily supported by visual stimuli, it does not suffice to only include one image in the analysis. For this reason, the core image of each of the corporation's three CSR pillars (Eco Innovation, Eco Efficiency, and Skills to Succeed) will be briefly discussed and contrasted with one another (see Figure 8). The Eco-Innovation section features the Schwechat Refinery in Vienna that hosts the BioCrack facility, where research on second generation bio fuel (as produced of biomass or woodchips) takes place. With regards to Eco Efficiency, the OMV choose a Turkish gas power plant, which provides the Turkish market with low-carbon power. For the Skills to Succeed segment, a visual depicting a group of Tunisian workers participating in an OMV-sponsored educational training was chosen. While all visuals are clearly connected to the OMV's core business activities, the human dimension falls short for out of the three images, only one is displaying actual people. Yet, authenticity is innate to all illustrations, for they feature actual OMV sites of production and creation – which might serve to justify the missing human link.

Press Releases

While the OMV dedicates a lot of time and efforts to its sustainable communication (as indicated by the setup and design of its CSR section), this aspect does not receive much consideration as part of press releases. The company, in general, is not very active when it comes to letting the public participate in its latest developments and projects, as only 9 news stories were published online over the 4-months period of investigation. The largest proportion of press releases (7 of 9) is dedicated towards purely economic news, which do not touch upon sustainable topics but rather discuss the OMV's products, co-operations or international business activities. Unlike the EVN or Kelag, the OMV does not enrich economic news with CSR elements; if social and/or environmental aspects are brought up, they are addressed in separate news releases (2 of 9; see Figure 9). This segregated approach presents a clear contradiction to the firm's otherwise successful CSR communication, which is highly integrated.

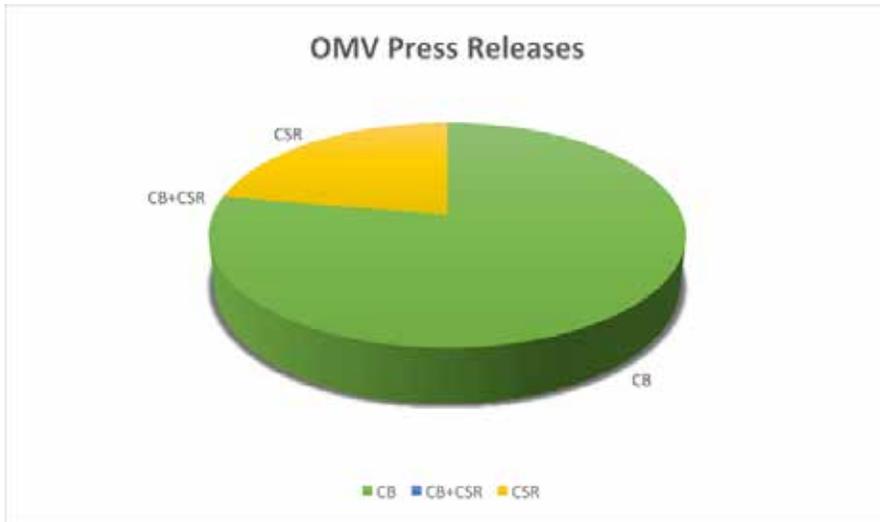


Figure 9: OMV Press Releases by Category

Contradictions

Just like the previous two Austrian energy suppliers, also the OMV is struggling to bring its CSR messages across without contradictions. The largest challenge relates to the corporation's inability to position itself in a cohesive and consistent manner. This becomes especially clear when contrasting the OMV's self-perceived image as created through its website appearance with the self-perception created through the firm's press-releases. On the corporate website, the firm is eager (maybe even over-ambitious) to position itself as a sustainable and responsible actor; however, the press release section is neglected and, thus, paints a different picture, as the topic of CSR receives merely any recognition. For this reason, the firm's CSR communication forfeits some of its authenticity, leading to a problem of credibility.

Credibility as to the OMV's CSR initiatives is also impinged by the fact that the textual information presented in different sections is contradictory. The two examples given below concern two of the company's main projects, which are linked to its core business:

- Example 1: Steps to reduce direct emissions

"[...] in order to increase energy efficiency and reduce emissions. Besides the reduction of CO₂, also the consumption of gas can be reduced" (OMV, 2013b)

"Our product portfolio's greenhouse gas intensity could be slightly reduced over the past years. In 2011, however, greenhouse gas intensity increased. [...] Looking at absolute numbers, our indirect greenhouse gas emissions increased due to a larger sales volume" (OMV, 2013b)

- Example 2: Water mobility

"The OMV is already investing in a future, in which vehicles using ordinary combustion engines are losing their importance" (OMV, 2013b)

"The OMV is ready to invest up to EUR 50 million in eco innovation" (OMV, 2013 b)
 Contradictions in the OMV's written statements distract from the quality of the company's investments, having a negative impact on its credibility. Mishaps, thus, come at a high price and should advise the firm to check the quality of its phrasing for future releases.

Classification of CSR Positionings

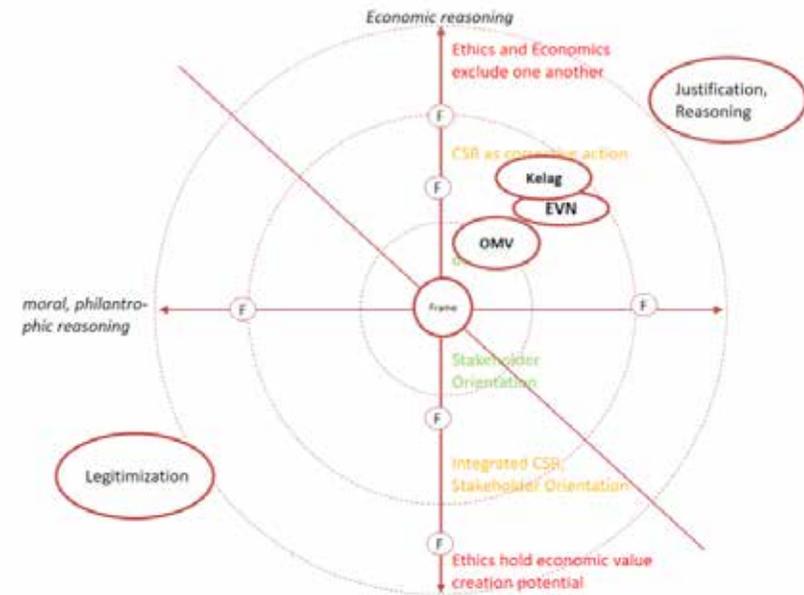


Figure 10: Energy Suppliers' CSR Positioning

After having dissected online message content on several levels and across several layers, companies' CSR positionings will now be integrated in the previously introduced framework with regard to their argumentations. The overall positioning looks as follows (see Figure 10):

EVN: Positioning the EVN within the given framework is not an easy endeavor. The company exhibits elements alluding to a moderate and/or neutral position due to a rather conservative communicative approach. On the economic continuum, its arguments are predominantly moderately legitimizing, with all its CSR efforts supporting an integrated approach. As to its morale or philanthropic reasoning, the EVN

can be seen as both moderately legitimizing (with regard to its PR strategy) and neutral legitimizing (due to the instrumentalization of CSR). CSR projects are thereby stressed to create a more favorable corporate image, which is also supported by numerous certifications, memberships and awards.

Kelag: Quite like the EVN, the Kelag can achieve a moderately integrated positioning on grounds of its CSR communication activities. Even though some of its arguments (e.g., green jobs or green IT) might appear a bit extreme at first sight and are not backed up by evidence, the company builds its arguments on neutral statements to the largest extent. Albeit a visual caption is missing, its integrated CSR approach is particularly put forward by its GENERATION KLIMASCHUTZ campaign.

OMV: The firm's CSR communication activities reveal the OMV to occupy a moderate-neutral positioning. As part of the economic continuum, the firm utilizes both moderate or neutral-legitimizing arguments: the moderate allocation is supported by its integrated CSR approach, which is closely linked to its core business operations (e.g., see the OMV's Resourcefulness conceptualization). It is, nonetheless, also neutral-legitimizing due to the high relevance the OMV attributes to its stakeholder management and by integrating them into the resourcefulness concept. With regard to the firm's moral philanthropic reasoning, the OMV is eager to gain public recognition for its charity CSR projects (as part of its community initiatives). At the same time, the company has an institutionalistic approach to CSR, attempting to improve its corporate image by listing nominations and certifications (e.g., Global Compact, Best Practice with regard to Human Rights Preservation).

Conclusion

The present paper was concerned with investigating how Austrian energy suppliers approach the topic of CSR communication and set out to detect (1) if companies address this topic communicatively at all, and (2) if their communicative disclosures are consistent or full of contradictions.

Overall, findings suggest that albeit communication is at times linked to the firm's core business operations, the connection is broken at times. At the same time, CSR itself – even though it offers the potential to be emotionalized – is not thematized in such manner. The Kelag makes a good attempt with its GENERATION KLIMASCHUTZ project, however, is unable to follow through and establish meaningful links amongst its various initiatives. Yet, a presentation and communication of CSR content free from contradictions and missing links would definitely assist energy suppliers in creating favorable public images – in line with maintaining their Corporate Communicative Responsibility (CCR, Weder, 2012).

For energy providers, it is not sufficient to engage in CSR projects; rather, CSR must be closely linked to their social and environmental projects (e.g., OMV), implemented voluntarily, and be concerned with the preservation natural resources to create a long-term impact. In addition, the topic should be emotionalized (e.g., Kelag) and free from contradictions (e.g., OMV), otherwise companies might run risk of being accused of greenwashing. Hence, successful CSR communication might take some time and effort to be implemented holistically – nevertheless, it presents an investment that is likely to pay off in the long run. This is particularly the case for energy providers, who – on grounds of their business endeavors – have to position themselves and their initiatives with care.

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Appendix

EVN Press Releases		
Date	Headline	Category ¹
09.01.2013	Preisverleihung des Videowettbewerbs „junior challenge wasser“	(3)
22.01.2013	Fischwanderhilfe als Kinderstube für Jungfische - 20.000 Bachforellen-Eier für die Ybbs	(3)
30.01.2013	Marktgemeinde Angern – Partnerschaft mit EVN Wasser	(2)
21.02.2013	Bahnhofplatz in Winzendorf erstrahlt in neuem Glanz - LED-Beleuchtung und EVN Elektro Tankstelle mit Photovoltaik eröffnet	(3)
01.03.2013	Prellenkirchen erweitert Windkraftkapazitäten – EVN und Kittel Mühle errichten acht weitere Windräder	(1)
08.03.2013	Fliegende Säge zum Ausästen der Leitung – Hubschrauber unterstützt EVN bei Instandhaltungsarbeiten	(1)
14.03.2013	Ad-hoc Meldung: Einigung über den Verkauf des Anteils der EVN AG an der Projektgesellschaft zur Errichtung eines Wasserkraftwerkes in Albanien an die Statkraft A.	(1)
19.03.2013	EVN AG kündigt der Republik Bulgarien	(1)
08.04.2013	Ökostrom für Deutsch-Wagram – EVN und W.E.B errichten neuen Windpark	(2)
09.04.2013	EVN sichert die Trinkwasserversorgung von 50.000 Einwohnern - Inbetriebnahme Pumpwerk Oberzögersdorf	(2)
17.04.2013	Eröffnung der 1. EVN SchnellladeElektro-Tankstelle in Poysdorf	(2)
17.04.2013	Trinkbrunnen für die NNöMS Fels am Wagram	(3)
19.04.2013	Fischwanderhilfe als Kinderstube für Jungfische – 10.000 Äschen-Eier für die Ybbs	(3)
30.04.2013	Ad-hoc Meldung: EVN präzisiert erwartetes Konzernergebnis zum 30.9.2013	(1)

Kelag Press Releases		
Date	Headline	Category ²
24.01.2013	SmartHome Austria - Online-Befragung	(3)
30.01.2013	Fernwärme aus Biomasse für Spittal an der Drau	(2)
19.02.2013	Kelag auf der „Bauen & Energie Wien“	(3)
25.02.2013	Kelag auf der Energiesparmesse Wels	(3)
05.03.2013	Bio-Fernwärme für Bad Sauerbrunn und Neudörf	(2)
22.03.2013	Erfahrener Kärntner Manager übernimmt Vertriebs- und Wärme-Agenden	(1)
27.03.2013	„Sehr gut“ für Kelag-Kundenservice	(1)
03.04.2013	Gratis Messekarten für PlusClub-Mitglieder	(1)
09.04.2013	Studienpraktika zu vergeben	(1)
29.04.2013	Erfolgreiches Geschäftsjahr 2012	(1)

OMV Press Releases		
Date	Headline	Category ³
09.01.2013	Finale Investitionsentscheidung für das Aasta Hansteen Gasfeld	(1)
17.01.2013	OMV MaxxMotion bester Winterdiesel	(1)
18.01.2013	OMV ad hoc: OMV verkauft Bevorratungsgeschäft	(1)
01.02.2013	OMV verkauft Marketing-Tochtergesellschaft in Kroatien	(1)
21.02.2013	Bericht Jänner - Dezember und Q4 2012	(1)
09.03.2013	OMV wird Partner des Life Ball	(3)
02.04.2013	Kooperation OMV mit Erste Bank und Sparkassen	(1)
04.04.2013	OMV: Weitere Meilensteine in der Region Kurdistan im Irak	(1)
16.04.2013	OMV und WU: Kooperation in Forschung und Lehre	(3)

(Footnotes)

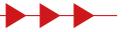
1 (1) Link to core business without CSR reference | (2) Link to core business with CSR reference | (3) No link to core business but clear CSR reference

2 (1) Link to core business without CSR reference | (2) Link to core business with CSR reference | (3) No link to core business but clear CSR reference

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7. About BledCom

About BledCom



The primary mission of the international symposia that have been organized over the past 23 years under the aegis of BledCom, is to provide a venue for public relations scholars and practitioners from around the world to exchange ideas and perspectives about public relations practice in all its forms such as corporate communication, public affairs, reputation management, issues and crisis management, etc.

Building from this history, BledCom seeks to help establish a state-of-the-art body of knowledge of the field with each annual symposium attempting to widen the horizons of the field by attracting current and new perspectives and state-of-the-art research from public relations and related disciplines. Toward this end, every BledCom symposium seeks to offer a venue for practitioners and scholars to share their conceptual perspectives, empirical findings (adopting any/all methodologies), or case studies related to the field.

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8. BledCom 2016

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