Organizational and Strategic Communication Section

ECREA - European Communication Research and Education Association

Contents

The European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) was created in 2005 as a fusion of the two main European communications researchers, the European Communication Association (ECA) and the European Consortium for Communications Research (ECCR) and has the following objectives:

- Encouraging and spreading, within a European framework, the development of research in different areas of communications, as well as promoting an interest in communications research within, and between, the member states of the European Union.

- Promoting a forum where information can be exchanged between researchers in the communications field and facilitating communication and cooperation between members of the Association;

- Giving aid to, and favouring the publication of, research work by young European researchers;

- Taking into account the diversity of cultures and languages in Europe;

- Developing, improving and promoting educational projects linked to communication and the media.

The ECREA section for Organizational and Strategic Communication promotes an active and critical dialogue among scholars in view of consolidating an interdisciplinary field for thoughts, debates, applications and complex projects.

The participation rules of the Section allow contributions from researchers, professors, master and doctoral students, as well from corporate representatives whose aim is to develop the internal research portfolios of their own organizations.

The Section also allows contributions of independent specialists and consultants in marketing, public communication or related fields, as the very field of organizational communication is difficult to observe unless part of the organizational systems.

Our section concerns the influence of different sorts of communications, from and in organization, including public-relation, advertising, human resource management, by mass media or social media...

Each of these fields has expended its outlook and domain beyond its conventional definition and extent to integrative communication processes.

Organizational and Strategic Communication Section organized its annual workshop in Toulouse (France), June 9th 2009
Strategic and Organizational Communication in firms: Crisis as Opportunity?

This was a small working conference, facilitating conversations intended to develop future connections between participants. Each scholar submitted a 30-minute presentations and provided one approach, theory or analytical tool that can be used to productively understand various situations.

Participants spent time during the conference analyzing them from a variety of approaches.

Programme Toulouse, June 9th 2009

08.45 – 09.00 Registration

09.00 – 09.15 Welcome

09.15 AM - Information and Communication in a Period of Crisis

1. Deconstructing Organizational Communication for (Productive) Dissensus
Carolyne Lee (Australia) carolyne@unimelb.edu.au

2. Textual Agencies and OrganizingPprocesses: The Case of Safety and Crisis Management in a Petrochemical Industry
Bertrand Fauré (France) be_faure@yahoo.fr

Coffee / tea break

3. The Effects of Interactive Communication in Solving Global Problems
Rusi Marinov (Spain) rusi_m@hotmail.com

12.00 – 02.00 Lunch

2.00 PM - Identity, Culture in a period of crisis

1. Le management de la diversité et ses dimensions communicationnelles dans un monde globalisé. Quelques études de cas françaises.
Valérie Carayol (France) Valerie.carayol@u-bordeaux3.fr

Coffee / tea break

2. The RAUDIN Project
Elizabeth Gardère (France) elizabeth.gardere@u-bordeaux4.fr

1. Crisis Communication in Bankruptcy Proceedings
Luis Mañas Viniegra (Spain) barreneo@hotmail.com

16.15 End of workshop

This workshop aimed to understand contemporary developments in communication theory by looking backwards as well as forwards. It intended to deal with the question of how communication is intertwined at various levels. Additionally, we would like to address the question of what kind of alterations can be used to adapt existing models and theories for current crisis. We wanted to encourage papers that explore tensions between older and new approaches.

About 30 participants from European Union (Spain, Portugal, France, Turkey, United Kingdom) and from Australia took part in the event.
Various forms of presentations were chosen, in order to outline the complexity of the research field and allow contributors to find their specific place in the programme.
The debates reflected the cross-disciplinary process of conceptual and methodological transfer from humanities and social sciences to organizational communication. Each paper tried to introduce the state-of-the-art or key aspects of the research work connected to corporate communication in the respective countries/societies/contexts, and explained methodologies and/or main results of studies and reflections in the field. The debates were rich and inspiring, performed in a very convivial ambience

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We organized a round-table in EUPRERA congress in September. Our section promoted an active and critical dialogue among scholars in view of consolidating an interdisciplinary field of debate, applications and complex projects.
The meeting was an occasion to discuss future and forthcoming activity of our section.

We would like to edit a book with a variety of contributions from various authors (ECREA members and non-members) using -as much as possible- material from the Barcelona conference, the workshop, ON and IN organizations.
We created a mailing list for the members of our section. The main purpose of the list and this present newsletter is to constitute a community where any scholar working within the emerging field of organizational and strategic communication can inform his peers about new publications, upcoming conferences or other relevant information.

- *Call for papers. Call for contributions:*

- Special Issue of
European Journal of International Management

Everybody Hurts, Sometimes – Emotions and Dysfunctional Leadership

Deadline for paper submissions: December 1, 2009

Organizational dysfunction characterizes a facet of today's workplace that is often hidden or ignored. In general we expect, albeit naively, that business leaders will do the right thing. They are expected to act honorably, in accordance with organizational and institutional values, as well as acting ethically. The ideal leader of the 21st century can integrate all the necessary subordinates and know how to build a team while making themselves dispensable. They know how to lead a diverse workforce, possess strategic skills, have a learning focus, as well as an international orientation. They offer constructive criticism when things go wrong and resolve conflicts diplomatically, respecting subordinate's expectations and ambitions. Also, ideal leaders are expected to be passionate about their jobs. They are supposed to show emotional commitment and devotion and are expected to involve their personal lives in the organization, thereby integrating their own 'selves' into the life of the organization. They are one with the organization; a symbol of its being.

However, such leaders are mostly mythical creatures. In reality most leaders gain their position due to technical expertise rather than an ability to work with human resources, and consequently tend to be strong in operational and technical skills, but less so in relations-building-skills. Moreover, leaders' performance tends to be measured on a cost-efficiency basis, and when pursuing functional objectives, leaders can often be dysfunctional for the well-being of those who are charged with delivering this functionality.

The aim of this special issue is on this view to capture the 'other side' of leadership, to challenge the ideal image of the heroic and charismatic leader almost displayed like a superhero. We want to invite contributions that investigate current state of emotions and dysfunctional leadership around the globe, applying unique perspectives, and analyses. Qualitative and quantitative as well as conceptual approaches are encouraged. Papers also should point to the future of leadership with particular emphasis on how best to advance the arguments, methods, and effectiveness of leadership.

Subject Coverage

Examples of topics appropriate to the theme of emotions and dysfunctional leadership include:
Leaders as the disruptive force in their organizations
The passionate leader
The loving and caring leader
Emotional ignorance
Emotional workplace bullying
Trust-breaking
Tyrannical behavior towards subordinates
Leadership fantasies
Micro leadership, with emphasis on roles and implications of roles
Manic leadership
Inaccessibility of leadership
The invisible leader
Manipulative leadership
Management of meaninglessness
Gossip and rumors
Managerial cowardliness
The 'successful psychopath'
Consequences of workaholic tendencies of individuals in organizational power positions
Prevention and intervention strategies – who sets them, how are they enforced?
Whistleblowing – usefulness and effectiveness
Feedback phobia
Pushing employees outside their comfort zone – promises and challenges

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere.

All papers are refereed through a peer review process. A guide for authors, sample copies and other relevant information for submitting papers are available on the Author Guidelines page (http://www.inderscience.com/mapper.php?id=31)

Guest Editors:
Jeanette Lemmergaard, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark, jla@sam.sdu.dk
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Calls for Papers: Special Issues
Please email contributions to this page to Angelika Zierer-Kuhnle, EGOS Executive Secretariat (angelika@secretariat.egosnet.eu).

- Repetition and difference in organizing over time and space
June 28–July 2, 2010
Faculdade de Economia
Universidade Nova de Lisboa
Lisbon, Portugal

What better place could there be than Lisbon, the westernmost capital of continental Europe, to explore the relevance of globalization for organization studies and to celebrate discovery, cultural difference and the experience of diversity which EGOS stands for?

Globalization is the buzzword of the new millennium. Its presence can be felt in everyday life; its forces strain established orders, opening new possibilities for global organizations. We appear to be the witnesses of something entirely new. History, however, seems to move in circles that resemble previous ones. Globalization is no exception. Some authors refer to current events as the third wave of globalization. The fist wave started in the 15th century, the Age of Discovery, with Portugal and Spain playing major roles. The second wave came in the early 19th century and lasted until World War I. The driving force of this period was the United Kingdom and it resulted in the increased relevance of the North Atlantic. The third wave of globalization began with the aftermath of World War II, and it has got a new form during the past two decades. It sees the world's economic center moving eastward, with China and India gaining in size and importance.

What is interesting about these – or even alternative – views of globalization is the fact that what appears as a new and irresistible force of social change, may actually be a new form of a recurrent historical process, in which organizations (be they the kingdoms, or trading companies of the past, or the multinationals of today's modern world) play a substantial role.

Giddens, Bauman, Castells and others forayed into globalization's impact on people and their interactions, and their theories continue to inspire organizational scholars in their quest to uncover the dynamics and undercurrents of the third wave. They argue that globalization reveals itself in how organizing happens today, be it in leadership, innovation, global teams, born global ventures, business ethics, or new organizational designs. This is, in our opinion, why we need to continue to study globalization in its organizational aspects and implications.
http://www.egosnet.org/jart/prj3/egosnet/

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Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact one of the following members of the local Organizing Committee at FEUNL in Lisbon:

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- Constructing and Disrupting Social Realities

April 7–10, 2010
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Markets, institutions and organizations are important factors in sustaining economic exchange, providing political stability and fostering material production and innovation. At the same time, they are the means by which social identities are anchored and collective meanings are constituted and reproduced. In doing so they play a critical role in the construction of social realities.

In today's unstable and risky world, Latin American and European markets, institutions and organizations have increasingly come under pressure, although in different forms and to varying degrees. Because of that, their instrumental and symbolic roles are called into question; their sensemaking function is jeopardized; and they have a hard time in fulfilling their purposes.

The purpose of this 3rd LAEMOS Colloquium is to enhance empirical and theoretical studies on the dynamics of development and crisis with specific reference to Latin American and European societies. Under the general theme of the meeting the purpose is to connect and mix a broad variety of studies, narratives and discourses on the present times of crisis and on future perspectives of development and innovation.

Upcoming deadlines
Abstract submission (1,000 words): November 15, 2009
Notification of acceptance: December 15, 2009
Submission of full paper (max 6,000 words): March 15, 2010

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- Euprera Congress 2010: Jyvaskyla (Finland)

http://www.jyu.fi/euprera2010

September 23-26, 2010
University of Jyvaskyla, Finland

Theme: Communication in a Changing Society:
Dynamics, Risks and Uncertainty.

PhD Seminar: 26-29 September 2010

Society has more uncertainties than before. Topics like risk perception and monitoring have become more important in nowadays dynamic surroundings. And -especially for organizations that function in an international environment- creating a continuous dialogue about organizational policies and e.g. CSR, is quite a challenge. How can PR research help in developing answers to such challenges and how could the PR profession take this into account?

SUBTHEMES OR TRACKS
1. Risk perception and crisis communication;
2. Change management, innovation and internal communication;
3. Dynamics of communication and networking in an international environment;
4. Changing perspectives on PR and CSR;
5. Fuzzy boundaries between the public and the private domain, company and government communication.
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Abstracts of the Toulouse workshop June 9th 2009

Information and Communication in a period of crisis

1. Crisis Communication in Bankruptcy Proceedings

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Keywords: crisis communication, bankruptcy proceeding, unemployment, corporate reputation, Spain.

Abstract
According to data from the National Statistics Institute, in 2008 there were 2,902 bankruptcy proceedings in Spain, representing an increase of 197.3% compared to 2007. In addition, 610,000 jobs were destroyed, ending the year with 3.2 million unemployed. 67.2% of companies declared bankrupt in 2008 are concentrated in construction, industry, real estate and business services.

If in 2008 the main problem of Spanish companies was the lack of liquidity and lack of financing, in 2009 the problem is compounded by the lack of productive activity.

In this situation, it's necessary to develop a crisis communication plan adapted to a new situation, that includes steps to safeguarding and recovering corporate reputation.

Corporate communication must include a humanistic vision, not immune to the difficulties that the crisis has on other business concerned: workers, subcontractors, suppliers... The personal attention to those affected, the speed, proximity and transparency are the basis of this proposal, avoiding at all times to generate alarms.

Similarly, efforts should focus on explaining to society that proceedings and records of employment regulation are tools that allow sanitation, sustainability and business continuity. Failure derogatory perception about their business can continue to prevent operating on the market, while lack of potential consumers.

Additionally, it is necessary to enhance internal communication processes for regulation of employment, so that rumors and the media do not become the source of information for workers, avoiding criticism and leaks from within the enterprise and the motivation as a result of the uncertainty, which also affects workers not initially included in the Record of Employment Regulations.

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2. Deconstructing Organizational Communication for (Productive) Dissensus

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Keywords: organization, communication, hegemony, critical, deconstruction

Abstract
The term 'period of crisis' has quickly become our current metanarrative, and therefore in at least some organizations, it has also emerged as the underlying or even explicit theme of much of the communication used within the organization to strategically construct its identity and culture in a specific way, relative to 'the crisis'. The processes by which certain conceptions of reality, such as this current one, predominate over others have been usefully theorized by way of Gramsci's notion of hegemony, a notion that has enriched much research into communication. In particular, 'critical organizational communication scholars have shown how these "structures of dominance" exist not simply ideationally, but through the communicative constitution of quotidian taken-for-granted realities'(Mumby 1997).

Building on this framework, then, I develop an argument in this paper for a research approach based not on discourses that are normative and interpretive, as in much research into organizational communication, but instead on those that are critical and dialogic. This is an approach that pays 'explicit attention to moral and ethical issues' (Deetz, 2000), and therefore seems urgently necessary in researching the increasingly complex communicative situations that our organizational workplaces have become.

From there I proceed to outline a methodology that is essentially an ethnography of a communicative site (Deetz, 2000)—a contemporary workplace in the form of a large organization. This ethnomethodology will be piloted, and then used as the basis to seek from a small sample of employees the expression of their own views and feelings towards quotidian organizational communication,

in particular seeking any topics employees perceive are missing from this communication. It is intended that these responses contribute to a dialogic perspective (Habermas, Bourdieu, Derrida, Laclau and Mouffe) on the organisation's communication processes, with the aim of facilitating positive outcomes for both organizational communication, and researchers' ways of discussing and theorizing it. Finally, the 'texts' generated by the employees will be read deconstructively, seeking the binaries perceived in organizational communication, the terms suppressed or marginalized (Derrida), with the aim of making explicit a productive dissensus— one that can lead to open discussion about the communicative construction of the organization's identity and culture.

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3. Persuasion Methods used by the Interactive Advertising

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Keywords: advertising, persuasion, interactivity

Abstract:
The worldwide crisis results from developments in the real economy – but the dynamics of the downturn is influenced by media coverage. Groundbreaking research by Lamla et. al. has established a strong correlation between the tone of economic coverage and the decisions taken by companies.[1] This paper analyzes how reporting about the economy and business has developed since the economic crisis, which evolved in the wake of the "new economy boom". The paper compares the coverage of the state of the economy and the reporting about companies over the period from January 1998 until March 2009. Based on the changing patterns in sectoral coverage and topic structure of reporting, the analysis explores, how media coverage interacts with developments in the real economy and perceptions and intentions of companies and consumers.
The analysis is based on two long-term data sets:
1) an exhaustive quantitative-qualitative analysis of the coverage of the economy in opinion-leading German TV and print outlets, which assesses the tone of coverage and the topic structures on story level
2) a comparable analysis of the coverage of industries and individual companies on story level.
Preliminary results show:
1) Dynamics and intensity of negative coverage of the economy have increased notably in the period 2008/2009 compared to 2002. Negative coverage thus anticipated the development in the real economy, e.g. the downturn in employment.
2) Reporting about companies turned markedly negative in the period of 2008/2009 with a strong focus on management issues. This development was accompanied by an increasing personalization of business coverage.
3) At the same time, the salience of share price coverage was less marked in 2008/2009 than in 2002. But on the other hand the tone of the reports focusing on shares was even more negative than in the previous period, when the shares of Deutsche Telekom hit their lowest point. The example of Deutsche Telekom is especially significant, because the IPO of DT marked the beginning of a share boom in Germany and was accompanied by an extraordinary PR campaign which involved a famous actor. The downturn of the Telekom shares was accordingly featured prominently in popular media, like TV news or the leading national tabloid Bild-Zeitung.
4) Reporting about the causes and the possible effects of the American sub-prime crisis affected the development of the real economy in a way, that further undermined trust in the existing structures and the financial reserves of companies, thus aggravating the adverse refinancing conditions for banks and other companies.
5) The crisis frame of reporting re-inforced the perception of an all-encompassing downturn by fading out reports about companies that were not reporting losses.
6) Reporting about economic policy focused strongly on political protagonists and their programs. Public support for a much stronger role of the state in economic affairs, ranging from a marked extension of subsidies to the nationalization of banks rose accordingly in the wake of this coverage.

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4. Textual agencies and Organizing Processes: The Case of Safety and Crisis Management in a Petrochemical Industry

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[1] Lamla, Michael, Lein, Sarah M. and Sturm, Jan-Egbert: News and Sectoral Comovement, Zurich 2007 [= KOF Working Papers No. 183]

Keywords: textual agency, organizing processes, security practices, performativity

Abstract
This article aims to clarify some aspects of the contribution of texts to organizing processes. To what extent can texts such as reports, procedures, policies or work orders be said to be performing something within organizational contexts – acting On and IN these contexts-? This question has recently been the subject of growing interest in organizational communication studies concerned by the mode of being of organizational forms - their constitution, maintenance and transformation- (Taylor & Van Every, 2000, Putman et al. 2009). In this view, texts are not only stabilized (institutionalized) representations or descriptions of a given organizational reality but are also agents by which this reality can be created and sustained. Under certain circumstances, and within specific contexts of use, they make a difference (Cooren, 2004): they enable organizational artefacts to be identified as actors – or speakers- able to "act" – or to "speak"- in their own name (Robichaud et al. 2004).

Although apparently extremely theoretical, these questions echo deeply with very empirical issues concerned with the normative influence of written rules within organizations (Who should write them? What sustains their authority?). The conjuncture of the current crisis gives a particular prominence to these issues because it reveals that financial texts, although extremely normative, were also very arbitrarily related to the organizational activities that they aimed to appraise (the crisis is financial before being economical). But, these issues are also raised by more structural reasons. Within economic systems characterised by an increasing diversity of normative sources (multi localisation, multi disciplines, multi cultures, multi constraints, multi jurisdictions…) organizing textuality becomes a major issue. Indeed, texts do not always "make a difference": they sometimes fail to perform anything at all. Any contemporary manager involved in organizing a service, a project or a teamwork knows how difficult it is to write – or command someone to write – a procedure, a norm, a rule (i.e. to inscribe onto a permanent record a prescribed mode of functioning) and then to ensure that the text thus produced is clearly understood and effectively applied by all.

To explore these issues, we ground on a longitudinal study of the creation and transformation of a safety procedure guide within a national petrochemical company (from 1984 to 2004). We first describe how this text, originally shaped by the local dialects of one subsidiary of the company, becomes progressively an official language, incorporated into the global syntax of the Security Management System of the company. We then raised the difficulties encountered by the company in ensuring a coherent evolution between these multi supports, multi sources, multi levels corpus of normative texts and the day to day practices of security during industrial activities. Each accident, each mistake, each failure is the result of numerous factors interacting in specific situations (Gilbert et al. 2007) and requires both a systematic treatment (organized, formalized, written[2]…) and a contingent reaction (spontaneous, informal, oral…). Texts then fail in articulating the *then* and *there* of global safety processes with the *here* and *now* of local events. In the company studied, the role of informal knowledge and non written communications in security's improvement is indirectly recognized by the recently emphasized importance of safety culture development (this renewed interest to the topic of safety culture – or climate- is also shared in the literature (Zohar, 1980, Guldenmund, 2000).

Finally, this article argues for a nuanced vision of texts' authority within contemporary organizations. Dislocated, embedded, recombined…texts become a hybrid substrate of normativity which interplays more and more closely with other communicational processes. In this perspective, their performativity relies on an evolutive intertextuality which enables flexible contractual combinations or variable expressions of rights and duties.

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[2] Notably through methods such as REX, incident analysis, causes' tree...,

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Identity, Culture in a period of crisis

1. Le management de la diversité et ses dimensions communicationnelles dans un monde globalisé. Quelques études de cas françaises.
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Mots-clés : management de la diversité, discrimination, organisation, communication, France

Résumé
La France a connu plusieurs vagues d'immigration, depuis le 19ème siècle, du Sud de l'Europe, d'Europe de l'Est et d'Afrique du Nord ; les périodes récurrentes de pénurie de main-d'oeuvre ont fait de la France un des pays d'immigration les plus importants depuis le commencement de l'industrialisation. L'intégration des populations issues de l'immigration est de nos jours une préoccupation publique importante. Les émeutes suburbaines, très médiatisées, qui se sont déroulées en France ces dernières années illustrent les problèmes sociaux « des zones urbaines sensibles », où une majorité d'habitants sont des immigrés. Pendant longtemps, la seule manière d'envisager la diversité culturelle, en France, a consisté à mettre en place des politiques «d'intégration » et de «mixité sociale». Les politiques d'assimilation n'ont pas été toujours très performantes et, en partie sous la pression de l'Union européenne, les concepts de diversité et de non-discrimination ont acquis graduellement de la légitimité dans le domaine public. En France il n'y a aucune donnée statistique officielle sur la population en termes de groupes ethniques ou culturels. Il est dès lors difficile, pour certains, de mettre en application une lutte contre la discrimination ethnique ou raciale. La non prise en compte des différences ethniques est justifiée par les valeurs universalistes de la République Française construite sur le principe de l'égalité et non pas selon le principe d'équité communément revendiqué aux USA. Les politiques de discrimination positive, par exemple, sont régulièrement critiquées par les élites intellectuelles et politiques en France (Calvès 2004) parce qu'elles sont considérées comme étant inspirées par le modèle culturel américain. Un débat assez virulent existe autour de ces questions qui transcende les frontières politiques traditionnelles. La critique de la discrimination positive empêche les responsables d'entreprise d'adopter les modèles américains de gestion de la diversité et ont permis le développement de nouvelles pratiques autour de la gestion de la diversité dans les entreprises françaises. Ces dernières doivent être observées et étudiées en prenant en considération ce fond culturel particulier. Le travail proposé considérera la dimension communicationnelle des pratiques de management de la diversité à travers plusieurs études de cas françaises.

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2. One Case, Different Cultures, Different Ways to Manage the Crisis: Turkish Airlines Plane Crash in Holland
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Abstract
Crisis management is one of the prominent study area of both public relations and corporate communication. Multinational companies' operational areas became more diverse and vast because to the globalization, which brings forward "identity" and "cultural" concepts. By approaching the issue from crisis management perspective, it can be argued that same crisis condition in different countries should be handled differently due to the different cultural formations and experiences of these countries. This study aims to highlight different crisis response strategies of two different countries with different cultural background experiencing the same crisis at the same time. The case study examined in this paper is a Turkish Airlines plane crash, landing at Amsterdam's Schiphol international airport on 25th February 2009, killing nine people and injuring 84, six critically. This crisis denoted that different cultural contexts differentiate being ready for crisis, tools and styles of communicating with public, information flow between parties and also relationship patterns with media. This plane crash produced another crisis between Holland and Turkey because of the countries' different crisis management style and emphasized that there is no only one best way to handle crisis. The process of crisis management in this case study also highlighted that cultural differences in these two countries produces different public expectations in the sense that public-private distinction of information, information quality, information speed and communication style.

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3. Corporate Contingencies in Inter-Organisational Collaborations: A Process-System Model of Effective Communication
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Abstract
The aim of this theoretical paper is to stress the importance to develop a non-linear process-system of communication to manage contingencies in inter-organisational collaborations. Multinational companies seek new ways to expand their businesses or to survive in periods of crisis through inter-organisational collaborations, such as alliances, joint-ventures, mergers and acquisitions, relationships headquarters-subsidiaries. So far, communication between organisational members working inter-geographically or inter-organisationally requires specific communicative qualities crucial to avoid misunderstandings and failures in collaborative projects. These are the causes for instability in organizational settings which take to contingency in corporate communications or communicative gaps due to the inter-organisational differences of corporate cultures.
The construction of a non-linear and process-oriented theory of communication presupposes a proper explanation of the basic concepts needed for such a construction. These concepts are designed to refer exclusively to the cognitive and the social domain of human beings. Hereby, the conceptual scope of 'systems' covers a continuity of processes which relate to one another in a specific and describable way while the system's transformational changes according to its environments are unpredictable, i.e. they are 'non-linear'. 'Process' is chosen to cover the modification of relations between components or elements in a certain domain in space and time. These modifications are irreversible, and they are governed by patters of circular causality. Thus, communication can be theoretically modelled as a dynamic process-system which consists of interactive reflexive processes.
Due to reflexivity as the basic mechanism of communication, and due to the cognitive autonomy of agents (Schmidt 1994), the effects of communication processes cannot be explained by clear-cut reasons. Instead, communication processes can be described as enabling conditions which, at the best, trigger a sequence of activities in self-organising systems whose modes, results and efficiencies can normally not be precisely predicted. The paper addresses the following questions: how can organisational members effectively communicate in inter-organisational contexts? How can different corporate cultures match to reach organisational consensus through communication?
This investigation seeks to contribute to the field of organisational communication by proposing a model of effective communication in inter-organisational collaborations applicable to

organisations aiming to expand their businesses geographically or through alliances.

4. The Global Economic Crisis as a Crisis of Trust. Business Coverage in Opinion-Leading Print and TV Media in Times of Crisis

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Abstract:
The worldwide crisis results from developments in the real economy – but the dynamics of the downturn is influenced by media coverage. Groundbreaking research by Lamla and al. has established a strong correlation between the tone of economic coverage and the decisions taken by companies.[3] This paper analyzes how reporting about the economy and business has developed since the economic crisis, which evolved in the wake of the "new economy boom". The paper compares the coverage of the state of the economy and the reporting about companies over the period from January 1998 until March 2009. Based on the changing patterns in sectoral coverage and topic structure of reporting, the analysis explores, how media coverage interacts with developments in the real economy and perceptions and intentions of companies and consumers.

The analysis is based on two long-term data sets:

1) an exhaustive quantitative-qualitative analysis of the coverage of the economy in opinion-leading German TV and print outlets, which assesses the tone of coverage and the topic structures on story level

2) a comparable analysis of the coverage of industries and individual companies on story level.

Preliminary results show:

1) Dynamics and intensity of negative coverage of the economy have increased notably in the period 2008/2009 compared to 2002. Negative coverage thus anticipated the development in the real economy, e.g. the downturn in employment.

2) Reporting about companies turned markedly negative in the period of 2008/2009 with a strong focus on management issues. This development was accompanied by an increasing personalization of business coverage.

3) At the same time, the salience of share price coverage was less marked in 2008/2009 than in 2002. But on the other hand the tone of the reports focusing on shares was even more negative than in the previous period, when the shares of Deutsche Telekom hit their lowest point. The example of Deutsche Telekom is especially significant, because the IPO of DT marked the beginning of a share boom in Germany and was accompanied by an extraordinary PR campaign which involved a famous actor. The downturn of the Telekom shares was accordingly featured prominently in popular media, like TV news or the leading national tabloid Bild-Zeitung.

4) Reporting about the causes and the possible effects of the American sub-prime crisis affected the development of the real economy in a way, that further undermined trust in the existing structures and the financial reserves of companies, thus aggravating the adverse refinancing conditions for banks and other companies.

5) The crisis frame of reporting re-inforced the perception of an all-encompassing downturn by fading out reports about companies that were not reporting losses.

6) Reporting about economic policy focused strongly on political protagonists and their programs. Public support for a much stronger role of the state in economic affairs, ranging from a marked extension of subsidies to the nationalization of banks rose accordingly in the wake of this coverage.

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[3] Lamla, Michael, Lein, Sarah M. and Sturm, Jan-Egbert: News and Sectoral Comovement, Zurich 2007 [= KOF Working Papers No. 183]