

relations is going to play a leadership role in organization-public relations (OPR) in future. Furthermore, surveys such as Gallup polls (e.g., Czarnecki, 2019) and academic studies (e.g., Coombs & Holladay, 2014) note that public relations has a poor reputation and a lack of credibility in many parts of society. This raises the controversial but inevitable question: should the term public relations and the even more disdained abbreviation 'PR' be abandoned? Why not simply refer to communication, or public communication, to identify the increasingly diverse, multidisciplinary, multimedia field of organization-public communication and OPR practices that are undertaken today? What purpose does the discursively constructed concept and theorization of public relations as distinct from corporate, organizational, and strategic communication serve in light of the porous boundaries of these fields and the paradigmatic and practical limitations of 'PR'? Perhaps the future of public relations is not public relations!

Such a suggestion is not simply a call for a name change. Nor is it to echo the common call for 'PR for PR'. Transformational change is required along the lines of the literature discussed in Sections 1 and 2. Hope and inspiration may be drawn from the fact that transformational change is often triggered by cataclysmic and existential events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Perhaps in a world of rising temperatures, warming oceans, and extreme weather events; in which further pandemics are likely; where post-truth politics threatens democracy; where social inequity is creating outrage; new paradigms will evolve and new leaders emerge.

7. Limitations

A limitation of the study is that it is based on three cases only involving a multinational corporation and two of its major subsidiaries operating in western, southern, and eastern Europe respectively. Further research is required to establish the extent of the practices identified. However, given the best practice focus of the organizations studied, the scale of their operations, and the results obtained, these case studies raise questions worthy of further exploration and discussion.

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