

Pekka Aula and Leif Åberg

Blistering Publicities: A New Challenge for Organizational Communication and Public Relations

Introduction

The relationship between organisations and publicity has changed dramatically during the past two decades, though in the 1990s, it was assumed that publicity could be easily managed or even controlled in certain conditions. These days we discuss publicity's unmanageability and the difficulty in influencing what people are saying or how publicity treats organisations.¹ Communication technology has recently dominated organisational publicity perspectives: first, the Internet largely as technological platform, then social networking. Early analyses of the Internet and public relations (PR) focused primarily on technology and tools: The Internet was considered to influence the organisation's communication channels and audiences, the content and form of its messages, and how it received feedback.²

With the development of social media (e.g., Facebook, Pinterest) and other online community and networking services (e.g., LinkedIn), the Internet creates meanings attached to organisations and the relationships of actors who influence the organisation's activities. Indeed, the Internet can be considered an "environment of meanings"³, "an arena for making sense"⁴ or, in the words of Professor Leif Åberg⁵, "a space for communities and human interaction."

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Pekka Aula and Leif Åberg are professors of Communication and Media Studies at the University of Helsinki. They can be reached at pekka.aula@helsinki.fi and leif.berg@helsinki.fi.

¹ Aula & Heinonen 2011.

² van der Merwe et al. 2005, Ihator 2001.

³ E.g. Aula & Mantere 2008, du Gay 2000.

⁴ Aula & Vapaa 2006.

⁵ Åberg 2006, 113.

Alongside the publicity created primarily by traditional media (e.g., TV, radio, print media) has come emotionally sensitive digital publicity⁶ characterised by continuously emerging audiences and the communications technologies and services connecting them. From this publicity is formed a complex communications environment of multiple actors in which communication is between the organisation and its audiences and interaction between audiences.⁷

The concept of networked publicity highlights organisations' increased visibility and strong dependence on social interaction.⁸ This new publicity is ambient and contained within the organisation. From this perspective, publicity is not outside the organisation; rather, the organisation and publicity are components of the same meaning-producing communications system.⁹ Thus, the organisation, traditional and new media, and physical communications networks converge into a single networked, unlimited form of publicity.

Essentially, the change in publicity has forced organisations to evaluate their relationships to publicity in a novel way and influenced various communication practices, that is, how organisations form and maintain relationships. Moreover, the boundary between an organisation and its environment has further blurred. The change in publicity has affected how an organisation believes it should interact with publicity and its various actors.

In this article, we analyse the dynamics of organizational publicity and changes to the understanding of PR and its practices. We argue that publicity is in constant motion and that the dynamic changes in publicity issues are complex, even chaotic. The publicity is

⁶ Scott & Walsham 2005, Laaksonen et al. 2011.

⁷ de Bussy et al. 2000.

⁸ Frieland, Hove & Rojas 2006.

⁹ Aula 2010.

never totally bland or “gentle”; it is always blistering in some way or somewhere. We also argue that micro- and macro-level processes interact when organisations function in dynamic publicity fields and that communication acts (what organizations say) and functional acts (what organizations do) that appear in publicity affect the organisation’s reputation.

We begin by exploring companies’ central views about PR, after which we present our conceptualisation of the public sphere. We then condense our concept into a theory of the dynamics of publicity, then mirror the results with the idea of “blistering publicity.” We conclude this article by considering our theory’s practical impacts on how to manage and evaluate the relationship between companies and publicity – or in other words, PR in the era of blistering publicities.

PR perspective on publicity

Broadly speaking, two perspectives have described the relationship between organisations and publicity. According to the earlier managerial, mostly Anglo-American conceptualization, an organisation’s PR representation builds, develops, and maintains interactive relationships. Accordingly, an organisation systematically manages communications to influence the opinions formed about it and to maintain common understanding and trust. In this way, PR is assessed from the perspective of strategic relationship management.¹⁰ This approach is promoted, for example, by Professor James Grunig, the leading figure in the new publicity perspective in organisational communications.¹¹ He analysed traditional public theories from the organisation’s perspective and identified and studied the creation and functional mechanisms of the organisation’s audiences. The same concept of PR, which emphasises the role of the communications department or the person responsible for communications, appears in Professor Leif Åberg’s books on communications management¹² and in the Finnish Association of

Communications Professionals’ (ProComs’) *2012 Principles of Public Relations*¹³.

The other PR perspective, which draws primarily from European traditions, emphasises the reflective nature between the organisation and publicity and focuses on audiences and public spheres. This view highlights the effects of the organisation’s activities on its audiences and society,¹⁴ with which the organisation maintains a dialogical relationship.¹⁵ Moreover, some recent Finnish organisational communication models have stressed the communicative role of each member of the organisation to strategically managed communications. Individual members are important in creating a reputation.¹⁶ In her latest studies¹⁷, Professor Elisa Juholin has accented the importance of all employees’ communication skills and interactive, dialogical communications.

The above-mentioned PR concepts examine publicity as something separate from the organisation and as a relatively stable state existing regardless of organisations. Accordingly, an organisation’s task is adjusting to prevailing publicity. PR activities focus on stakeholders or audiences with publicity influence or on relationships between the organisation and publicity actors. Basic publicity mechanisms are taken for granted, and publicity is examined instrumentally.

Complexity drivers in publicity

The relationship between an organisation and publicity can be approached from a reciprocal perspective: The organisation operates in public spheres and creates new types of publicity. Therefore, publicity is neither uniform nor static. Regarding changing publicity, what is important is the increased diversity that drives publicity complexity. Publicity is always in flux. Accordingly, organisations’ PR today can be characterised by increased diversity in

¹⁰ Hutton 1999.

¹¹ Grunig et al. 1992.

¹² See e.g. Åberg 2000.

¹³ ProCom 2012 “Principles of Public Relations: Towards the year 2020 - strategic communication and blistering publicities, www.procom.fi.

¹⁴ Verčič et al. 2001, Raupp 2004.

¹⁵ Kent and Taylor 1998, 2002.

¹⁶ Aula and Mantere 2008, Aula and Heinonen 2011.

¹⁷ See e.g. Juholin 2007.

structure, function, content, time, and communications.

According to the *structural diversity* of PR, an increasing number of actors are active in the interface between an organisation and publicity. In the early 1990s, organisations' public spheres were easier to distinguish and describe than today. Stakeholder-based PR models were based on the idea an organisation could define and prioritise stakeholder relations and it could execute systematic, goal-oriented communications with these stakeholders.

Functional diversity refers to the number and dynamics of stakeholders. Previously, the relatively few stakeholders were defined according to their roles and institutional relations, for example, decision-makers, important customers, or key journalists or investment analysts, who were treated relatively separately. Because of the Internet, organisations are faced with countless new stakeholders characterised by interest in a theme.

The increased *diversity of content* in PR means the number of issues affecting organisations has grown and they, too, are interconnected in new ways. These issues' ripple effect¹⁸ is substantial and hard to predict; in this sense, the ripple effect resembles the butterfly effect, according to which a small change at one place in a system can effect large transformations in a later state. In practice, the ripple effect describes how a person can take content in a blog, for example, and tweet the link to others, after which it could be posted on Facebook or reported by the media – issues ride on ripples.

The importance of time to organisational PR has changed. The increased *diversity in time* in PR means that organisations are being increasingly assessed on their plans. Moreover, the Internet does not forget: Old issues live on for a long time and might reappear when they are least wanted.

Moreover, *diversity of communications* determines organisations' PR. Organisations long considered the Internet as a new channel that, utilised skilfully, provided an important addi-

tion to their communications palette, for example, in the form of online shopping, online customer magazines, or social media marketing. But the Internet's more important influence is the increased interaction between stakeholders it enables. Although the concepts of Web 2.0 and social media are indeed ambiguous, organisations' new communication reality results directly from the development and popularity of search engines, social media, and other online social networking services. Diversity has increased also within traditional media: The media and their audiences have fragmented.

To explain this new, dynamic, diverse field of organisational communication and PR, we will outline our *theory of dynamic public spheres*, where *dynamic public sphere* refers to a communication space within which issues affecting an organisation circulate at different stages of a life cycle. These issues are significant, because they determine new and emerging audiences, how audiences relate to organisations, and how they create meanings about organisations. Our theory is based on the observation that, within dynamic public spheres, we can identify 1) emerging issues, 2) issues linked with these, 3) actors activated, and 4) their acts. Moreover, we can analyse 5) the discourses and arguments actors raise and use, 6) the nature of the public sphere like traditional media, social media, and real-time intercommunication situations, and 7) the dynamics of the public sphere regarding increasing or decreasing diversity. By identifying these, we can define our theory's key concepts.

Dynamic public spheres

All organisations operate in diverse *public spheres* and create new publicity with their actions. Iivonen and Åberg (2009) identify public spheres in two ways. First, they analyse whether actions are direct or mediated: Are the actors interacting face to face or via some media, like the Internet, television, or even newspaper columns? Second, they analyse if actions are broad or limited: How open and broad or limited and small is the group that appears publicly? The focus of public spheres is from an organisational perspective – naturally, an organisation's internal publicity.

¹⁸ The *Ripple effect* is a concept developed by Laurel Papworth (2008).

Central to Iivonen's and Åberg's model is the conceptual difference between publicity and public spheres: From organisations' perspectives, *publicity* refers to a situation in which people communicate about an issue related to the organisation. This requires that at least one person identify the issue and recognise it affects him. When this person relates the issue to others, publicity is created. *Public spheres* are virtual or real-world spaces in which publicities are created. In public spheres, social actors encounter each other: citizens, stakeholder representatives, experts, journalists, and non-governmental organisations.

Issues are matters affecting organisations that result, directly or indirectly, from the organisations' actions. For example, they can be caused directly when an organisation discontinues activities in a certain location, or they can be caused indirectly when activists target an organisation because they believe it supports activities activists oppose. An example of the latter is when an animal rights activist group targets a fur farm or shop based on its location, lack of security, or similar considerations. Regarding dynamic public spheres, issues can be divided into emerging issues and other issues linked to emerging themes.

Each issue has its own life cycle. Although the beginning of the life cycle is easily determined, its end is considerably harder to pinpoint. On one hand, the life cycle can end when an issue is completely resolved and ceases to exist. For example, in October 2011, the Finnish national broadcaster YLE reported that then-Member of Parliament Hannes Manninen was among a group of fraud suspects in a case involving Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY). Manninen and RAY denied the allegations strongly, and YLE was forced to admit it misreported the story. On the other hand, an issue's presentation can cause repercussions contrary to the intentions of the person highlighting the issue leaving the person to think, "How long are you going to keep this up?" The issue can reappear after long periods of time. An old issue can be revived as an emerging issue, or it can be raised again and linked with a new, emerging issue making people to wonder something like "There was a similar situation three years ago, when the organisation did this or that...".

Actors are persons or groups who perform publicity acts. These communication acts, like a public discussion, online statement, letter to the editor, or TV show, publicise issues and actions resulting from publicity. An example of the latter is a decision to start a committee to monitor election spending or a minister's dismissal.

Actors in the public sphere can be classified differently. Journalist and writer Malcolm Gladwell (2000) distinguishes between connectors, mavens (information specialists), and salesmen (persuaders). In his theory on the diffusion of innovations, Everett Rogers (1962) distinguishes between different adopter categories: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. Actors in these models are classified according to their communication roles, which is particularly clear in Gladwell's classification. Rogers connects these roles with the diffusion of innovation while admitting the communications of different adopter categories differ considerably.

Issues are always presented in a certain *discourse*, and *arguments* justify them. A discourse defines the contents, concepts, and arguments of the issue and excludes alternative methods of presentation (Hall 1999, Foucault 2005). When examining dynamic public spheres, the concept of discourse is particularly useful, because an issue presented in a specific discourse can either activate other disseminators of the discourse or create counter discourses. An argument is a reasoned claim or opinion. From the perspective of the dynamic public sphere, arguments are important because actors use them to justify an issue or discourse. Analysing arguments is important to finding counterarguments.

Gladwell (2000) popularised the *tipping point*, which he defines as the critical moment when a certain issue begins to multiply and spread much faster than before. The issue could be a fashion trend, rumour, campaign, mobilisation, a surprising event, or any other unanticipated development. In this way, the tipping point resembles a phase transition in physics, in which a certain system changes unexpectedly or even disappears due to the influence of a previously unknown factor.

Gladwell presents three factors that affect the spread of issues: the law of the few, stickiness, and the power of context. The law of the few focuses on people involved in the process – the connectors, mavens, and salesmen mentioned above. Stickiness compels people to pay close, sustained attention to an issue; it hits a specific group at a specific moment. The power of context refers to conditions in which issues emerge. A small issue regarding a politician may be overlooked during an election campaign, yet become a hot topic before elections. In 2009, a singer in the TV show *Britain's Got Talent*, Susan Boyle, rose to worldwide Internet fame overnight. The Asian tsunami catastrophe in 2004 brought actors into the limelight that were previously known only within a very limited sphere of online publicity, like the www.sukeltajat.fi website in Finland, which was an important unofficial information source during the catastrophe.

With these concepts, it is possible to describe and analyse an organisation's public sphere at a specific moment, the dynamics (i.e., changes) of the public sphere, and the state of publicity regarding the organisation's activities. In the next section, we present the main premises about potentially chaotic publicity based on the uncontrollability of issues, the instability of publicity itself, the unpredictability of organizational activities, and their consequences.

Toward blistering publicities

The basic principle behind our theory is that human communication directs the form and behaviour of any organization (Aula, 1999), which is the essence of any form of organizational communication and, thus, PR. This means organization and publicity are, by definition, social. Moreover, organisations and publicities are social systems that embody “a high degree of systemic interdependence, which, among other things, leads to nonlinearity, emergent order creation, and other surprising dynamics” (Hazy et al., 2007: 4). Thus, publicity, as a social system, is never totally predictable, and a small change at one point in time may generate disproportionate social change later.

Our first premise is on loan from physics, namely, the concept of entropy: *the natural direction of a system is toward disorder*. In

normal conditions, all systems left to themselves tend to increase disorder in direct relation to the amount of time. Entropy increases as it moves from an orderly, organised, planned state toward a more disorganised, fragmented, unplanned state. The more disorder in a system, the greater its entropy. An example of entropy is the increased disorder on a desk if you don't work to keep it tidy.

According to the second premise of our theory, *local organising is possible by action and communication or suitable conditions*. Human systems are never left to themselves: A person can take action to return order from disorder. In the real world, you can tidy your desk. In organisational context, examples of making order include planning, organising activities, and sharing tasks. Local organising is described by the theory of self-organising systems, in which a new structure can be created without external pressure. That is, a system can be organised without conscious organising. In suitable conditions, systems can behave in a self-directed manner, which can spontaneously and radically change the system's structure and functions.¹⁹

If the first and second premises are correct, *factors that create disorder are as natural to organisations as factors that create order*. This is our theory's third premise. An organisation's path toward chaos, i.e., the breaking point of the system, is as important and natural as the trend toward order.²⁰ Regarding an organisation's communication, dissipative communication, which creates disorder and destroys prevailing meanings, is as important as integrative communication, which maintains the prevailing order and meanings' structure.²¹

According to the fourth and final premise of our theory, *the micro-level interactions of an organisation affect micro-level structures, and vice versa*. In certain conditions, the micro-level acts of an organisation are organised into macro-levels. This means an organisation's local, seemingly meaningless grassroots communication can significantly affect all the organisation's activities and, therefore, its publicity processes. What is essential is that, even if communications are disorganised locally,

¹⁹ Goldstein 1994.

²⁰ Rowley and Roevens 1996.

²¹ Aula 1999.

they can create behavioural regularities from the overall organisation's perspective.

The theory of dynamic public spheres

In the earlier section, we described the general premises that support our examination of organisations' contemporary publicity. When publicity is studied from an individual organisation's perspective, its dynamical nature becomes clearer than if studied on a more general level, for example, a political or societal system. In other words, we can assume the number of issues and actors will be more limited when we study issues meaningful to a specific organisation from its perspective.

Based on previous chapters, we will present our theory of the dynamic publicity processes of organisations in the form of propositions.²²

Proposition 1. Organisations' publicity work, like PR, occurs in public spheres. These public spheres consist of communicative arenas with countless potential actors.

Proposition 1.1. Actors are activated when they perform a communicative act concerning the organisation. If they do not get others to participate, no group is created concerning the issue, and the issue will probably fade. Thus, the actor's act has meaning for the organisation only if the issue or the actor is sufficiently powerful. Essentially, it can be assumed the life cycle of causes behind the actor's communicative act is limited and the impact on the organisation's publicity will be minimal.

Proposition 1.2. If more than one actor is activated, groupings are formed. The interlinking of these emerging audiences can occur around a shared issue, common discourse, or relationships. Accordingly, there are a large number of potential groupings in public spheres, for example, in Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. The

activated groupings are created dynamically, i.e., the creation and development of a grouping is influenced by previous occurrences during the publicity process and what is expected to happen.

Proposition 1.3. If propositions 1.1 and 1.2 are true, an organisation's public sphere at a specific moment can be described as a meaning-creating network in which nodes are the issue raised plus issues or counter-issues, actors and the groupings they form, and the discourses of issues linked to the original issue. Correspondingly, the dynamics of the public sphere can be described as changes that occur over time within a meaning-creating network. When comparing a public sphere's situation at a specific time to what preceded it, we can learn if publicity fragmentation is increasing or decreasing.

Proposition 2. The more publicity there is (i.e. "many publicities"), the more difficult it is to control it, because interdependencies increase exponentially.

Proposition 2.1. An organisation that is an issue's target generally strives – if the issue is negative and potentially harmful – to officially negate or minimise the issue. This occurs in the form of a denial, counterarguments, downplaying the issue or its proposer, directing public debate elsewhere, or raising new themes favourable to the organisation that presumably will lessen the impact of negative issues already in the public sphere. If the issue is positive or potentially beneficial, the organisation will probably strive to maintain the issue and derive the greatest possible benefit from it.

Proposition 2.2. New publicity activates micro-level communications. Accordingly, a new issue impacts the organisation's internal public spheres. An issue raised within internal public spheres can shift to external public spheres.

Proposition 3. If a phase transition (or tipping point) occurs within an organisation's public spheres, the organisation will be forced to act differently. Herein lies the power of publicity. The problem is that issues do not disappear entirely - they always leave a mark in organisation's history. Therefore, an organisation cannot just begin acting differently as if noth-

²² To draw attention to these essential characteristics of the complex nature and assumable non-linear processes of the dynamic publicities we will explore and follow the central ideas of complexity and chaos theories. The theory of the dynamic public sphere is based on authors' previous reflections: on the theory of dynamic organisational communications (DOT, Aula 1999) and on the theory of spontaneous activity dynamics (SAD, Åberg 2011).

ing ever happened. After the tipping point, the acts of the organisation – or any other actor – are assessed or legitimised differently than before, because whatever occurred cannot be wiped from the slate. People have long memories; the Internet remembers (almost) everything.

Publicity aflame

Our theory of dynamic public spheres proposes the processes of public spheres affecting organisations are dynamic, complex, and recursive. Publicity is, therefore, always in motion. It appears as acts others observe and interpret. These acts exist in a complex, very

unpredictable relationship with each other. It is almost impossible to predict the effect of an issue's rise. Similarly, no single process in publicity can be returned to its starting point; publicity is irreversible. In the next section, we consider publicity tipping points with the help of our theory.

An event may begin a process that progresses in time and in which an individual acts differently, which attracts others. The combined effect of different factors leads to growing pressure until the tipping point, when a phase transition occurs on the level of societal behaviour.

Table 1: Five stages and shifts in activities.

1	Individual-level tipping point	Individual level
2	Creation of initial group	Group level
3	Clash of issues	Group/societal level
4	Tipping point	Societal level
5	Activities after the phase transition	Societal level

There are five stages in our theory of spontaneous activity dynamics, through which activities shift from the individual level via the group level to the societal level.

The basis for the individual-level tipping point is that an individual notices an activity or event and reacts. A phase shift then occurs: The individual communicates differently than before.

It can be assumed that, on the individual level, the transition occurs when the individual experiences a distracting stimulus related to the sensory environment: A branch snaps in the forest, or thunder rumbles in the distance. Or a person reads or hears news and realises it affects him or her. The distraction can be a decision or organisational action someone notices. It can be another's conscious act, like an opposition party's decision to activate before elections, a competitor's actions, or the communications of a malicious actor, like the deliberate spread of disinformation.

The second stage is the birth of the infant issue. From a social process perspective, a tipping point is created when at least two people share an observation and act. This creates the initial

group, that is, the group that begins to think about an issue an individual raised. Because of this sharing, the process becomes social – previously it was simply a reflection of the individual. This is the state of pre-publicity, because the issue is apparent only among the initial group.

The creation of the initial group is decisive for three reasons. First, the issue is created when a certain matter or worry is shared, i.e., it begins to be communicated. Second, the initial group's composition has a decisive influence on the intensity with which the matter is raised. In accordance with Grunig and Hunt (1984), three factors influence the activities of the initial group at this stage: 1) identifying the problem: Does at least one person realise the matter is a problem? 2) barriers experienced because of the activities: Does at least one person believe something can be done about the issue? and 3) degree of commitment: To what degree and how strongly is the matter connected with people and their social circle? Because of the initial group's activities, the issue becomes apparent to others, causing a shift to the next stage, i.e., the clash of issues.

When an issue with its arguments in a specific discourse is raised or it enters the public sphere, action is created. For the clash of issues in the third stage, we can apply Aula's (1999) arena model of struggling cultures, according to which an organisation can be in a latent, competitive, anarchistic, or monolithic relationship with its audiences.

A relationship with audiences is latent when no issue in the public sphere connects the organisation and actor. When an issue becomes public, a competitive relationship forms. If many new issues are linked with the emerging issue, or if the number of actors grows large, the relationship becomes anarchistic. The organisation's situation management is reduced, and the diversity of the public sphere increases. The relationship becomes monolithic if the issue's life cycle fades without a phase transition occurring. In a monolithic relationship, interaction is naturally two way, yet integrative. Communications are executed through formal and established channels, which is close to the traditional concept of PR management.

In practice, the sequence of events could proceed as follows. The subject of an issue strives to silence or downplay the issue or its proponents. The proponent of the original issue then presents new arguments or linked issues. Other actors are activated who raise new discursive or counter-discursive issues, linked issues, or new arguments. It can be assumed the public sphere becomes larger and more diverse, breaking old conceptions and creating new meanings as shifts occur from one public sphere to another. This happens particularly when issues shift from a closed sphere to a public sphere or from indirect spheres to direct ones.²³

The fourth stage is the tipping point, when a dramatic change may occur. In practice, this means people begin to perceive differently from before. A single issue can change a lot after the tipping point, when a sufficiently large group of people believe differently. Their interpretive framework changes irrevocably, and perceptions change regarding their influence on social practices. Recent studies (SCNARC/Rensselaer 2011) show that, if 10% or more support a minority-proposed opinion, it will become dominant. Such a small percentage is explained by

how minority representatives communicate views within their networks, providing more weight to an individual's proposal than the idea's original distribution in all media might suggest.

Something always precedes the tipping point. According to the butterfly effect discussed earlier, small changes in the original state can lead to great consequences in the future. In the beginning, a small event occurs whose eventual meaning cannot be comprehended. This small event causes another small event that perhaps would not have happened without the preceding stimulus. And because social processes are naturally nonlinear and irreversible, i.e., they cannot be nullified and returned to the original state, the process continues until it either dies and fades – or it reaches the tipping point.

It is important to note that a tipping point does not happen in a vacuum. Societal circumstances, like an existing political culture, affect individual issues' tipping points. Indeed, researchers²⁴ have pointed to a kind of void in the prevailing social structure that is filled, like the Arab Spring uprisings in 2011; a social demand someone decides to satisfy, like populist parties' election themes; something that clicks at the right moment, like the popularity of low-carbohydrate diets; or a window of opportunity open for only a brief moment, like being the right person or organization at the right time and place.

Social processes thus have a greater probability of reaching the tipping point if there are structural imbalances within society or a community. The Occupy Wall Street movement that arose in autumn 2011 is a good example of this. Occupy Wall Street protests appeared in surprising places. In Spain, these protesters are called *indignados*, i.e., the indignant – those who are indignant about the lack of jobs, money, and a future. This indignation can cause a tipping point. Moreover, social processes are more likely to reach the tipping point if a noticeable structural gap is created in a certain situation, like the lack of social control, for example, the absence of police during the Watts race riots in Los Angeles in 1965.

²³ Iivonen & Åberg 2009.

²⁴ Eg. Smelser 1962 or Winston 1986.

When a phase shift occurs in public spheres, actors are forced to behave differently. Herein lies the power of publicities. The practices of society or a part of society are changed. This change is the fifth and final stage of the tipping point.

In conclusion

We have described how the diversity of organisations' public spheres has increased. We presented our theory describing the dynamics of public spheres and reflected on the tipping points of publicities. Finally, on the basis of our

theory's essential characteristics, we present certain challenges connected with PR management in practice.

Publicity is a dynamic process in which issues arise, may reach the tipping point, or fade away. Accordingly, an organisation cannot know in advance how a certain issue will develop. This would require more advanced publicity analysis methods. In Table 1, we exemplify situations in which the degree of diversity changes, shifting either toward greater control or toward the edge of chaos.

Table 2. Examples of situations in which control over publicities increases or in which the public sphere becomes more chaotic and less controllable.

<i>Towards greater control if</i>	<i>Towards the edge of chaos if</i>
Issues are not important	Important issue is raised in the public sphere
Issue's life cycle is declining	Issue's life cycle is on the rise
Number of issues is decreasing	Number of issues is increasing
Amount of interconnections is decreasing	Amount of interconnections is increasing
Number of arenas is decreasing	Number of arenas is increasing
Amount of integrative communications is increasing	Amount of dissipative communications is increasing

In the future, organisations must increasingly legitimise their operations at closer intervals, i.e., whenever an issue threatens to reach the tipping point. This creates new challenges for management and communications professionals. All personnel must be aware, at least generally, of the public sphere's situation and the changes occurring within it.

These public sphere processes cannot fail to influence the organisation's reputation. It depends on what kinds of issues are raised in the public sphere and how the organisation manages these issues.

The dynamic nature of public spheres is creating new types of leaders. For example, the Occupy movement has leaders and key actors who have been identified or recognised as leaders in no other contexts. This creates new challenges for the idea of stakeholders and its application. Traditional stakeholders, like the media, politicians, or analysts, can be identified. Accordingly, long-term communications

with them can be planned. But no planning model can foresee that, for example, on 16 August, a group of concerned mothers will decide to take action.

In his study of the importance of the Internet to democracy, Evgeny Morozov in his book *The Net Delusion* (2011) presents an instrumentalist, ecological perspective on technology and social change. According to the former, the Internet is a neutral political tool and unbiased supporter of change. According to the latter, the Internet is changing the political environment, those who participate in it, and the language of politics. Likewise, organisations should conceptualise publicity more broadly than through a simplistic tools approach. Instead of the instrumentalisation of publicity, changes in publicity change the organisation itself, the way audiences relate to it, and the discourses of stakeholders regarding organisations. To understand publicity, organisations should commit to analysing the long-term effects of publicity changes.

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