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276

Laura Asunta

The Role, the Goal and the Soul of Professional Public Relations

Developing a Holistic Model of PR Professionalism

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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ABSTRACT

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This doctoral dissertation investigates PR professionalism and PR as a strategic expert function. The approach is phenomenographic and the research progresses through four phases: (1) building a conceptual framework, (2) conducting an interpretative study of concepts, (3) conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews among 37 Finnish PR experts, and (4) constructing a holistic model of PR professionalism.

The interpretative study of concepts concludes that PR professionalism consists of expertise in management of identity, management of public sphere, and management of relationships, and its core values are respect, responsibility and reflexivity.

The interview study outlines five different approaches to the PR professional: Bridge builder, Advocate of the organisation, Advocate of the mission, Strategic facilitator, and Neutral facilitator. The critical differences in PR professionals' thinking regarding their profession relate to the main goal of PR, its position and how the demand for recognition is reasoned, nature of communication, general orientation, and relation to ethics.

The holistic model of PR professionalism consists of three intertwined and inseparable dimensions – the role, the goal and the soul of the professional PR – which enable and empower PR to ascend to its full potential as a strategic expert function. Through these dimensions PR professionalism facilitates communicative organisation and bridges the organisation with its environments, guides the PR profession to goal-oriented and high quality practice, and supports individual practitioner's competence and professional identity.

Keywords: Public relations, communication management, professionalism, expertise, professional roles

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PREFACE

All meanings, we know, depend on the key of interpretation.
George Eliot

This research was initially triggered by personal experiences of role confusion when working as a PR professional. How I saw myself and the goals of PR did not always seem to match with the image others had of me and my tasks. And there were various images, some closer to and others further from, the reality – or my interpretation of it.

I also understood that I was not alone in facing this dilemma. Role confusion was a common phenomenon which had been bothering the field and its representatives for ages. I wanted to clarify who PR professionals are and how they should be perceived. I wanted to solve the identity crisis of PR.

However, instead of one truth I found several truths – several perceptions. And in trying to understand these perceptions, and the keys to interpreting them, I began to think: who am I to judge any of them? Perhaps there is no right way of understanding PR. But would that then imply that anybody can do anything under the heading of PR, and call it professional practice? There had to be more to it than that.

This research is about bridging various points of view. It is about finding shared meanings and understanding different ways of thinking. And the same might be said about the work of PR professionals. In PR professionals' work it is essential to understand that how one sees things is not the whole picture (or not necessarily even a piece of a correct picture). We all look at things from our own perspectives and within certain frames. Only through interaction is it possible to understand those frames and – perhaps eventually – construct shared meanings. And only through seeing oneself as part of the interrelated net of meanings is it possible to find sustainable solutions and common ground for coexistence and cooperation. It demands respect and reflexivity to be a good (corporate) citizen in this world of effectiveness, strategic thinking, and competitive advantage. You cannot just take whatever you get hold of along the road and utilise it as your own. You also have to consider the perspectives of others and the consequences of your actions. Connectedness and mutual respect are the core principles of good PR, and through these principles the profession is deeply rooted in the worldview and philosophy of humanism.

Building bridges, connecting viewpoints, constructing meanings: this is what I believe public relations is about. At its best, PR is communication that creates the bridge moment: the moment of understanding more than just the words or signs, the moment of engagement, the moment of being part of the bigger picture. At their best, PR professionals can help others to reach their bridge moment and build mutually beneficial relationships based on the bridges of understanding and connectedness.

At this point – as I am about to graduate – it is customary to look back and

reflect on one's research journey. I could describe some rocky roads of desperation, the riptides in the ocean of knowledge, or the views from the high hills of accomplishment. But I want to talk about important bridges.

This journey actually began long before I even thought about doing a doctoral degree. It started while I was still doing my MA thesis. I had returned to my studies after struggling with elevated brain pressure, the doctors' failure in treating me, and major vision loss that led me to being categorised as "legally blind". Despite my disability I was crawling back to life, validating myself again as a viable and productive human being. Every day on my way to the department of communication I crossed a river called *Tourujoki*. On crisp winter mornings as I crossed the bridge the rays of the rising sun made the frost on the branches of the trees arching over the river shine and glisten like a thousand diamonds. "It is so beautiful out here," I wanted to exclaim; but I didn't, because it would have sounded a little odd coming from someone holding a white cane. What did I see anyway? But I saw. And I imagined the rest. I filled the picture in in my head and my heart. And I realised that in completing the picture I became part of it. I was connected with the world. A short time before this I had isolated myself in my misery. Now I was on the bridge, seeing and breathing the beauty of the world, connected to life in an entirely new way. I was back – and much more than that.

My bridge moment led to new steps, new directions, and new connections. Some years later I found myself discussing the topic of my doctoral dissertation with my supervisor. And now, (too many) years later, I find myself on the bridge again, reaching for my place within academia. Hoping to understand and be understood. Hoping to connect with others' work and bring my own contribution to the shared construction of PR professionalism.

It is not always easy to open your eyes to new horizons, and look over the troubled waters and the gaps that disconnect you from the other side. It is human to fear the unknown and prefer the solid ground under your feet. Sometimes you need help to interpret the situation: to build a bridge over the gaps. I sincerely thank all those who have built bridges for me by granting me their tangible and intangible support during my journey of discovery.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the Finnish Cultural Foundation, more specifically, the foundation of Kalle and Dagmar Välimaa, for their generous three-year grant. I was also awarded a grant by the Rector of the University of Jyväskylä for one year full-time employment as a doctoral student, and some smaller grants by the Faculty of Humanities and the C.V. Åkerlind Foundation. I am grateful for all this financial support which made it possible for me to focus on the challenges of research instead of more mundane worries.

My supervisor, Professor Marita Vos, naturally deserves many thanks for her efforts and her patience with me: she never lost her faith in me – even though my progress was sometimes, indeed, more a matter of faith than proven evidence. My second supervisor, Professor Vilma Luoma-aho, has also provided some valuable perspectives along the way. I am more than grateful to the reviewers of this thesis, Associate Professor Inger Jensen and Professor Catrin Johansson, for all their advice and inspiring comments, which have greatly helped me to improve it. Many other senior researchers at our department and within wider academic circles have also showed me a great deal of support and helped me to find my focus in times of trouble.

Special thanks goes to my intelligent and endlessly helpful friend, post-doc researcher Anne Laajalahti, who has enormous knowledge to share and a magic hawk-eye that catches the smallest detail even in a moving target. I also want to thank Sini Tuikka from the Publishing Unit for smooth and friendly service in finalising the layout of my thesis and coordinating the printing process. Many thanks also to the language editor Marcus Denton.

I also want to express my gratitude to my personal trainer, Janne Savallampi, whose workouts offered much needed counterbalance to all that intellectual wrestling at the computer. He taught me what it means to do your best, and reminded me that, no matter how long the journey, it is done by putting one foot in front of the other.

All my dear friends and fellow doctoral students definitely deserve their share of thanks as well. They have been bridges that connect my scientific bubble to "real life". We have shared many deeply intellectual discussions about famous poets, the impact of weather conditions on different objects such as bicycles, the renewal of religious traditions in postmodern communities, and so on. They have also listened without complaint to my endless analysis of my research, my philosophical approach, my relationship with the scientific community, my progress, my ordeals, and my this and that. From now on I promise: less thinking and more action!

I am also deeply thankful to my family. Our Canadian relatives, the Hoicka family, have showed me great support and given some valuable advice regarding various issues. My brothers, Miika and Markus, have helped me with some practical matters along the way. To my mother and father: the bridge of continuity, connectedness, and caring that you have built throughout my life has taught me the most important values, which have guided me on my way. Your integrity, persistence, creativity, and your great sense of humour, which turns the darkest moment upside-down, are priceless! Finally, I want to thank the Heavenly Father, the giver of life, for blessing me with the brains to undertake this research, and the brain surgeons who are to be thanked for the fact that I did not have to do it in Braille.

> All I'm saying is simply this, that all life is interrelated, that somehow we're caught in an inescapable network of mutuality tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason, I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. You can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality.
>
> Dr Martin Luther King Jr

Jyväskylä, a night in November 2015, under the northern lights

Laura Asunta

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YHTEENVEDON KUVIOT JA TAULUKOT

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century organisations operate in ever more complex environments and the intended and unintended consequences of their actions may be seen and judged differently in a variety of arenas. While public relations (PR) may have a significant role in helping organisations to deal with various challenges of contemporary world, perceptions regarding the role and importance of PR vary a lot among different actors – including PR scholars and PR professionals.

The views range from profound mistrust to ardent belief that PR is balancing conflicting interests and facilitating democracy in society. By and large the image of what PR practitioners do is quite vague and is often considered to be only publicity work and sometimes even understood as pure propaganda (Flodin 2003, 245–246). Recent research reveals that PR professionals and journalists have negative perceptions concerning each other (Niskala & Hurme 2014). These negative perceptions are also visible in public debates between journalists and PR professionals in Finland triggered by accusations that PR professionals act as "communication cops" whose task is to hamper the work of journalists (see e.g. Melgin 2014; Mykkänen 2014).

Basically, the legitimacy of PR as a modern profession has always been challenged, which PR has often defended by emphasising an earnest drive towards professionalisation (Merkelsen 2011). Grunig (2000) offers the ideal of a symmetrical PR model as the basis of PR professionalism. Grunig (2000) argues professionalism empowers PR practitioners towards the negotiation position where PR aims at changing an organisation's thinking so that it considers both its own and public interests. However, this view has also been widely debated.

Public relations scholars (or scholars under various labels related to the field) have tried to define what PR is and what it is supposed to be doing, and thus clarify the identity of the profession. Numerous studies have been conducted about the competence profile, status, position, reputation, and ethical principles of the occupation. Yet, the picture is unclear. Swerling, Thorson and Zerfass (2014, 12) argue:

> In today's complex organisations, the need to for communicators to play the role of strategic influencer may be what is called in gambling circles "table stakes." Therefore, the

> most pressing question currently at hand – for scholars and practitioners alike – is precisely what are the areas of expertise, or the body of knowledge, about which you are able to provide strategic counsel.

This doctoral dissertation is a journey of exploration which aims at finding ways to clarify PR's identity and legitimate its position as a strategic expert function. The journey is interplay between two horizons: the pragmatic world of PR professionals and the intellectual spheres of PR academy. The empirical data was collected in Finland and therefore the research explores primarily European points of views. Since academic debates are global wider perspectives are also included.

The dissertation approaches the topic from the professionalism point of view. Professionalism relates to issues of power, legitimacy and status, which are continuously debated regarding the role and identity of PR (Kristensen 2010, 138). This research does not take a classic demarcation view on what are the characteristics of a profession to try to find out whether PR has achieved the status of a profession or not. Neither is it interested in the motives behind professionalisation or professionalism. To provide a fresh point of view this study focuses on explaining professionalism in the PR field and identifying the enablers and barriers for PR's position as a strategic expert function. The research problem and the research design as well as the methodological choices will be explained in more detail in Chapter 2.

The thesis initially builds a conceptual framework based on profession research. It then scrutinises the studied phenomenon from two perspectives: how professionalism in public relations is constructed in academic texts (subordinate study 1) and how PR professionals perceive professionalism and related issues in principle and in their current work (subordinate study 2).

The first of the two uses an interpretative study of concepts, which is a literature-based method for describing and interpreting the meanings of the concepts (see section 2.4). The concepts and their definitions are contextual and the interpretation is more or less tightly bound in the chosen theoretical framework. An interpretative study of concepts aims at describing and interpreting the whole of the meanings of the studied concepts (Takala & Lämsä 2001). The second subordinate study takes a phenomenographic approach to investigate PR professionals' perceptions of professionalism and expertise in PR. The data of this subordinate study consists of 37 semi-structured in-depth interviews with Finnish PR experts working in various organisations in private, public and non-profit sectors.

The research will combine the conclusions from the two studies and construct a holistic model of PR professionalism. Thereby the research aims, on the one hand, at providing new perspectives for PR's identity-work both on practical and theoretical levels, and, on the other hand, providing new points of views for academic discussions on professionalism.

Sections 1.1–1.3 explain the starting point of the research and sketch the route-map for this journey of exploration. First a glance at the history of PR sheds light on from where PR has arrived to its current status quo and what kind of pack affects its bearing. Describing the approach and the motives of this research will then explain where this journey is heading. Finally the steps to the destination are marked by depicting the content and structure of this travelogue.

1.1 Roots and reputation of public relations

Different viewpoints concerning both the PR concept and the activities of PR can also be seen in the notions of the origins of PR and how the field has developed. Sketching an overview on PR's roots provides perspective for understanding of where the mistrust for PR stems, and on what kind foundation the aspiration for professionalism has developed.

Some scholars place the origins of PR in the rise of press agentry and organised publicity-seeking activities (see e.g. Cutlip et al. 2006). However, communication actions that can be interpreted as being PR were practiced in politics, in business and in administration long before the first press agencies were founded and before the term PR was used. A common argument is the development of PR was a reaction to The Enlightenment movement in Europe in 17th and 18th centuries and to industrialism and development of mass media in 19th century (Nessmann 2000; see also Kunczik 1994b; Ronneberger & Rühl 1992). Lamme and Russell (2010) extend the origins of PR to at least 2000 years ago. The short review of the history of PR in this section focuses on PR's development in 20th century and takes examples from different countries, mainly from those phases that explain the identity crisis and questionable reputation of PR.

Grunig and Hunt (1984) developed four models of PR to describe various forms of PR practice. Integrated into these models is the historical development of PR. Accordingly, the development of PR began with the press agentry and publicity model, followed by the public information model and thence to the more sophisticated and allegedly more ethical one-way asymmetrical and finally the symmetrical two-way communication model (Grunig & Hunt 1984, cited in Grunig & Grunig 1992). Grunig and Hunt explained that the work of press agents in the middle of the 19th century were reminiscent of propaganda in the sense that truthfulness was not that important as long as messages got public attention. Public information work developed further in the beginning of the 20th century as both large businesses' and the state's reaction to scandal-seeking journalism. Both sectors hired their own journalists to write press releases that were generally truthful but, which were used in order to skew the opinions of the audience. Gruing and Hunt argued that PR became two-way communication oriented during the period of WWI in United States when some PR practitioners like Bernays started to use scientific research in PR practice but their approaches were asymmetrical because the theories applied were related to propaganda, persuasion and plotting for consensus. Incrementally, two-way asymmetrical PR was accompanied by two-way symmetrical PR model where PR aims at balancing the interests between organisation and its publics (Grunig & Hunt 1984, cited in Grunig & Grunig 1992).

Pieczka and L'Etang (2001) contend Grunig and Hunt's view of PR's progressive development, as presented in the four models of PR, is suitable only for an American ideological and cultural context. Pieczka and L'Etang (2001) explain that in Great Britain the growth of PR was especially affected by the development of political field in that PR had by the early 20th century a significant role in promoting fluency in democratic administration. The PR concept has also had an important role in international conflicts and national struggles for power, which have raised questions of PR's accountability, transparency and openness, and also PR's connections with propaganda (L'Etang 2000; Pieczka & L'Etang 2001).

In the context of Germany, the American term ″Public Relations″ was introduced as late as 1937, but PR activities had been developed in businesses and in public sector organisations in the 19th century (Bentele & Junghänel 2004; Nessmann 2000). Indeed, Nessmann (2000) suggests the nature of early phase PR in Germany and Austria was the work of active informers. During the First World War offices for press and propaganda activities were founded but their practices were quite amateurish and between the wars many of the press agencies were closed (Oeckl 1993a, 1993b, cited in Nessmann 2000). PR practice continued mainly in the commercial sector where different communication activities were used in order to build understanding and trust (Nessmann 2000). The era of Nazism and The Third Reich made sure that PR did not have a chance to develop further. Indeed, The Third Reich used censorship and declared ″critical″ newspapers illegal (Nessmann 2000, 217–218; Nessmann 2004; Bentele & Junghänel 2004). After WWII, European researchers, especially German, adopted American PR theory and practices and developed them further in the European context (Nessmann 2000).

In Finland PR-like activities were already being practised during the first two decades of 20th century in the advertising field but the PR concept was unknown (Lehtonen 2004). Indeed, PR developed first mainly under the term propaganda (Melgin & Nurmilaakso 2012; Lehtonen 2004). The word ″propaganda″ was replaced with the word ″suhdetoiminta″ (public relations) and later, in 1980s, with the term ″viestintä″ (communication) (Lehtonen 2004, 111; Siukosaari 2012).

In 1937, a group of Finnish writers, journalists and advertisers who were recruited to carry out war propaganda founded the first Finnish PR association called "Propagandaliitto" (propaganda league) to promote Finland to the world and market the 1940 Olympic Games, which were supposed to take place in Helsinki. Propagandaliitto was closed down in 1939 due to the start of WWII (Lehtonen 2004). The current Finnish association for PR professionals ProCom (www.procom.fi) was founded in 1947 under the name "Tiedotusmiehet" (information men) and is the oldest PR association in Europe (Melgin & Nurmilaakso 2012).

During WWII, all public communication was placed under the control of the army (Melgin 2012 & Nurmilaakso; Lehtonen 2004). After WWII, government ministries and public institutions hired young PR officers of the army to apply their skills as propagandists in peacetime PR work (Lehtonen 2004). They had to learn again how to practice their occupation and adopt ethical norms of modern PR (Virkkunen 1958). In the 1950s and 1960s, the PR field grew and the concept became more common but practitioners were lacking professional competence and instead used some questionable methods (Siukosaari 2012).

In general, PR's wartime connections with propaganda can be seen as an important factor causing the mistrust journalists feel towards PR practitioners. Kunelius (1998) contends that after WWI journalists started to understand that the "reality" they were transmitting was often specially produced and formulated: politicians used PR practitioners to shape the information that was offered for journalists and some news-events were even manufactured for them. Overall, in Western countries the start of PR history usually occurs when the PR concept was not yet known and connections with more questionable phenomena like wartime propaganda are acknowledged.

In the former Eastern Bloc countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the transition to democracy seems to offer a chance to restart the history of PR with a "clean slate". For instance Gruban (1995) contends that in Slovenia, the early 1990s developed PR field is not burdened by negative images like the stereotypical "gin & tonic –PR" of American PR. Tsetsura (2003) describes Russian PR as young, and says that there is no tradition of communication in Russia. Furthermore, Tampere (2003) mentions that during the communist period Russia did not have a PR profession. While Tampere (2003) does not claim that there was no tradition of communication in Russia, she does relate that during the communist period there was no objective information available in the public arena. However, communication did exist, but it was typical to blur the truth by offering too much information and combining it with lies, manipulation and so called ”double talk” (Tampere 2003, 130–131).

Zlateva (2004) argues that in former Eastern Bloc countries PR activities grew in crisis-circumstances after the collapse of communism in the 1990s. She contends that public relations acted as a tool for reorganising and stabilising in a process of transition. In the comprehensive change of the complex structures of society, media, for example, was liberated from state monopoly with the establishment of private newspapers and audio-visual broadcasters. The special circumstances of transition societies offered much more complicated challenges for the experts of public communication than they had experienced before. (Zlateva 2004) This social, political and economic transition meant that for the first time in its history, the strategies, practices and tools of PR could be used in aiding the peaceful socio-economic transition (Ławniczak 2004).

From these starting points the negative connotations associated with PR, and the desire of practitioners to argue convincingly that PR has developed from those slightly dubious beginnings seems to make sense. However, scholars have criticised attempts to explain PR's progress through its phases towards ethical and professional discipline. Common to most of these periodisation approaches in explaining the history of PR – like the aforementioned four models of PR (Grunig & Hunt 1984, cited in Grunig & Grunig 1992) – is that they use an evolutionary logic which contends that PR has grown "from a one-sided communication to a form of mutual understanding or at least socially beneficial form of information" (Raaz & Wehmeier 2011, 266). This kind of periodisation has been questioned (see e.g. L'Etang 2014; Lamme & Russell 2010; Raaz & Wehmeier 2011) for instance by pointing out that

> public relations did not conform to a pattern of increasingly sophisticated or more ethical practices, and no concentration was found among "good" or "bad" public relations within a given time period or particular sector.
> (Lamme & Russell 2010, 354.)

Lamme and Russell conclude that throughout its history PR has been driven by five motivations: "the need or desire to raise money, to recruit others, to establish legitimacy, and to agitate against or to advocate for someone or something" (2010, 355). They explain that all of these purposes have been attempted by using persuasion either instead of, or together with, coercion. Furthermore, this activity has not been restricted to either social elites or only the business world but has been used in all sectors both by those who have power and those who do not. Lamme and Russell (2010, 354) argue that the idea of PR's gradual development concerns mainly the diversity of tactics used and articulating the "rules of engagement".
In the light of the findings of Lamme and Russell it is interesting how strongly rooted are the discourses of PR's ethical progress and periodised development when relating the history of PR or teaching it in universities to the future PR professionals. L'Etang (2014, 658) points out that "morality tales are a feature of public relations' self-mythologizing and discourse, part of its long-standing legitimacy struggles". It could be argued that by hanging on to these storylines PR is feeding the counterarguments and mistrust of others. This dissertation takes a critical viewpoint of these storylines and aims at helping to cut PR loose from the vicious circle that generates and reproduces PR's legitimacy struggles and identity-crisis.

1.2 Starting points and focus of the dissertation

In Europe PR is practised widely but it is rarely called PR (van Ruler & Verčič 2004). Because of the negative connotations, foreign origin and problematic definition of the concept, various translations and new names are used instead (Horsle 2004; Flodin 2003). However, in academia, PR is considered as the practical term for the discipline. This research chooses to follow this route and understands PR as an umbrella concept, which includes both internal and external communication of an organisation – acknowledging that this is somewhat out-dated division – and considers PR as synonymous to communication management. This very loose definition is considered to be a sufficient starting point for this journey since one central idea of this research is to clarify the mission and nature of PR. Thus, a too strict definition at this point would hamper the findings into a bastille of preconceptions.

The perceptions of PR practitioners and scholars regarding professionalism are disparately divergent (van Ruler 2005). While scholars debate about the definition and the role of PR professionalism or expertise, PR professionals may have very different understandings about these issues. A mainstream argument in academic debates is that the PR profession is a strategic management function and the PR manager should have a place at the decision-making tables. Scholars also repeatedly refer to the issues of values and ethics when discussing professionalism or universal principles of good PR. These issues seem to raise contradictory arguments and consequently seem to lead to PR having a "divided ethical identity" (Fawkes 2012, 865). While the excellence-discourse characterises PR almost with saintliness, the critics associate PR with persuasion and propaganda (Fawkes 2010). The excellence-thinking pleads on mutuality and symmetry but these are sometimes interpreted as procedural acts and empty words instead of real internalised principles that guide the operations of PR (Merkelsen 2011). In the current world of fragmented meanings one may also question whether universal principles of PR, or any profession, are possible or even desirable.

The motivation behind this research is to shake the old thinking patterns and the commonplace discourses of "theory is far from practice". The purpose is to scrutinise different perceptions regarding the PR profession and professionalism, and to bring these perceptions together and develop a new updated understanding of the phenomenon. This is vital to the development of PR profession because without a solid identity PR cannot answer to the challenges and needs of organisations, and its place in the public sphere processes and social systems will be taken over by other fields like marketing, advertising, human resources (HR) and journalism (see e.g. Kruckeberg 1998, 2000).

Reaching for deeper understanding and bridging different points of views in order to construct a stronger and more up-to-date identity for PR are the driving forces behind this dissertation. It is time to step up from the academic juxtapositions, which are looking backwards and relying on old paradigms, and to turn the attention to the future prospective and the strengths that the profession possesses.

This research is located at the crossroads of several research fields and lines. Public relations is a multidisciplinary discipline. Professionalism has been studied widely among social sciences, and expertise – a central concept to professionalism – has been studied for instance within pedagogics and work research. This research focuses on the structures that produce and shape individual's experiences, and also on the individual's perceptions that construct and constitute the reality. This research could therefore be seen to be applying also cultural studies, which borrow methods in an eclectic manner from various fields of science in order to reach deeper understanding about the studied phenomenon (Alasuutari 2011). Cultural studies is also said to be a bridge builder between humanities which study human beings and social sciences which study the world where human beings live and interact (Alasuutari 2011).

Like most of the contemporary interpretative communication researches, this investigation rejects the idea of totally value-free research and takes the stance that "personal and professional values are a lens through which social phenomena are observed" (Miller 2002, 53). As the author is both in PR academia – conducting research in the discipline and teaching it in a university – and having experience in the PR industry as a practitioner, it is especially important to be transparent about the values through which the studied phenomenon is reflected. The guiding principle throughout this research is that there can be various ways to perceive the world and the researcher's duty is to treat different point of views with respect instead of judging some as right and some as wrong. However, when it comes to constructing understanding about the profession's goals and value-sets it is necessary to take a stance and choose the most appropriate approaches.

1.3 Structure of the monograph

This research consists of four phases: (I) building a conceptual framework, (II) interpretative study of concepts, (III) interview study and (IV) constructing a model based on the findings of the previous phases. The process has developed, typically for qualitative research, as an on-going interactive process, in which the phases are not only outlining the picture from their specific perspectives, but are also setting forth questions for the other phases of the study, and constructing the whole puzzle. Every now and then the researcher has had to step back and check the route again. For simplicity's sake this monograph presents the journey more chronologically (see Figure 1).

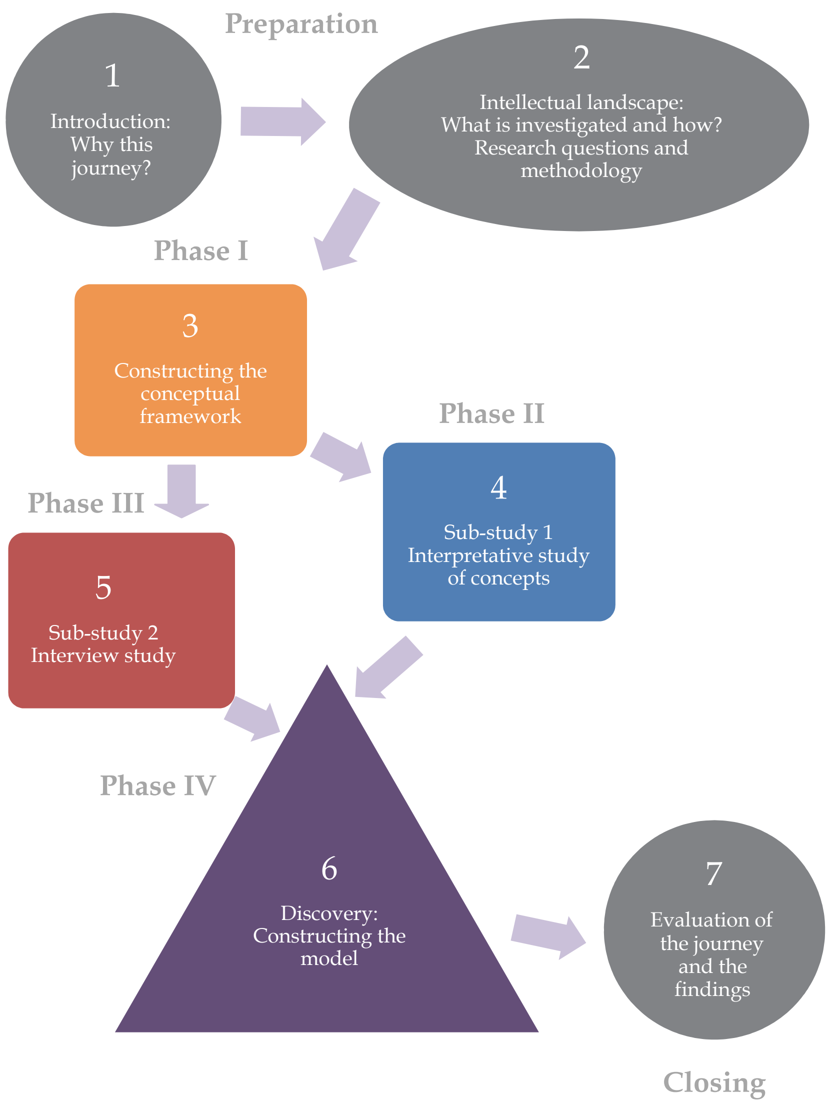

FIGURE 1 Schematic Flow for the Monograph

The introduction, Chapter 1, has outlined the research topic and the perspective from which it is viewed, and has discussed the central concepts related to the studied phenomenon and described briefly the roots of the PR profession's identity challenges.

Chapter 2 introduces the "intellectual landscape" where the research is located, discussing the ontological, epistemological and methodological issues. It defines the destination of the journey by explaining the research problem (section 2.1.1) and the research questions (section 2.1.2) for each phase, and points out the ways to reach the destination. The Chapter also reflects issues related to the quality and credibility of the research.

Chapter 3 constructs a conceptual framework for this research and reflects the past and current trends in profession research and makes a short overview on how these issues have been studied within the domain of public relations.

Chapter 4 takes up the academic's perspective to the research topic by reporting the interpretative study of concepts. The aim is to find out how academic literature constructs public relations professionalism.

Chapter 5 presents the interview study conducted among Finnish public relations experts, which aims to shed light on the topic from the PR practitioner's point of view.

Both Chapters 4 and 5 begin with a brief reminder of the research questions and the chosen method. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 end with a summary of "conclusions and confusions" where the most important findings as well as questions which were left open are summarised.

Chapter 6 finally brings the two different perspectives together and constructs a holistic model for professional public relations. Chapter 7 summarises the research journey and evaluates what was found and what was lost, and what issues call for new voyages of discovery.

2 INTELLECTUAL LANDSCAPE AND THE ROUTES TO THE DESTINATION

All research is guided by the researcher's viewpoint regarding how the world should be understood and studied (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). Research methods can be seen as ”living entities that resist simple classification” (Sandelowski 2010, 83) meaning that they take shape in the hands of the researcher in the particular research context. This chapter outlines the intellectual landscape this research is located in by taking stances on ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological questions while describing the research problem and explaining the research design and the techniques used.

Broadly speaking, the worldview of this study is founded on the interpretive philosophy of science. Interpretive paradigms were created from the need to separate them from the dominant positivist paradigms (Miller 2002). Various interpretive paradigms exist, e.g. interpretivism, (philosophical) hermeneutics and social constructionism (Schwandt 2000), each of which have a different emphasis or point of view but their axioms are not mutually exclusive – only positivist and interpretivist approaches hold incompatible disagreement (Lincoln & Guba 2000, 174). The main differences between positivist and interpretive paradigms concern the notion of reality ("real world out there" vs. different understandings about the world, realism vs. relativism), the nature of knowledge (truth can be found vs. truth is negotiated/socially constructed), and relation between researcher and the studied phenomenon or research participants (neutral objectivity vs. subjectivity). The positivist demand of neutrality has become a major issue in the conflicts between the paradigms. Most interpretivists abandon this axiom, and critical theorists even argue that taking a stance and correcting any injustices is imperative to research. (Lincoln & Guba 2000.)

Within the interpretivist approaches, this study can be located in the phenomenographic research tradition[1], which believes in multiple realities that are

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1 Instead of being anchored in a specific philosophical orientation, phenomenography is an empirical research tradition which does not delimit strictly to certain metaphysical beliefs about the nature of reality or knowledge (Svensson 1997) but it can be applied

constructed from interpretations (Green 2005). While empiricists and positivists understand that knowledge is to be found by deriving it from observed facts, and rationalists and constructivists see it as constructed within individuals' minds[2], phenomenographers locate knowledge in a relationship between the individual and external world (Svensson 1997). Knowledge is actively generated "through thinking about external reality" (Svensson 1997, 165). This "relationality" is one of the key assumptions of phenomenography (Bowden 2005). Whereas many other research approaches hold a dualist worldview, in which the inner world explains the outer world or vice versa, phenomenography leans on a "non-dualistic ontology" according to which the experienced world becomes constituted in a relation between the subject and the environment (Marton & Booth 1997, 13). A person does not just adapt to the existing "real world" but they create an understanding about the world by experiencing and influencing the world. An individual constitutes the interpretation of a particular situation based on their previous experiences and understandings (Huusko & Paloniemi 2006). Thus, the intertwined relationship between individual and the collective generates a variety of ways of conceptualising the world. This relationship constitutes an entity that is part of the reality but can be delimited from its surroundings, and is more than the sum of its parts (Svensson 1997).

Hasselgren and Beach (1997, 193) criticise the non-dualistic relation between experience and truth by arguing that ontologically this connects the differences between various conceptions to the "mind-world relation" and thus to the ways of saying something, which may lead to accepting the produced data and interpreted findings as such and neglecting proper critical analysis. To avoid this, Hasselgren and Beach (1997) call for reflexivity in the phenomenographic research process. Säljö (1997) argues that rather than trying to understand how people experience a phenomenon, phenomenography should go deeper in scrutinising the discursive entities. He explains that practitioners, in paying attention to the motives and abilities of people to communicate about certain phenomenon, might provide more understanding about the actor's relationship to the phenomenon than taking their descriptions of the phenomenon directly as ways of experiencing it.

Phenomenography separates two aspects in meanings: referential and structural aspects (Marton & Pong 2005). The first focuses on the content of the individual's understanding about a particular phenomenon, while the latter concentrates on how certain understanding is constituted on existing thought patterns. Structural aspect delimits the referential aspect, i.e. how we see things defines what we see (Uljens 1989).[3] Referential meaning is found by interpreting what is said about the subject, whereas structural aspect can be detected through linguistic markers (Marton & Pong 2005). Referential and structural aspects are intertwined

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within different interpretivist paradigms.

2 In rationalistic, mentalistic and constructivistic thinking knowledge is seen "as rational or mental constructions within a more or less closed rational and/or mental system" (Svensson 2007, 165).

3 This echoes Bourdieu's thinking about habitus affecting how an individual experiences different things (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1995).

and they cannot be separated (Huusko & Paloniemi 2006). Understanding the structural aspect requires paying attention to the context where something was said, and to the thinking patterns of the individual.

Although interested in variations in individuals' conceptions and ways of thinking, instead of producing only individual level descriptions, phenomenographic research aims at finding and systematising shared patterns of thinking (Huusko & Paloniemi 2006). The research process consists of continuous interplay between contextual understanding and holistic abstracting. It is a two-way process, which moves from individual differences to common similarities, and back again. The search for shared patterns of thinking will lead from individual cases to general understanding, the meaning of which is then explained regarding individual cases.

Phenomenographic research uses different kinds of data, which are transformed into textual form (Huusko & Paloniemi 2006). Hasselgren and Beach (1997) describe five approaches within what they call "Gothenburg phenomenography": experimental, discursive, naturalistic, hermeneutic, and phenomenological phenomenography. In experimental phenomenography the context of producing the data is reminiscent of an experiment. All respondents read a text about the certain topic before answering questions about that topic. Discursive phenomenography (which is also referred to as the least sophisticated method) produces data from conversations (often semi-structured interviews) between the researcher and the respondents without any pre-assignment that might shape the understandings of the respondents. The naturalistic approach uses "authentic" data of recordings of what is said in actual situations without the impact or manipulation of an outsider. Hermeneutic phenomenography interprets texts which were not originally produced for phenomenographic analysis, aiming at understanding the relations between the whole and the part and original contexts of the statements as conclusively as possible. Finally, in the phenomenological approach the data is produced by asking each respondent to describe what is going on in their mind during the interview (Hasselgren & Beach 1997).

The relativist assumption of the co-existence of multiple "realities" and multiple ways of conceptualising them, welcomes the option to scrutinise the problems of professionalism in PR from different perspectives by using a multiple method approach. The first two phases of this research are conceptual-theoretical and aim to make sense of and restrict the wide and complex topic. The third phase brings empirical point of view in the form of the interview study, belonging more clearly to the phenomenographic research tradition. However, as pointed out above, the phenomenographic approach includes various methods and uses different ways of collecting data. Thus also an interpretative study of concepts – as the focus of this method is not in linguistic or structural analysis but in interpreting the meanings of the studied conceptualisations – is suitable for the phenomenographic approach. Regarding the above mentioned branches of Gothenburgh phenomenography, the interpretative study of concepts could be seen as representing hermeneutic phenomenography, whilst the interview study belongs to discursive phenomenography.

Overall, as with hermeneutic phenomenography, this research takes as its starting point the basic assumption of the modern hermeneutics:

> …things are never just given of themselves, their meaning must necessarily always be arrived at through interpretation, where both the interpreter and the object of interpretation are considered part of the same hermeneutic circle of understanding
> (Hasselgren & Beach 1997, 199).

2.1 Setting the scope – the destination and the ways to reach it

This part of the chapter and the following sections will explain more specifically where this research is heading and what are the underlying assumptions regarding the nature of the research problem (ontological questions) and the ways of knowing (epistemological questions).

This research leans on pluralistic epistemology, believing that the argument can be based on multiple sources of information (Kakkuri-Knuuttila & Heinlahti 2006). Interpretive researchers believe in socially constructed reality and that knower and known cannot be totally separated from each other (Miller 2002). Consequently knowledge is constructed in an interactive process where researchers acknowledge their own influence on the outcomes.

This research believes that the most authentic knowledge regarding PR professionalism lies in the field of PR practice and is crystallised in a shared process of co-creating the meanings. The practitioners' conceptions and experiences are the primary source of information and the researcher's role is to reflect, combine and interpret what the research participants say. Sometimes the attitudes and beliefs of an individual are hidden and they emerge in the conversation as choices of words or emotional reactions. When taking the role of an interpreter the researcher has to become sensitive to these clues as well as to one's own underlying assumptions and mindsets.

2.1.1 The nature of the research problem

Hodges (2006) suggests that PR profession should be studied from the cultural point of view scrutinising how PR practitioners experience and constitute their occupation in the cultural surroundings they operate in. She formulates a framework for analysing public relations practitioner culture (PRP culture) which she defines as follows:

> The practitioner lifeworld – The totality of practitioners' thought, concepts, values and assumptions about their occupation (referred to collectively as "habitus") and their occupational experiences and identities that guide their behaviour. These will evolve with contact with other practitioners (occupational socialisation) and with wider social and cultural influences.

> A system of occupational practices involving actions which "make a difference" to the world in some way.
>
> (Hodges 2006, 85.)

Hodges (2006, 88) calls for more research from "an emic perspective in order to transcend generalisation and to celebrate the diversity of the public relations practice". She explains how professional culture is constituted within the intertwined realities of society, profession and the life-world of the individual practitioner (Figure 2). Universalistic approaches to what a profession is or should be, tend to forget the individual and cultural aspects: not only the profession's norms and values but also the professional's personal experiences and perceptions and the local cultural and societal surroundings affect to how the profession is practiced. This then impacts on the local surroundings and shapes the profession's structures.

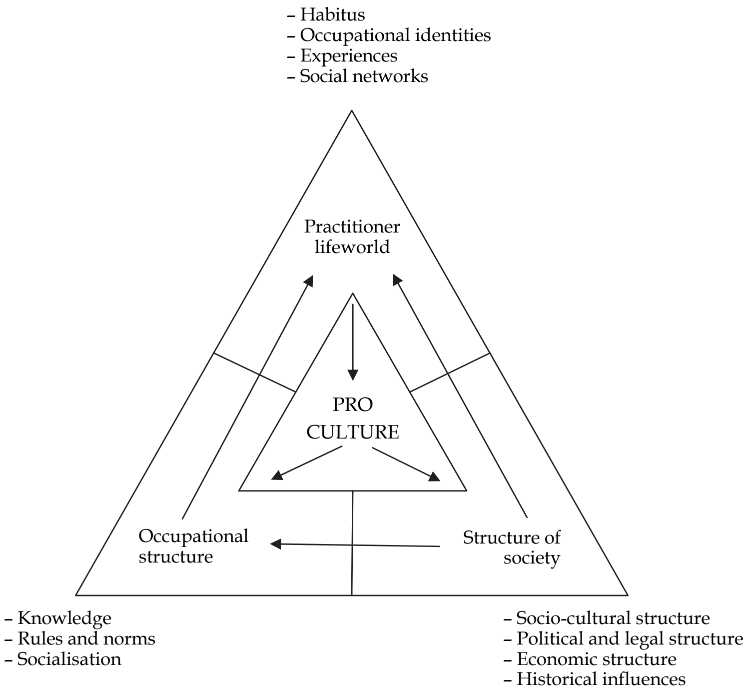

FIGURE 2 The circuit of cultural intermediation (Hodges 2006, 86)

As explained earlier, the phenomenographic approach believes in multiple ways of experiencing the world, and that the ways people experience the world constitute their realities and consequently shape the world. Various actors in a range of contexts may understand same issues very differently. This goes well with the Hodges (2006) thoughts on "PRP culture". How individual PR practitioners perceive their work and the world where they operate in impacts on the way they practice the occupation and hence shape the world and PR as a profession.

How PR is perceived as a profession is affected by the viewer's experiences and standpoints. Whether or not PR is seen as a strategic level expert function, and why, depends on from whom we ask. Is the person familiar with the tasks and goals of PR? What kind of kind of organisational context one is thinking of? What strategic level might mean in that context? What kind of societal surroundings are we talking about? In order to make sense of this topic, which at first glance may seem confusing it is necessary to draw the borders and set the scope in what exactly this research is aiming at.

The phenomenon of interest of this study is the alleged strategic level PR expertise, which seems to suffer from a never-ending identity crisis. This phenomenon is scrutinised from a perspective of professionalism. The idea is to find out how professionalism in PR is perceived, and could professionalism help to solve the identity crisis of PR.

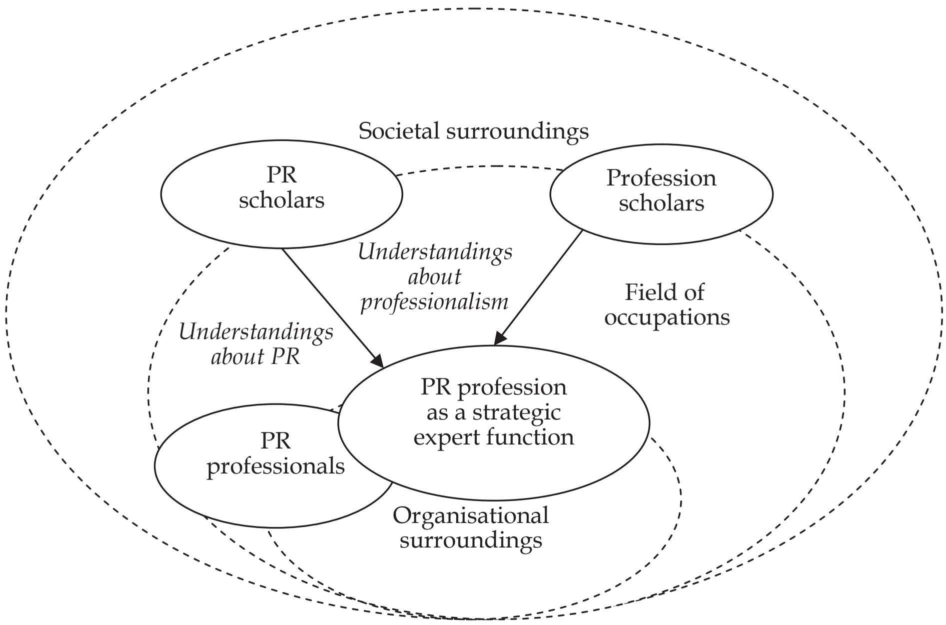

FIGURE 3 Setting of the studied phenomenon

As shown in the Figure 3, the scene of the research is wide, and there are several actors to be considered in the play – and the figure actually only presents some of them. This research is mainly interested in the understandings that shape the phenomenon. The underlying assumption is how various actors understand what PR is and what it is supposed to be doing affects how PR is practiced. This research focuses on two groups of actors: PR scholars and PR professionals. The former, through research and publications constructs the image of PR, and discusses what the concept aims at, what is considered as quality in PR practice, and so forth. The influence the PR scholars have on the PR practitioners' understandings of the phenomenon is debatable. Nevertheless, PR practitioners' understandings are based on their first order perspective (see Uljens 1989), meaning their own experience about their profession, the discipline and the surroundings, in which they operate. To sharpen the focus, this research chooses to investigate the understandings of these actors from the point of view of professionalism: how PR scholars construct PR professionalism in academic literature, and how PR practitioners themselves perceive their work and professionalism. To adopt a phenomenographic orientation the research operates with collective and individual understandings trying to find patterns of thinking and their contextual meanings.

The framework within which PR and its position as a strategic expert function is scrutinised is elaborated on the basis of profession studies and is to an extent inspired by the Field theory of Bourdieu and the Structuration theory of Giddens[4]. The framework combines three perspectives – occupational, organisational, and individual – and three key themes of professionalism which are the position (autonomy, relation to power), objectives (what is the special area of expertise, body of knowledge, and what the profession aims at) and the ethics (ethical service ideal, beliefs and values).

Instead of the phenomenon of interest per se, phenomenographic research focuses in the conceptions the subjects have regarding the phenomenon, and how these conceptions relate to each other (Bowden 2005). Figure 4 illustrates the relational nature of phenomenography applied to this research.

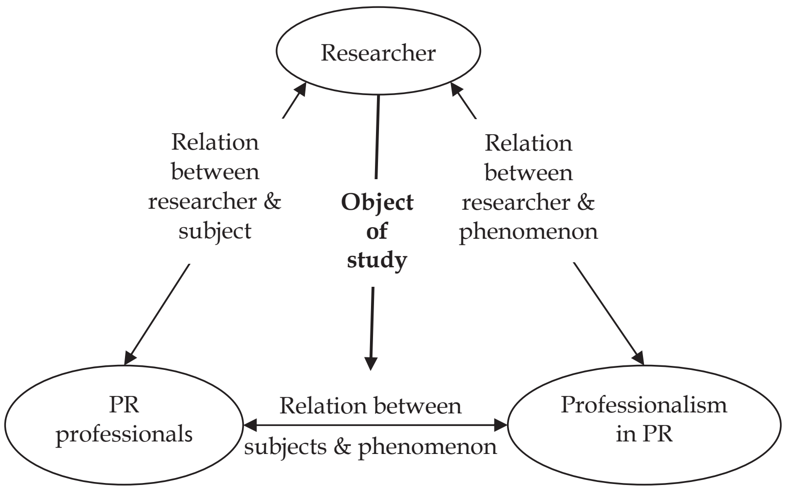

FIGURE 4 Phenomenographic approach in the subordinate study 2 (adjusted from Bowden 2005, 12)

[4] Bourdieu has elaborated the Field theory in several publications, see e.g. Bourdieu 1984, 1993. For Structuration theory see Giddens 2009.

Phenomenographic research acknowledges that there are also relations between the researcher and subjects, and the researcher and the studied phenomenon. The researcher should be aware of these relations, and reflexively explain how they have affected to the research process.

2.1.2 Research design and the research questions

This research creates knowledge by using multiple methods: analysing texts and asking individuals about their conceptions and experiences. The theoretical framework of this research and the underlying concept of the interactive nature of scientific knowledge and the empirical world are presented in the Figure 5.

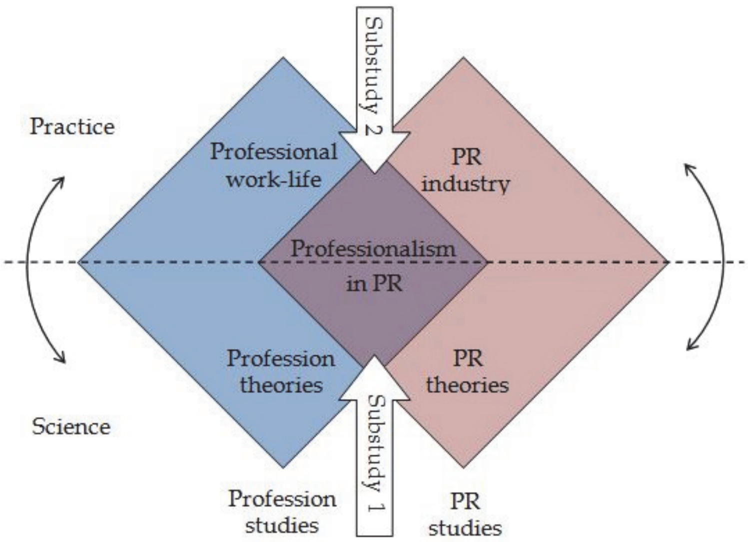

FIGURE 5 Theoretical framework and the worldview of this research

The practical world and scientific world are not two isolated entities but two intertwined levels, which constantly affect each other and our understandings of the world. The phenomenon under investigation in this study locates in profession studies and PR studies. From profession studies point of view this research scrutinises professionalism within a specific profession, namely PR. From PR studies point of view this research focuses on how professionalism can help to understand and realise the nature of strategic PR expertise. Two subordinate studies of this research approach the studied phenomenon from different directions – the perspective of science and the perspective of practice – aiming at bringing the two worlds together.

The research consists of four phases which are illustrated in Figure 6.

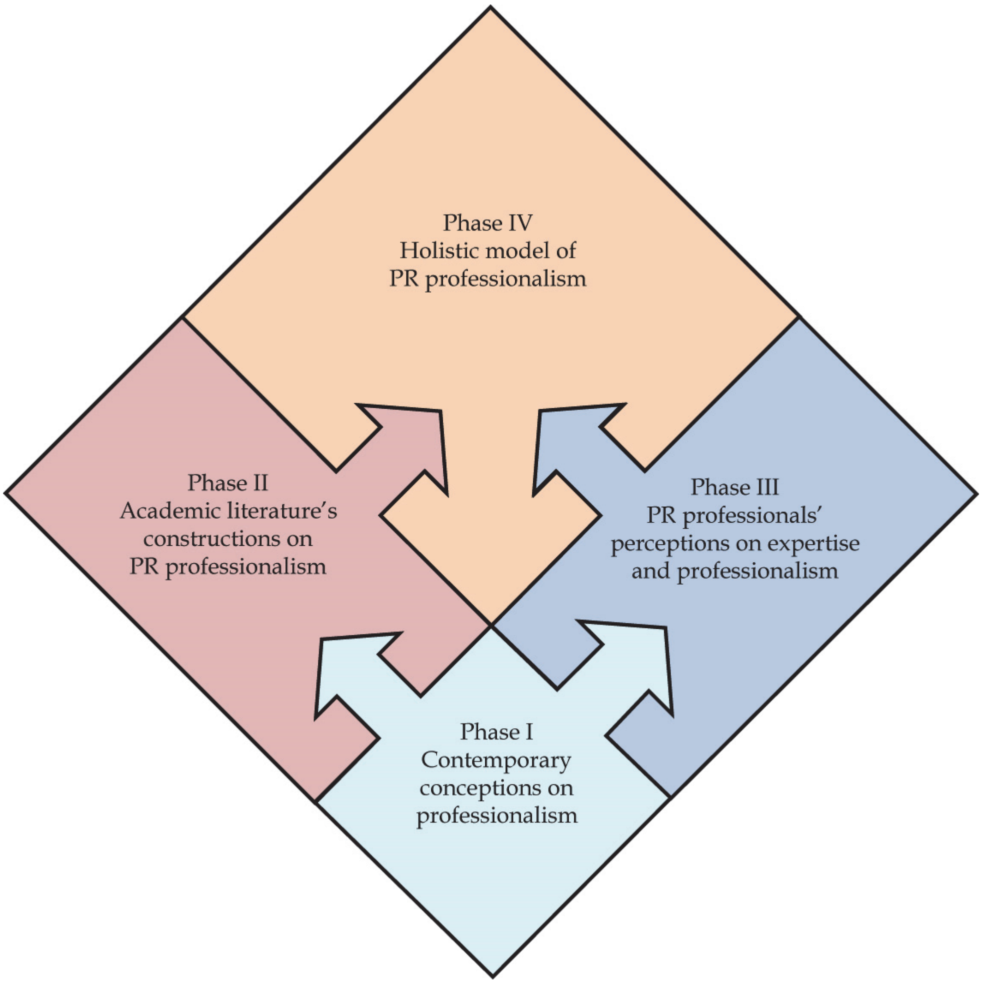

FIGURE 6 The four phases of the research

First two phases of this research are conceptual-theoretical. The purpose is to examine the meanings and relations of the concepts related to PR and professionalism. The first phase (I), reviews how the concept "professionalism" is used in sociological research, and takes a quick glance at the related research within PR field. This phase constructs a conceptual framework for the whole research. The second phase (II) is based on the subordinate study 1 which focuses in finding out how PR professionalism is constructed among PR scholars, especially in the European PR field. Instead of traditional concept analysis (see e.g. Näsi 1980) this study utilises interpretative study of concepts which focuses in finding and forming interpretations for the concepts through an interactive process of observations and produced clues and hints that arise from the chosen literature and the theoretical framework (Takala & Lämsä 2001; Lämsä & Takala 2004).

The third phase (III) consists of the subordinate study 2 which approaches the studied phenomenon from PR professionals' point of view. The in-depth interviews conducted among Finnish PR experts shed light into the research problem. Finally, the fourth phase (IV) brings the previous phases together and moves on to theorising and constructing a new model.

Overall this research aims at finding out what are the enablers and impediments for the strategic role of public relations? The chosen perspective of this study suggests that this problem setting is connected to professionalism, and thus this research also strives to explain what are the essential elements of professionalism and why is it important to public relations or any expert occupation?

Main research questions are

1 How can professionalism help PR to find its full potential as an expert function?

2 What are the key enablers of PR professionalism?

3 What are the impediments for PR professionalism?

The two subordinate studies bring their own input to the whole research process and thus they have their own research questions.

Interpretative study of concepts

4 How are the elements of PR professionalism constructed in academic PR literature?

5 What empowers PR to act in a strategic expert role?

6 What are the core values of professional PR?

Interview study

7 How do the interviewees (PR professionals in Finland) perceive PR's role as an expert function?

8 How do the interviewees perceive the meaning of PR for the organisation?

9 How do the interviewees perceive the difference between professional and unprofessional PR practice?

10 What are the critical aspects that separate interviewees' qualitatively different ways of perceiving professional PR?

The two subordinate studies approach the topic from their own angles but both of them lean on the conceptual framework of this research. The framework combines current views of what is professionalism and how it is addressed in the context of PR, and the subordinate studies grab onto these themes in order to construct deeper understanding regarding PR professionalism and its possibilities.

2.1.3 Knowledge claims: What the study aims at?

Methods of knowing are connected to the purpose of the study. How we can gain knowledge of something depends on what we want to find. Habermas (1972) conceptualised three different knowledge-constitutive interests: technical, practical and emancipatory interests. Habermas argues that technical knowledge interest, which is typically used in natural sciences and systematic social sciences, aims at predicting and controlling external nature. Practical knowledge interest is commonly used in humanities. An essential element of it is inter-subjective understanding, which aims at transmitting and interpreting tradition. Emancipatory knowledge interest, as explained by Habermas, is used typically in critical social sciences and uses ideology critique and aims at overcoming domination and control.

This research uses qualitative methods in order to increase theoretical and practical understanding of what professional PR is and what it offers for organisations. Thus the knowledge interest of this research is in Habermasian terms practical: it will constitute inter-subjective understanding. Besides interpreting the studied phenomenon based on empirical findings this research also scrutinises and challenges the current academic debates. In that sense the approach of this research includes a hint of emancipatory knowledge interest.

The aim is to bring together multiple approaches: on the one hand this study reflects the conceptions of PR academics and practitioners, and on the other hand it focuses on how individual PR practitioner's expertise fits together and interacts with organisational settings and expectations. The research therefore brings different point of views into the same discussion and makes the picture of the phenomenon more complete. In addition, the study will also construct a model of PR professionalism providing a new approach for the professionalism debates. Thus, the study advances its analytic scope from describing and interpreting the phenomenon to theorising. By doing so it also provides strategies for strengthening the position of PR function, having thus also emancipative purposes.

The knowledge claims (see Table 1) of this research follow a typology adjusted from Hammersley (2008) and Maxwell (1992). Hammersley divides the different interests of knowledge, or knowledge claims as he calls them, to descriptive, explanatory and theorising, stating that these apply to both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. However, the explanatory knowledge claim associates strongly with causality, which fits poorly with qualitative research settings. This research aims at interpretative understanding, and thus deriving from an earlier typology of Maxwell (1992) the explanatory knowledge claim is replaced by the interpretive knowledge claim.

TABLE 1 Knowledge claims and phases of the study

<table>
<tr><th>Phase of the research</th><th>Describe</th><th>Interpret</th><th>Theorise</th></tr>
<tr><td>I Constructing the conceptual framework</td><td>Defining the conceptual framework of professionalism</td><td></td><td rowspan="4">Constructing a model of PR professionalism by combining theoretical framework and different approaches from academic PR literature and empirical data.

Detecting impediments and enablers for strategic role of PR and proposing ways to bridge the gaps.</td></tr>
<tr><td>II Interpretative study of concepts</td><td>How PR professionalism is constructed in academic PR literature</td><td>What are the key elements of PR professionalism</td></tr>
<tr><td>III Phenomenographic interviews</td><td>How PR professionals perceive the role, goals and challenges of PR?</td><td>What are the key elements and possible missing pieces that influence PR's role or professionalism in PR?
What kind of underlying patterns of thinking are guiding PR professionals in their work?</td></tr>
<tr><td>IV Reflecting the findings of the interview study in the light of the interpretative study of concepts</td><td>What are the main points of views regarding the studied topic in academic literature?</td><td>What new perspectives are arising when reflecting the findings of this study and the views presented in literature?</td></tr>
</table>

The phases of this research describe and interpret the studied phenomenon from their specific point of views. In the final stage of the research, the findings and aspects are brought together in order to construct a theoretical model. Following sections will introduce the chosen methods of each phase of this research.

2.2 Steps in phase I: Constructing the conceptual framework

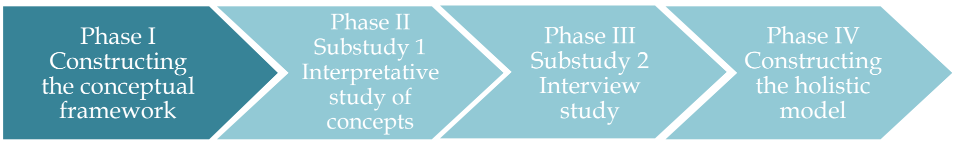

FIGURE 7 Focus of the section 2.2

In order to keep the broad topic of this research within some borders and find the way through the conceptual jungle, it is necessary to construct a framework to set a scope and understand the related perspectives. The first phase of the study (Chapter 3) constructs the groundwork for the rest of the research. Two intertwined methodological choices direct the research here: the relation to theory and the way the literature review is conducted.

2.2.1 Relation to theory

Theoretical framework is the specific, explicitly defined, perspective from which the researcher examines the data (Alasuutari 2011). In qualitative research it is normally not used the way it typically is used in quantitative research: for constructing hypotheses which are then tested in the light of empirical data. Instead, in qualitative research theoretical framework becomes more important when transferring local explanations to more general level (Alasuutari 2011).

In this research the framework is, indeed, first used as a loose guide to see where to focus the attention. It is then put aside while approaching the data inductively. Finally it is returned to, with the aim of contrasting and combining the new findings with it, and eventually developing a new theoretical model.

This research uses professionalism spiced with notions from the Field theory (Bourdieu 1984) and Structuration theory (Giddens 2009), as a loose directional frame that mainly defines the key concepts and the topics of discussion. While the research proceeds from describing the phenomenon to interpreting and theorising, the conceptual framework will also be reflexively reconsidered and reconstructed.

2.2.2 Literature review

Examining what is already known about the chosen research topic is an essential part of any research project. There are many ways of doing a literature review, and literature review may serve different kind of purposes. Fink (2010, 3) for instance defines literature review as follows:

> A research literature review is a systematic, explicit, and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners.

Fink's definition refers to a "systematic literature review", but she also mentions that a "narrative literature review" may be used to describe the history or development of a particular problem and its solution (Fink 2010, 16). However, as Baumeister and Leary (1997) explain many researchers use narrative literature reviews in many contexts. A systematic literature review is sometimes prioritized over an "unsystematic literature review" by arguing that the former is more scientific than the latter (Sandelowski 2008, 105). Sandelowski (2008) points out that the choice of the literature review type depends on the context. For instance, a literature review *for* research does not need to follow and report strict systematic protocol whereas a literature review *of* research does. When a literature review is for instance part of a dissertation, it functions as an introduction to the topic and as a tool to restrict the research problem and the related conceptual framework, and thus relevance of the presented literature is more important than comprehensiveness of it (Maxwell 2006). Moreover, just following the explicit protocol of collecting and treatment of the literature does not make systematic literature reviews impartial and objective any more than being unsystematic makes qualitative or narrative literature reviews non-methodological or unscientific (Sandelowski 2008).

Simply describing what is written about the research topic does not qualify as a literature review – the author has to explain how the researches fit together and develop a synthesis (Baumeister & Leary 1997). Baumeister and Leary (1997) identify five different goals where literature reviews may aim at: (1) developing new theory, (2) evaluating theory, (3) mapping knowledge on a specific topic, (4) identifying problems (e.g. contradictions or weaknesses) in certain area of research, and (5) describing historical development of a particular theory or research topic.

The aim of the literature review in this research is, on the one hand, to set the studied phenomenon into a wider perspective and, on the other hand, to reason the specific perspective from which the topic is scrutinised. The review combines various types of literature and synthesises the different point of views by constructing a tentative model. Thus, it could be best characterised as an integrative literature review, which as Torraco (2005) explains aims at critically discussing and synthesising existing literature about the topic in question so that it comes up with new perspectives organised as a model or a conceptual framework.

The use of keywords in the literature search in this case is somewhat problematic: limiting the search strictly to "professionalism" or "professionalisation" combined with "public relations" results only narrow selection of literature. Yet, the issue is discussed widely from various perspectives among the academic community. In addition to "PR", the related terms such as "organisational communication", "communication management", "corporate communications", combined with "professionalism", "profession", "professionalisation", "competence" and "expertise" were used. Additionally, a snowball method was used in order to follow the references of some articles or book chapters dealing directly with the topic of professionalism in PR. This way a great variety of academic writings relevant to this research was found. Consequently, the material proved to be very broad, which forces the making of choices based on the researcher's own consideration.

The chosen articles are mainly published in 21st century. Among PR textbooks, new books that were available and the most significant older books were chosen. Essential sources for the research were the "Delphi-study" which is mapping the European PR field, and Grunig's elementary research project "Excellence-study" which aimed at gathering the body of knowledge of PR and investigating the quality factors of PR. One central source of information while examining European PR field is the book, 'Public Relations and Communication Management in Europe" published in 2004. Although the focus of this research is European PR, it is relevant to refer to American PR literature and studies because they have had a significant impact on the development of the PR field on a global basis. Also, articles from sources external to Europe and the USA that challenge the dominant view in the literature were included.

2.3 Steps in phase II: Interpretative study of concepts

FIGURE 8 Focus of the section 2.3

The aim of the subordinate study 1 is to understand how PR professionalism is constructed in academic PR literature, and how the elements of professionalism allegedly empower PR to act in a strategic expert role. This topic relates to many intertwined and ambiguous concepts and therefore more than a traditional literature review is regarded as beneficial. To clarify concepts and their relations the researcher could choose to conduct concept analysis, which has been utilised in many forms in linguistics, computer science, philosophy and so forth. Whereas traditional concept analysis concentrates on defining what, and under which conditions, can be called X (see Kingsbury & McKeown-Green 2009) more interpretative methods aim at developing concepts. Finfgeld-Connett (2006) separates three main lines in concept development: single concept development, synthesis, and multiple concept development.

Approaching the topic of this research with the traditional mechanistic concept analysis would result in a system of definitions, which could be too great a limit to the interpretive process and the outcomes of the whole research.

> Although concept analyses have the potential to clarify symbols, terms, and words, and render more precise theoretical and operational definitions, they are limited in that they do not generate new ideas or useful theories.
> (Walker & Avant 2005, cited in Finfgeld-Connett 2006, 103.)

Traditional concept analysis would fit best with the demarcation approach where the idea is to define what is, and what is not, the studied phenomenon. However, the basic assumption of this research is that meanings are created in a dynamic interaction between different actors, and thus overly static definitions would limit the possibilities of interpretation. Thereby an interpretative study of concepts was considered to be most appropriate methodological choice for this subordinate study. It is more fruitful than a plain literature review, less formal than a systematic concept analysis, and sufficiently focused to guide the researcher through the broad and challenging area of interest.

Interpretative study of concepts is a literature based method which belongs to interpretative research paradigm of organisation and management studies (Takala and Lämsä 2001). The concepts and their definitions are contextual and the interpretation is more or less tightly bound in the theoretical framework the researcher has chosen. The method aims at describing and interpreting the whole of the meanings of the studied concepts (Takala & Lämsä 2001).

Interpretative study of concepts is a process during which as a result of interaction between sources at hand and the researcher's own ideas, the researcher repeatedly evaluates and formulates the research problem (Takala & Lämsä 2001). Thus, the research process proceeds like a hermeneutic circle from the whole to its parts and from parts to the whole (Lämsä & Takala 2004). During the process, the researcher suggests an interpretation concerning the whole text and through it tries to interpret individual parts of the text, and at the same time the individual parts of the text have an effect on composing the whole interpretation (Haaparanta & Niiniluoto 1991, 63–64).

2.3.1 Theoretical framework in interpretative study of concepts

In the interpretative study of concepts it is necessary to choose the theoretical approach which the problem statement is based on, and to critically evaluate the sources that are used in the research (Lämsä & Takala 2004). The researcher may, however, choose how tightly to commit to the theoretical framework (Takala & Lämsä 2001). Takala and Lämsä highlight that in the critique of the sources, it is important to evaluate the significance of the chosen literature both regarding the sources, which concern the theoretical framework and those, which are the actual research material.

Rather than as strict precepts to set landmarks for the territory this subordinate study uses the theoretical framework as an inspirational starting point for the journey. It gives an idea of where to go and what kind of aspects to be interested in. The framework is constructed in the first phase of the dissertation, the literature review on the topic (see section 2.2).

2.3.2 Selection of the literature

Literature analysed in this subordinate study includes a wide range of PR textbooks and scientific publications. The first step was to do a cursory review on the main PR textbooks that were available in libraries or private bookshelves to find out how they dealt with the issue of professionalism or professionalisation. Some relevant researches were found from the reference lists of those books. Going to the sources of sources could be called snowball-method in literature search. Then the search was widened to include research articles in a variety of databases (ProQuest, Elsevier Science Direct, EBSCOhost Communication & Mass Media Complete and Business Source Elite, Emerald Management) with different combinations of the keywords and including only peer reviewed articles with full text available.

Initially, the literature searches used keywords that related to profession studies (profession, professionalism, professionalisation, expertise) and PR field (public relations, corporate communication, communication management, organisational communication). The specific dimensions of professionalism were added to subsequent searches: position, practitioner roles, ethics, quality, added value, and competence. Although different combinations of the keywords were used, the best way to find out useful articles was to search through entire volumes of the relevant journals or follow the sources of already found articles. The initial tranche of searches (the window of the searches from 2000 onwards) of the databases was done in 2008 and updated in 2011 and 2013. In the last tranche, those journals that had proven to be most fruitful sources in 2011 were checked for the latest update. These journals *Public Relations Review*, *Journal of Public Relations Research* and *Journal of Communication Management* from 2010 to 2013 were reviewed at subtitle level to see if any new interesting articles had been published about the topic.

2.3.3 Aim of the interpretation

Takala and Lämsä (2001, 385–386) separate four different lines in interpretative study of concepts:

- heuristic interpretative study of concepts
- theory observing interpretative study of concepts
- descriptive interpretative study of concepts
- critical interpretative study of concepts

Takala and Lämsä (2001) explain that the heuristic interpretative study of concepts derives from the concepts and their definitions, and the theoretical framework is only loosely guiding the interpretation. Theory observing interpretative study of concepts is more strictly bound to the theoretical framework. Descriptive interpretative study of concepts aims at describing, clarifying and interpreting the meanings and the entirety of the meanings associated with the concept. It also aims at forming a rich and comprehensive picture of the subject without any special critical purposes concerning the interpretation. In the critical interpretative study of concepts the purpose is to find and reveal the ideologies and power-relations related motives behind the studied concept. The authors contend this outline of the different types of interpretative study of concepts must not be understood as absolute but the method may also be a combination of two or more of the described types of interpretative study of concepts. (Takala & Lämsä 2001.)

Applying the outline proposed by Takala and Lämsä (2001) the methodology of the subordinate study 1 is a combination of heuristic and descriptive interpretative study of concepts. In other words, this study derives from concepts and their interpretations and commits rather loosely to the theoretical framework. This study describes the concepts related to professional PR and the meanings attached to them, and based on them it forms a comprehensive interpretation of how PR professionalism is constructed in academic PR literature.

2.4 Steps in phase III: Conducting and analysing the interviews

FIGURE 9 Focus of the section 2.4

Phenomenography believes that reality is always experienced and that people may have individual experiences and interpret the same phenomenon differently (Uljens 1996). Accordingly, PR professionals may experience their work and their profession in various ways. This subordinate study is interested in individual PR professionals' perceptions regarding the goals and position of PR in their current organisations, as well as their conceptions of PR expertise and good and bad PR in general. These issues were examined through semi-structured interviews which were conducted among Finnish PR professionals. This section of Chapter 2 explains the processes of collecting and analysing the interview data.

2.4.1 Selecting interviewees

Non-probability sampling can be divided into three sample strategies: convenience, judgement (or purposive), and theoretical (Marshall 1996). Marshall explains that convenience refers to the most accessible sample and judgement refers to choosing a sample that best serves the purposes of the study. A judgement sample infers that the researcher makes a decision regarding the sampling strategy, based on the type of sample (for instance a key informant who shares the expertise of the topic, maximum variation sample, deviant cases sample, etc.) that would best help to answer the research question. By theoretical sampling Marshall refers to such research, in which the researcher develops interpretative theories based on the analysed data, and selects a new sample in order to elaborate the findings in the light of the new data.

Phenomenography typically uses a purposive maximum variation sampling where the idea is to select the sample so that it includes as much variation as possible in the characteristics of the participants (Green 2005). The sample should be big enough to provide sufficient conceptions about the subject but the amount of data should be manageable (Bowden 2005).

This research used the maximum variation sample: the idea was to interview both female and male PR professionals from all sectors (private[5], public, non-profit) and from small, middle-size and large organisations. In practice, the interviewees were selected first by using the so-called snowball-sampling technique

[5] Private sector is represented by both business-to-business and business-to-consumers companies.

(Stacks 2011). Two PR professionals known by the author were asked for three suggestions regarding possible interviewees. They were then contacted and invited to take part in the research. Those who agreed to be interviewed were asked to recommend up to three colleagues who were then asked to participate in the research. The original two PR professionals who set the snow-ball in motion were excluded from the final data.

Snowball sampling provided rich data but there were not many big companies represented. Therefore, a strategic sample was added: the PR managers of the 20 biggest companies in Finland were sent an invitation to take part in the research, from which 6 PR managers agreed to participate.

During the spring and autumn of 2009, semi-structured in-depth interviews, lasting 15–75 minutes each, were conducted among in-house PR experts (N=37; male=10 and female=27). Interviewees represented organisations (N=37) of various staffing sizes (from less than 10 employees to more than 5000) of local, national and multinational status and across all enterprise sectors: business-to-consumers [B2C] private sector (n=5), business-to-business [B2B] private sector (n=10), public sector (n=12) and non-profit (n=10).

TABLE 2 Number of interviewees by sector and gender

Sector	Females	Males	Total
B2C*	4	1	5
B2B**	9	1	10
Public sector	7	5	12
Non-profit	7	3	10
Total	27	10	37

* business-to-consumers private sector
** business-to-business private sector

In order to comply with the Responsible Conduct of Research formulated by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK) concerning the protection of participants' anonymities, the interviewees were coded: gender (f/m); numerically 1–37; role; type of business. In some cases it was difficult to define to which sector the organisation belongs. For example, an organisation within the Finnish Evangelic-Lutheran church is financed by taxes and is thus considered to be a public sector organisation but could also be considered to be a membership-based non-profit organisation. Furthermore, some foundations have characteristics typical of non-profit, public, and private sectors. Some of the private sector companies are conglomerates, which have both business-to-business and business-to-consumer sections. The borderline cases are grouped into a certain sector according to the main focus of the organisation, which in most cases the interviewee explained.

2.4.2 Conducting the interviews

Controlling the researcher's relation to the subjects (interviewees) and the phenomenon is important in order to secure the authenticity of the data (Bowden 2005). In a phenomenographic interview it is recommended to move from concrete to abstract in order to make sure that the interviewees talk about their own experiences (Entwistle 1997) instead of giving "textbook answers".

Bowden (2005) emphasises that the researcher should always use a similar opening in each interview of the particular research and avoid further input during the interview in order to keep the interview situations as similar as possible and to make sure that the interviewees are talking about the same phenomenon. Svensson (1997) on the other hand, points out that the interview needs to be sensitive to each respondent's unique way of conceptualising the issues; i.e. the same concepts may refer to a completely different phenomenon, and one phenomenon may be described using a range of expressions.

Bowden (2005) suggests the avoidance of the researcher's additional input is imperative because any variation in the way of asking the questions and reacting to the responses may lead to the interviewee describing a somewhat different phenomenon. This could be seen, however, as contradicting the basic assumption of phenomenography, which is the assumption of multiple realities and the relational nature of the conceptions. Since it is characteristic to phenomenography to believe that people experience the world in different ways, simply standardising the way of asking interview questions would not ensure that the interviewees would be talking about exactly the same phenomenon. Rather one could ask if it is even legitimate to get them to describe exactly the same phenomenon.

In this research, the interviews followed a planned set of questions and possible help-questions but allowed for some flexibility and interaction during the interview. Because the interviewees are discussing PR within certain organisational settings, as well as their conceptions regarding PR profession in more general level, it can be expected that they are describing slightly (or very) different phenomena. Therefore it was considered more important to achieve the best possible understanding by allowing a more interactive interview technique than rigorously following the principles presented by Bowden (2005). Consequently the interviews followed a "negotiated text" approach (Fontana & Frey 2008, 144), which does not include an illusion of total neutrality on the part of the interviewer but instead allows for the interaction between interviewer and the interviewee. From an epistemological point of view this approach understands the interviewees as active producers of information and meanings, not only as informants who possess the information. This accords well with the phenomenographic assumptions of intentionality and relationality (Bowden 2005). During the interview, questions are asked and thoughts are raised about the chosen topics, and some of the thoughts or conceptions may be constituted or shaped within the interview. This interaction-based approach to interviewing also allows the questions to be rephrased if necessary, and it helps the interviewer to understand what the interviewee is talking about. As shown below, some interviewees explicitly stated that they processed their conceptions during the interview, while other comments reveal this implicitly.

> It was good to take part in this. It's always good that such a question comes up and you stop for a while to think about the ethics. Though I wasn't able to answer it... But these are things worth paying attention to. (F14, communication manager, B2B private sector)

> Actually now I started to think... [going back to the previous question] (F18, PR professional B2B)

> PR expertise... Do you mean like the company's... or how PR can prove... or what is demanded from PR for it to be expert or... wait, I'm trying to grasp this terminology... what does PR expertise consist of? I just want us to understand... PR expertise... Damn, I'm never left speechless. (M4, PR and marketing manager B2C)

In the case of this research, this approach also helped to deal with the problem regarding the concept "public relations" or its Finnish counterword "suhdetoiminta". The concept is used rarely in Finnish and during the interviews it was thus more natural to use more common Finnish terms in the field: "viestintä" (communication), "viestinnän johtaminen" (communication management) and "organisaatioviestintä" (organisational communication). This kind of reflexive approach to interviews means that besides the content of the interviews, the interaction between interviewer and interviewee is also analysed and reported when relevant to the outcomes of the analysis (Fontana & Frey 2008).

The interviews dealt on the one hand with the current job of the interviewee, more specifically the position of PR in the organisation, critical aspects that the organisations' success depends on, and the goals of PR, and on the other hand the perceptions of the interviewee regarding the nature of PR expertise and professionalism (see Table 3).[6]

Questions 1–3 aimed at finding out some background information and "breaking the ice" by starting with more routine questions and getting to know the interviewee. Some of these questions were in some cases asked beforehand when scheduling the interview. Since the background of an interviewee was not used to explain one's answers this kind of questions were kept to minimum unless the issues came up naturally during the interview. Questions 4–10 formed the core of the interview. First, questions 4 and 5 focused concretely on PR in the organisation where the interviewee currently works. Then, in questions 6–10, the discussion shifted to a wider perspective to address the interviewee's conceptions on PR expertise and its challenges.

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6 Finnish version of the interview questions can be found from appendices of this monograph

TABLE 3 Outline for semi-structured interviews

Area of interest (research question)	Interview questions
Background	
1 Identifying the post of the interviewee (PR manager or similar responsibilities)	What is your position in the organisation? What are your tasks?
2 Identifying the type of the organisation and its surroundings.	- In what kind of organisation do you work? (Sector, field, size, focus...)
3 Other information if needed or initiated by the interviewee.	
Perspective in questions 4–5: current organisation where the interviewee works	
4 Current position of PR in the organisation, and the factors which influence or could influence it. (RQ 7, RQ 10)	- What is the place of PR department in your organisation? What is the role of PR/CM in your organisation? - How is PR/CM valued in your organisation? - What kind of aspects affect to the position of PR/CM in your organisation? - How the position of PR/CM could be improved?
5 Goals of PR in interviewee's current organisation. (RQ 8, RQ 10)	- In your opinion what are the most important goals of PR/CM in your organisation? - What kind of added value PR/CM brings to the organisation?
Perspective in questions 6–10: PR/CM profession in general	
6 Content of PR expertise (RQ 8, RQ 9, RQ 10)	- In your opinion, what does PR/CM expertise consists of? - What is your perception of what PR/CM expertise is? - What kind of competence is needed in PR/CM?
7 Perception on PR professionalism (RQ 9, RQ 10)	- What do you think professionalism in PR/CM means? - What differs a professional from an unprofessional PR/CM practitioner? - What distinguishes good PR/CM from bad? - How do you define the quality of the PR/CM practice? - What does good quality PR/CM consist of?
8 Ethical issues (RQ 9, RQ 10)	- Have you faced any ethical issues in your work? - What kind of ethical questions do PR/CM professionals face?
9 Challenges (RQ 8, RQ 10)	- What challenges do you think the contemporary world is setting for PR/CM?
10 Trends (RQ 8, RQ 10)	- How do you think the PR/CM field will develop in future?
	- Anything you would like to add or ask?

Key: CM – communication management / PR – public relations / RQ – research question

Questions in the table formed a rough plan: the manner of asking the questions as well as variations in their order depended on the interviewee's answers. For instance if an interviewee already discussed the next topic in connection to another question, it was not necessary to bring up the theme again by asking that question. Some of the questions in the draft were parallel "help questions" which were used to rephrase the question when needed.

The idea of the questions was to get the interviewees to talk about the topics and the abstract concepts without defining the concepts for them. It was a conscious choice to start first with rather abstract questions, and use more concrete help questions, only if needed. For example, the question "what does PR expertise consist of" resulted in many kind of answer approaches from describing the process of developing expertise to listing needed skills or the type of knowledge PR expert should have. There were no wrong ways to interpret the question, indeed all approaches were equally acceptable. However, if the interviewee seemed unable to answer that particular question or asked the researcher to explain the question, then the additional question was used. For instance, a question about the competences of a PR expert was additional and was used mainly in those cases when the interviewee found it too difficult to talk about expertise.

This line of questions made the material extremely diverse and perhaps even dispersed, which set a challenge for the analysis phase. However, questions that are too concrete could have restricted the variety of different paths of thoughts. In the analysis, both what was told and how it was told was considered, and although abstracted from individuals the comments were always reflected against the contexts they were related to, thus aiming at finding out how the parts of the puzzle relate to whole understanding of the studied phenomenon. The analysis phase was approached as inductively as possible, trying to prevent the literature's viewpoints from leading the inference.

The interviews lasted from approximately 15 to 75 minutes. The author conducted all the interviews in Finnish. All but two interviews was conducted at the workplace of the interviewee. One of the exceptions occurred at a hotel during a business trip by the interviewee and the other at a cafeteria. The invitation to the interview was sent by email and the interviewees expressed their consent for the interview by email. Interviews were recorded digitally. The author transcribed two thirds of the interviews. The remainder were transcribed by another researcher and on completion were edited by the author.

2.4.3 Analysing the interview data

As the nature of phenomenographic analysis is inductive (Green 2005) it is important to rely on the data as much as possible and avoid imposing the framework (Entwistle 1997), which the researcher inevitably has adopted, while defining the research problem. The researcher cannot bring external input to the analysis phase but the categories must only be based on the data (Bowden 2005). However, settling with only describing the categories and their relations is insufficient, because the descriptions should also be evaluated and explained in the light of theory (Svensson 1997).

Whereas in some qualitative approaches (such as naturalistic inquiry) the context of the studied phenomenon is often seen as key to understanding the phenomenon, phenomenographic analysis steps from individual perspectives and specific contexts to more abstract level, trying to reach meanings that exist beyond the contexts (Green 2005). Yet, loyalty to the data is essential, and thus, while elaborating the categories of meanings the researcher must always rigorously check if the constructed interpretation fits with the original context (Green 2005).

The idea of phenomenographic analysis is not to list and categorise everything that was told during the interview and compare how many of the interviewees mentioned this or that thing, but to find from the details the patterns that reveal the holistic meanings given to the subject (Bowden 2005). The process requires reading the data several times, and the formed categories are repeatedly revisited and revised, in order to find and elaborate the essential meanings and their relations (Green 2005; Åkerlind 2005). The analysis includes (1) contrasting the studied phenomenon with other phenomena in order to discern the whole of the phenomenon from its context, (2) generalising what are the essential features of the phenomenon, (3) separating different ways of experiencing the phenomenon, and (4) fusing the different ways of experiencing the phenomenon by explaining how they relate to the whole of the phenomenon (Marton & Tsui 2004, in Åkerlind 2008).

Åkerlind (2012, 119–120) in explaining the process suggests that at first the focus is in forming a "data pool" by finding from the transcribed interviews those parts, which are relevant to the studied topic. From this data pool the researcher starts to search for the meanings the transcribed quotes contain. All important findings are included in the "pool of meanings", within which the material can be viewed either as regarding the individuals or as concerning the whole collectivity in question. All quotes belong to both the data pool and the pool of meanings and can be understood both as descriptions of a certain issue, but also as implications of a meaning. The discovered meanings are then organised in relation to each other into the final "outcome space" (Åkerlind 2012, 119–120). The aim is to establish a logical and comprehensive structure which relates the different ways of understanding the phenomenon to each other. This "outcome space" makes it possible to deal with the different understandings of different individuals within different contexts holistically, as a collectivity of conceptions. (Åkerlind 2012.)

The researcher creates categories of description based on the essential qualitative similarities and differences in the research participants' conceptions (Åkerlind 2012). The process of constituting the categories proceeds by finding tentative categories from the data, testing them against the data, validating some categories and adjusting others and so forth, until finalising the whole system of meanings (Marton 1986, cited in Åkerlind 2012). When forming the categories of description it is advisable to derive the labels for the categories from the expressions used by the interviewees instead of imposing the researcher's terminology on the labels (Barnacle 2005).

The upshot of the phenomenographic analysis is an outcome space, which organises the formulated categories in relation to each other. Uljens (1989) explains that the relations of the categories may be horizontal, vertical or hierarchical, whereas almost a decade later Marton and Booth (1997) refer only to hierarchical. Åkerlind (2012, 123) mentions that "outcome space need not always take the form of a linear hierarchy of inclusiveness; branching structures or hierarchies are also a possibility".

During the analysis the researcher may focus on one aspect of the studied phenomenon at the time, "seeking its dimensions of variation while holding other aspects frozen" (Marton & Booth 1997, 133). After analysing different aspects and achieving a comprehensive picture of the object of study, this interpretation is reflected against each subject of the study to develop and sharpen the interpretation.

Table 4 presents the four stages of phenomengraphic analysis and summarises the goals of each stage as they are understood in this research. The last stage of the analysis is emphasised especially among developmental phenomenography, which is motivated by the practical applicability of the research results (Green 2005).

TABLE 4 Stages of the phenomenographic analysis (Asunta 2013)

Stage of analysis	Outcome of this stage	Purpose of this stage
Selecting relevant quotes from the transcribed interviews (also referred as contrasting and generalisation)	Pool of data	Abstracting descriptions about the phenomenon
Discovering the different meanings attached to the phenomenon and its features, forming categories, testing and re-testing and validating the categories (also referred as separation)	Pool of meanings	Discovering the meanings behind the expressions
Organising the categories of the meanings regarding how they relate to each other and the whole of the phenomenon (also referred as fusion)	Outcome space	Construing the qualitatively different ways of conceptualising the phenomenon
Reflecting the findings against theory and the possibilities for practical application of them	Theoretical and practical conclusions	Finding answers to the research problem and pointing out the practical value of the research

In this research the first stage of interview data analysis started by marking the quotations, in which the interviewees talk about a topic that seemed relevant to the research. The quotations were then coded by expressing the topic in question on a more abstract level with a few words usually derived from the quotation and translated into English. At this point a code looked, for example, like: *facilitating change*.

When similar topics appeared the first created code was used in the latter cases. Later, while the coding was checked, the overlapping codes were merged and renamed if needed. If the quotation referred to many topics more than one code was attached to it. The pool of data which was created this way originally consisted of 2513 marked quotations and 2237 codes. However, not all quotations and codes turned out to be relevant for the analysis, and not all overlapping codes were merged for practical reasons. If the overlapping codes included exactly or almost same phrasing the codes were merged but if the expressions differed but the topic was same the codes were combined by creating a sub-category. This way it was possible to preserve the various expressions which improves the transparency and authenticity of the coding: it is easier to follow the logic of the coding when the original (though translated and more or less condensed) phrasing is kept visible.

In the second stage of the analysis the first idea was to group the codes according to the themes of the semi-structured interview. However, it turned out that in some cases the interviewees interpreted questions differently and consequently the same question produced descriptions of a very different topic. For instance, to the question of the objectives of PR some interviewees answered by telling about the concrete tasks of PR while some discussed about the defined objectives of PR and some simply pointed out that PR aims at supporting the business or functioning of the organisation. Therefore, this logic of grouping the codes was abandoned and the researcher tried to seize the meanings behind the quotations. This meant separating the quotes from individual cases and fusing them based on common characteristics. The general topic of a particular quote was marked by adding a descriptive word in front of the code, for instance: *objectives, facilitating change*.

Next, the overlapping codes were combined, and the content of the codes was re-checked to make sure that the quotes were understood correctly. Similar codes were grouped together and necessary sub-categories were formed. Technically, this was done by adding a few letters between the word that describes the general topic and the content of the code. As a result, the earlier example of a code looked like this: *objectives, ORG, MAN, facilitating change*. The letters *ORG* represent that this particular objective belongs to the category of *well-functioning organisation*, and the letters *MAN* locate this quote to the sub-category of *managing* the well-functioning organisation.[7]

Table 5 demonstrates the process of analysis, in this case regarding how the category of meanings about goals of PR was elaborated from what the interviewees had told about the objectives and added value of PR. The question "what are the most important objectives of PR" produced some comments about concrete tasks of PR and various descriptions of the major objectives of PR practice. These

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[7] The form of the codes: "topic, CATegory, SUB-category, content with few words". The coding lists with explanations can be found in the appendix.

were categorised into tasks and ten different objectives of PR. When analysing the answers to the question "what kind of added value PR is producing for the organisation" it was noticed that the seven found categories of added value resemble the categories of the objectives of PR. These categories were then combined and taken to a more abstract level, and as a result six categories of meaning were constructed to answer the analytical question of "what are the goals of PR". The final categories of the meaning were checked by returning to the original data and context to make sure that the abstracted description was understood correctly and that the quote fits to the established new category. Overall the separation and fusion process included many rounds of reading the data and testing the formed categories, resulting finally the so called pool of meanings.

TABLE 5 From raw observations to interpretation – example of the process of analysis

First round:	Second round:	Third round:	Fourth round:
Raw observations, what is said about different topics?	What are the comments really about?	Combining parallel categories and weeding out comments that are out of context	Interpreting and re-formulating the categories
→ Pool of data	→ Categories of description		→ Pool of meanings
Question about the objectives of PR	What PR aims at? (10 categories of objectives)	Leaving out comments about tasks, finding similarities in objectives and added value	Lifting the abstraction level and forming the interpretation regarding the goals of PR (6 categories)
	What PR does? (some comments about tasks)		
Question about the added value of PR	What PR aims at? (7 categories of added value)		

After analysing the data using smaller extracts and focusing on what is said about different topics (referential aspect) the focus was shifted to the wider understanding of the studied phenomenon: how do the respondents actually talk about professional PR and its position and objectives, and how the conceptions relate to each other (structural aspect). In this research this was done by listening and reading each interview again as a whole without the conducted coding and then reflecting relevant coded extracts to their contexts to see what they reveal about the concepts of the individual respondent. It turned out that first phases of the analysis (which closely remind thematic analysis) of the interview data offer valuable information about the topic (e.g. the goals of PR) but fail to detect the underlying thinking patterns that guide the respondents in their work. Putting the sporadic comments – produced as a result of the interview questions – in relation with each other within each interview helped to understand what was meant by the comments and how the individual interviewees perceive the studied phenomenon. This way it was possible to find the differences and similarities in the thinking patterns of the respondents, and to specify the critical aspects that characterise the different conceptions regarding the phenomenon.

From this point, phenomenographic research typically moves on to reflecting the findings against the existing literature in order to make further inferences regarding the research problem. In this dissertation this was achieved in the phase IV by bringing the findings of the two subordinate studies together and constructing the holistic model of PR professionalism.

2.5 Steps in phase IV: constructing the model

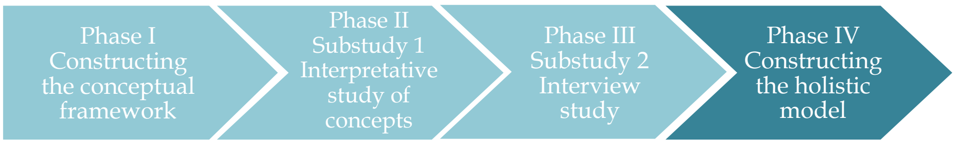

FIGURE 10 Focus of the section 2.5

In the last phase of this research the conclusions of two subordinate studies are brought together and a holistic model of PR professionalism is constructed. Construction of the academics' view on PR professionalism and the perceptions of the interviewees are reflected together in order to build a synthesis. The aim is not to falsify or verify one or the other perspective but to see the phenomenon from different angles and crystallise the core elements of the phenomenon. At this phase the interpretations are also connections to relevant existing theories to strengthen the basis for the holistic model.

This process of constructing a model based on interpretative research is reminiscent of Aristotle's way of synthesising which researchers have labelled as the "method of saving a concept" (Kakkuri-Knuuttila & Heinlahti 2006, 111). Saving the concept aims at keeping what appears right and abandoning what is wrong or contradictory in a concept following four steps: (1) collecting conceptions regarding a problematic issue, (2) pointing out the contradictions, faults and strengths in the conceptions, (3) formulating a new concept which includes the strengths and excludes the faults of the previous conceptions, and (4) reasoning for the new concepts and principles proving that they solve the problems and save the phenomenon (Kakkuri-Knuuttila & Heinlahti 2006).

The holistic approach refers to the idea that the whole is more than a sum of its parts (Christensen, Morsing & Cheney 2008). Holistic thinking is typical to interpretive research which aims at understanding the meanings of social realities (Kakkuri-Knuuttila & Heinlahti 2006). Without holistic approach this research would remain reductionist scrutinising different elements of professionalism. The holistic model brings the essential elements together to compose a synthesis.

A model is an abstraction of reality, which simplifies the complex phenomenon pointing out essential characteristics and elements of it, and outlining the relations between different parts and the entirety (Anttila 1998). When constructing a model the researcher emphasises most important aspects and cuts down less important in order to make the picture clear. Chapter 6 will initially bring together the most relevant findings from the two subordinate studies and will then combine them into three dimensions of PR professionalism and explain their interconnectedness. Discerned and potential pitfalls will be explained and finally a model will be constructed, which helps to understand the multifaceted phenomenon of PR professionalism. Calling the model "holistic" emphasises the significance of the parts to the whole: only together they enable the full potential of the phenomenon.

While the Aristotelian way of synthesising suggests abandoning the "unfit parts" of the concepts, this research also acknowledges the possible and observed problem areas in the studied phenomenon. Rather than providing only one Weberian-sense "ideal type" which would not exist in reality (see Adams and Sydie 2002), the model leaves space for variations and thus better reflects the complex reality.

2.6 Is the journey worthy – Quality criteria for qualitative inquiry

Although the value of qualitative research is nowadays generally acknowledged it is worthwhile to spend a moment to reflect how the discoveries of this voyage can be evaluated. This section of Chapter 2 summarises some of the approaches that qualitative researchers have adopted regarding the issues of validity and generalisability, and explains how these questions are solved in this research.

2.6.1 Credibility of the travelogue

Scientific research reports can neither be based on imagination nor can they be only disconnected observations of the world. Qualitative researchers have had two typical responses to the conventional demands of validity: they have either denied the relevance of the issue or argued that qualitative research has its own criteria for scientific quality of the research (Maxwell 1992).

For some researchers, the disagreement with the earlier dominant positivist approach is fundamental. The critical approach rejects the claims for validity criteria as ideological (Hammersley 2008), and demands the focus should be on the moral-political aspects of "ethical relationship", openness and reflexivity about the researcher's standpoints and own voice, and respect towards the multiple voices of the research participants (Lincoln & Guba 2000, 182). Richardson and St. Pierre (2008) explain the postmodern approach to validity via a metaphor of crystal, which instead of being fixed objects, have many shapes, they grow and change. Validating a qualitative research is like examining a crystal, i.e. seeing and understanding the phenomenon creatively from different perspectives but without losing its entity, using various sources of information, and discovering and abandoning hidden assumptions (Richardson & St. Pierre 2008). Essential in these approaches is to respect the different point of views, to acknowledge and avoid presumptions and possible influence of the power structures, and to be reflexive regarding the role of the researcher.

While defining the quality criteria for qualitative research, many researchers prefer combining the issues of validity and reliability, and using terms such as credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness, accompanied with emphasis on rigor and quality of the research process (Golafshani 2003). For instance Lincoln and Guba (2000) assess validity as authenticity, which consists of fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity (Guba & Lincoln 1989, cited in Lincoln & Guba 2000). They explain that fairness refers to representing all voices of the research participants equally and truthfully, and avoiding marginalisation by treating all respondents or individual subjects with respect. By ontological and educational authenticity they mean assessing research participants' raised level of awareness about people around them or processes they get involved in for some social or organisational purposes. Catalytic and tactical authenticities have to do with how the researcher motivates and, if necessary, trains the individuals to participate the inquiry in question. The issues of fairness, respect and relation between researcher and the research participants in this research are discussed in the section 2.6.3 which deals with the research ethics, and partly while describing the research method of phenomenographic interview in section 2.4.

Hammersley (2008, 44–45) argues that validity is simply about whether the "findings or conclusions of a study are true". He does not see that big of a difference between validity questions in qualitative and quantitative approaches: neither can prove their case with absolute certainty, and both need to evaluate the validity in respect of the knowledge claims they are making (for knowledge claims of this research see section 2.1.3). Hammersley (2008) contends that all three types of knowledge claims a research may be producing – descriptive, explanatory, and theoretical knowledge – include different criteria and threats to validity. When assessing a claim for descriptive knowledge the focus is in the accuracy and the authenticity of the descriptions, i.e. do the descriptions actually match with the studied phenomenon and how accurate are the possible differentiations? Assessing the validity of explanations includes three levels: (1) the validity of the descriptions that relate to the explanation, (2) the validity of the theoretical principle that combines the proposed causes and effects, and (3) the relevance of that proposed theoretical principle to the context where the phenomenon is studied in (Hammersley 2008, 44–45). When assessing the validity of the theoretical conclusions, the process includes the above mentioned phases and follows by making hypothetical propositions about the situations where the theoretical conclusions would work and where not, and which other factors might cause the same effects (Hammersley 2008).

Hammersley's (2008) thinking resonates with Maxwell's (1992) idea that validity of conclusions is more important than techniques when it comes to evaluating qualitative research. Maxwell (1992) argues that qualitative research should be assessed using five categories of validity which correspond with the types of understanding the research claims to be producing: descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, generalisability (which will be discussed further as a separate issue), and evaluative validity.

Descriptive validity – as well as the descriptive knowledge of Hammersley (2008) and the above mentioned demand for fairness regarding the voice of each research participant (Lincoln and Guba 2000) – emphasise the importance of the data itself being as accurate, authentic, and free from interpretation as possible. Interpretive validity refers to understanding the culture and context bound meanings of for example the statements or behaviour of the informants of the research. Theoretical validity assesses how justifiable the abstract explanation of the studied phenomenon is: how well the chosen concepts fit to the phenomenon, and are the relations between the concepts plausible. Evaluative validity is a matter of conscious applying of evaluative frameworks while assessing or commenting the described events or statements. (Maxwell 1992.)

Winter (2000) argues the interpretative validity conceptualisation of Maxwell (1992) ties the interpretation too much to the context by claiming that the account of a specific research participant is valid only if understood in the terms of that participant and connected to that particular cultural context. It seems that Maxwell's approach takes the authenticity to the extreme, where it eventually turns against the good intentions of trying to understand the individuals and situations as well as possible. Overall Winter considers Maxwell's (1992) categorisation paradoxical, and unnecessary because instead of guaranteeing an acceptable outcome by following certain validity checkpoints, validity leans on the concept of truth and the consistency of the research process and methods with the purpose and the truth claims of the research. Winter (2000) argues "it is the means of validation that should be adjusted depending on the kind of truth that is sought or expected".

The notion of contextual understanding inherent in the concept of interpretive validity in Maxwell's (1992) conceptualisation is characteristic to qualitative methods in general. Hammersley's concept of explanatory "knowledge claims" emphasises the connectedness of the accurate descriptions in the explanations, the logic of the inference, and how the inference fits to the context in question. Furthermore, Hammersley (2008) echoes Maxwell's (1992) typology in the sense that he, also, relates the types of validity to the kind of understanding embodied in the explanations. Winter contends that validity of all research should be assessed in relation to the concept of the truth the research holds. Thus, whether talking about understanding or truth of knowledge claim, all three authors – Maxwell, Hammersley and Winter – seem to put the emphasis on the legitimacy of the outcomes of the research.

Approaches that focus on assessing the threats to validity of research findings and conclusions, rather than research techniques, could be called "interpretively rigorous" (Lincoln & Guba 2000, 178). Instead of focusing on methods, the quality of the research is reasoned through explaining the process of interpretation.

A phenomenographic researcher does not aim to convince that the findings of the research match with reality[8], but that the findings "correspond to human experience of the phenomenon" (Uljens 1996, 115–116). Typically the quality of phenomenographic research is reflected by assessing its communicative and pragmatic validity (Åkerlind 2012). Communicative validity refers to the plausibility of the reasoning, and pragmatic validity refers to the usability (Kvale 1996) and meaningfulness (Uljens 1996) of the research results to the scientific community and the intended audiences. In general, communicative validity can be tested among the research participants, other members of the population represented by the sample, or the intended audience of the study. However, in phenomenographic research, the last two groups are preferred because the research participants (most often interviewees) are not expected to be able to rise above their own experience to the level of interpretation where the researcher operates (Åkerlind 2012).

Rigour in phenomenographic research process includes careful preparation for data-collection (most often interviewing, including open-ended but focused questions, pilot interviews etc.), critical evaluation of the data and the data-collecting process (possibly discarding tainted data), loyalty to the data (avoiding "forcing" the categories, and rather accepting inconsistencies within the data), iterative process of reading and analysing the data, and thorough reportage of the research process and elucidative argumentation regarding the findings (Green 2005; Åkerlind 2005; Entwistle 1997). It is important to be critical regarding the presumptions and presuppositions that may affect the interpretations (Åkerlind 2012). Conducting the research by a team of researchers who discuss and negotiate about the interpretations improves the reliability of the findings (Green 2005). In the instance of a single researcher, the audience is convinced about the reliability of the analysis by showing "interpretive awareness" (Åkerlind 2005, 125), i.e. having a reflexive and critical attitude towards all phases of the research process, careful explanation of the interpretation steps and demonstrating the logic of interpretation by using excerpts from the data (Åkerlind 2012; Lincoln & Guba 2000). One can also search for critical feedback during the research process, e.g. by publishing parts of the findings during the research process in either or both reviewed journals and seminars, and consulting researchers familiar with the research method in question (Åkerlind 2005).

In this research, using a team was impossible, and therefore explanation of the phases of the research process and the reasoning of the findings become more crucial. Also, as Sandberg (1996, 136–137) points out, usage of research team or "interjudge" techniques to increase reliability of the research process and to justify the legitimacy of the reached conclusions cannot guarantee the faithfulness of the research procedures. Sandberg argues that the demand for such reliability checks fits poorly together with the basic epistemological assumption of phenomenography

[8] The non-dualist worldview of phenomenography believes that reality exists only through experience, and thus the value of a theory or a research finding has to be evaluated in regard to human experiences (see Uljens 1996, 114–116).

according to which there is an interpretive and intentional relation between an individual and the world.

> Following the epistemology of intentionality underlying the phenomenographic approach implies first and foremost that the researcher must demonstrate how he/she has dealt with his/her intentional relation to the individuals' conceptions being investigated. That is, in order to be as faithful as possible to the individuals' conceptions of reality, the researcher must demonstrate how he/she has controlled and checked his/her interpretations throughout the research process: from formulating the research question, selecting individuals to be investigated, obtaining data from those individuals, analysing the data obtained, and reporting the results.
>
> (Sandberg 1996, 137.)

This research does not consider objectivist demands for neutrality or standardised research techniques as the only or best ways of producing scientific knowledge. Yet the most relativist view on validity, that is, denying the relevance of the whole issue, would leave the outcomes of the inquiry too contextual and insignificant for the scientific community or the professional life. Therefore, in this research the middle route is chosen: the validity of this research leans on the "interpretively rigorous" process of constructing explanations about the studied phenomenon. Adapting the notions of Hammersley (2008) and Maxwell (1992), the validity will be demonstrated by being accurate in the descriptions, explaining the interpretations and evaluating the transferability of them, and finally, by anchoring the theorising to other research findings. Linking the conclusions to the existing scientific research also relates to accumulation of knowledge which is explained in the following section while discussing the generalisability of qualitative research. This research also uses multiple methods and investigates the phenomenon from different point of views using thus "crystallisation" approach (Richardson & St. Pierre 2008) to validating the findings.

When it comes to assessing the validity of the findings it is also necessary to consider the possible threats to validity that is inherent in the data itself. For instance, if the data consists of accounts of the informants, the possibility for bias, reactivity in the interaction process between the researcher and the informant, and the ability or willingness of the informant to provide information needs to be evaluated (Hammersley 2008). These questions concern mainly the interview data of this research. Regarding the issue of whether the interviewees were able or willing to provide the information or answer truthfully, this threat to validity is decreased by analysing the data on both referential and structural aspects as typical to phenomenographic analysis (Marton & Booth 1997). This echoes, to an extent, the "factist perspective" and the "specimen perspective" described by Alasuutari (2000, 48) in the context of cultural studies. The factist perspective refers to analysing what the informants tell about the issue in question, taking their stories as statements which may or may not be true, whereas the specimen perspective means analysing the interview talk as such, understanding it as a sample of that specific interviewee's reality. Phenomenographic assumption of intentionality is also relevant here: the interview talk is intentionally co-produced description of how the interviewee experiences certain aspects of the studied phenomenon, in this case, PR professionalism which represents one sample of the qualitatively different ways of understanding the phenomenon.

Also other more technical aspects to the validity of the different methods used in this research were explained while describing each of the techniques in their own sections (sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4).

2.6.2 General value of a local finding

Some treasures have value only to their owners while the value of others is widely recognised. The general value of qualitative research findings has sometimes been questioned because of the low number of the cases studied, and the non-probability sampling method (Gobo 2008). Qualitative researchers have adopted different understandings regarding generalisability. Some researchers share the idea that instead of claiming for formal generalisation regarding certain population the qualitative research can claim that the developed theoretical inferences may be applied to other cases if the cases are similar enough, if the level of abstraction is high enough or if the intensive qualitative inquiry is used in connection to a extensive statistical research (Gobo 2008; see also Stake 2000 and Guba & Lincoln 1982). Another stance regarding generalisability in qualitative research is to plead on cumulability of knowledge, arguing that while transferring ideas from a case study to the next eventually the inquiries will accumulate a generalisable understanding of the phenomenon (Gobo 2008; see also Pawson and Tilly 1997).

Gobo (2008) argues that generalisation is also possible when based on non-probability sampling. He suggests an idiographic sampling theory, according to which the sample plan for qualitative inquiry should be made step by step "in dialogue with field incidents, contingencies, and discoveries" (Gobo 2008, 207). The idea is to reflect and improve the generalisability during the research process by adding respondents or continuing the research project with a new phase (Gobo 2008). Instead of sampling individuals from a certain population and thus taking the structural elements of the population for granted, qualitative researcher selects the sample based on aspects more essential to the research topic. It depends on the research problem as to what can be considered as appropriate unit of analysis, and what kind of variations should be represented in the sample (Gobo 2008).

In this research the focus is in generalisability of interpretation. The generalisation claim is justified with three aspects: reflective and interactive sampling process, the abstraction of the inferences, and accumulation of knowledge. With the interview study, the snowball technique and an additional purposive sample were used in order to get a diversity of participants. Interpretations from the different subordinate studies were reflected together and abstraction level was raised along with the theorising process, which also connected the new interpretations with existing knowledge.

2.6.3 Following the heart or the rules of the route?

Being methodologically coherent includes also the aspect of values and research ethics. The guidelines of Responsible Conduct of Research, formulated by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK), suggest good scientific practice follows the principles of "integrity, meticulousness, and accuracy in conducting research, and in recording, presenting, and evaluating the research results." The guidelines also articulate that applied research methods in collecting and analysing the data should meet scientific standards and be "ethically sustainable" and publishing the outcomes should follow an "open and responsible fashion" (TENK 2012, 30). These principles were followed to the best ability of the researcher.

From a more philosophical perspective an important ethical principle in interpretive research is respect for the voices of the participants of the research (Lincoln & Guba 2000). This applies in this research both literature-based parts and the interview study. Regarding the literature-based parts this concerns mainly giving credits to whom they belong to, referring to the sources adequately and not purposefully misunderstand sources by taking quotes out of the context. Regarding the interview study the issue is more diverse.

From the practical point of view the ethical aspects in the interview study involved transparency, authenticity and confidentiality. Interviewees were invited via individual email to participate in the research, to which they replied giving their consent for the interviews. In the invitation they were told what kind of research was in question and anonymity was promised. Anonymity included also the organisations the interviewees were working for. In practice this meant that any data considered to be revelatory was removed from the excerpts used when reporting the results of the research.

The interviews were transcribed carefully and only translated into English after analysis to secure the authenticity of interview data (only those parts that were used in reporting the results were translated). A sizeable proportion of the interviews was transcribed by another researcher. To make sure that the anonymity of the interviewees was secured the raw data was never saved on a public computer but only to the researcher's private computer and the safe copy on the external hard disc.

Respect towards the individual interviewees was shown also by accepting all recommended PR practitioners for interviewees regardless of the position or job description. It was decided that excluding someone based on seemingly less suitable or interesting position would mean judging who are fit to have perceptions on the studied phenomenon and therefore valuing some point of views over the others.

Moreover, the guiding principle during the analysis was that all perceptions were equally important. When describing the different ways the interviewees perceived their work it was sometimes difficult to prevent personal feelings or literature-based preconceptions from judging some perceptions as right and others wrong. Although they were evaluated and put into perspective, they were neither appraised nor condemned on the basis of how the researcher or scholars in the field think PR should be – although it must be admitted that as a university teacher and former PR professional one certainly has opinions regarding the studied phenomenon and a desire to develop the profession. It would thus be naïve to claim that this research would be value-free or totally objective. However, the researcher avoided judging individual interviewees or their opinions, and tried to treat the interviewees equally and respectfully during and after the interviews.

Respect during the analysis is especially important when conducting phenomenographic research where the aim is to capture the qualitatively different ways of thinking. The researcher has to carefully avoid twisting the words of an interviewee and detaching expressions from their contexts when trying to grasp the meaning of what is said. To secure this the interviews were read several times and whenever an excerpt was used to justify an interpretation it was once more checked that the interpretation fitted to the original context of the quote.

There is a need to explain one's standpoint regarding the influence of the inquiry. Believing that the reality is constructed by social interaction, and that research deals with and is part of that reality, brings along the "reflexivity problem" (Sulkunen 2008, 73) in that while studying social reality the scientists are also shaping it.

During the research process, the researcher and the research participants are producing the meanings together and negotiating the understanding (Schwandt 2000). Being reflexive about and throughout this process is fundamental to quality in qualitative research. Reflexivity means that the researcher is consciously evaluating one's own multiple identities, and how "the binaries, contradictions, and paradoxes that form our own lives" (Lincoln & Guba 2000, 183–184) are shaping the research process in all its phases.

The desire to develop the PR profession is the central value and driver in this research. While objectivists assert neutrality critical school states that the researchers should not only acknowledge the possible influence of values but instead they should actively strive for using the research to influence societal grievances (Miller 2002). This research stands somewhere between these polarities articulating a desire to develop the profession but yet keeping distance from different camps in the research field: as the research will show there are opposing standpoints within PR academia who have very different ideas regarding which direction PR should be headed. This research shows neutrality in not choosing sides in PR's paradigm conflicts, instead, it takes the role of sense-maker, interpreting different point of views with the aim of finding a synthesis which benefits the profession.

Schwandt (2000) argues it is insufficient to just become aware of one's prejudices, attitudes and conflicting interests concerning the research topic and then claim to put those away. Instead, one needs to engage them in the interpretation process, which means not only being conscious about their affect but also risk having them; being part of the interactive processes of change that constantly shape the social reality (Schwandt 2000). In this research, the researcher's role in the interactive process of shaping the world and being shaped by it is explained above and when necessary along with reporting the findings but mainly these aspects are reflected afterwards when evaluating the research in the Chapter 7.

3 PHASE I: MAPPING THE KEY CONCEPTS

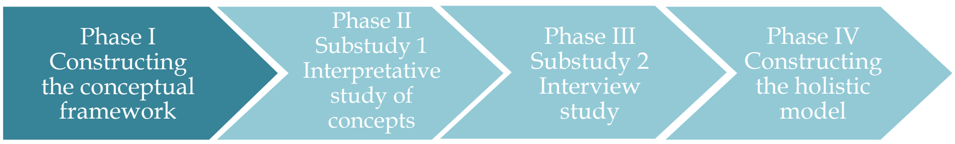

FIGURE 11 Focus of Chapter 3

Any occupation that seeks recognition as a strategic expert function will have to convince the actors in the related fields about the relevance of its know-how, and the competence and trustworthiness of its practitioners. Profession research has focused on these issues from different perspectives and among different occupational groups for decades.

Three central concepts to profession studies are “profession”, “professionalisation” and “professionalism”. The terms “profession” and ”professional” are rooted in the verb ”profess” which means declaration, confession or impression of intentionality, and originally profession referred to dedicating oneself to some special purpose usually associated with religious and moral motives (Freidson 1986, 21). However, from the very beginning, the word has had various usages and connotations, and the tension between competent trustworthy practitioner and somehow a poser or self-centered status seeker seems to be characteristic to profession-related debates. Already in 16th century, the word profession is sometimes used to refer to certain exclusive occupational group and sometimes in general to any occupation (Freidson 1986). In profession studies it usually refers to a specific occupational group but the interpretations regarding the phenomenon and the motives behind it are more ambiguous.

Professionalisation is generally understood as a process where occupational groups become professions. From a functionalist perspective the process was explained by disorganised occupational groups gradually developing into ideal type professions (Konttinen 1989). However, a more critical approach has understood professionalisation as a process where occupational groups aim at creating and controlling markets for certain expert services (Larson 1979). In a similar vein, Konttinen (1997) argues that professionalism means an occupation's efforts of controlling and strengthening legitimacy of the work, and the status of the profession. Accordingly, Konttinen seems to think that professionalism is related to the profession's desire to achieve a favourable position and ascendancy. Here it seems that professionalisation and professionalism are largely understood as a same concept.

However, the two concepts can be distinguished from each other more clearly. Following Englund’s (1996) definition, Kanes (2010a, 4) separates professionalisation and professionalism, seeing the first as a “sociological project” that highlights the position and status of a profession, whereas the latter is understood as a “pedagogical project” which focuses on quality aspects of work. Kanes (2010a, 5) thus refers to professionalism as “qualities of professional work”. Kunelius (1998) also distinguishes professionalisation and professionalism. He argues professionalisation is a phenomenon linked to the division of work in modern society where new forms of expertise are invented to answer to ever-more complex issues of managing the society. This definition echoes with Weber’s view according to which professionalism is one of the social structures that organise and regulate issues in society (Kanes 2010a). Professionalism, Kunelius explains is a "doctrine" which means belief in the power of expert-professionalism.

It is necessary to distinguish between typical Anglo-American and continental European approaches to profession studies. In the Anglo-American approach to the ideal type of professions, the central characteristic is the freedom of the independent professional to control working conditions whereas the continental European ideal type of profession leans on academic qualifications which give the administrative elite mandate to their positions (Collins 1990). Nevertheless, the Anglo-American ideal type of a profession is seen as a way for occupational closure whereas in continental Europe professions are often defined more loosely and occupational questions are dealt in more general level, i.e. relating to professional identity, career development, employment issues in public sector, education and expertize (Evetts 2003a).

The division between the Anglo-American and European models of professionalism has been criticised as over-simplification (Pickard 2009) and profession studies overall have been stated to be overly dominated by Western/Northern perspectives and thus fitting mainly to the welfare-state conditions (Kuhlmann 2013). Therefore, it is argued that more context-sensitive approaches would be needed to supplement the current theories. From a cultural perspective, which sees reality as co-constructed and emphasises dialogical understanding of the world we live in, individual professional is seen as embedded in a specific socio-historical context (Bekerman & Tatar 2005). A more nihilistic interpretation about the contextuality leads to the thought that one community has no right to force their values on another (Cochran 2000), which could lead to abandoning any attempts to construct universal professional ethics. However, as Cochran points out, this could also turn the attention more deeply to professional communities and adopting professional identity.

One argument is that what is considered as truth is affected by “stimuli from reality, previous theories and conceptions, and political, economic, cultural forces” (Brante 2010, 873). This becomes clear when trying to get a grasp on the development and current trends of profession theories. The research on professions has been criticised for poorly defined key concepts. Terms like ”professionalisation” and ”professionalism” are not universal but, instead, are contextual and deeply rooted in English language and culture (Torstendahl 1990), which set limitations to profession studies. This research acknowledges that the central concepts are defined in numerous ways within the variety of research approaches. Thereby instead of attempting to find a precise and airtight definition, it approaches the complex topic and ambiguous terms by using an interpretative study of concepts. Through reflecting different perspectives and understandings regarding professionalism this chapter constructs a three-dimensional framework for investigating professionalism. The three dimensions are then discussed in the context of public relations which is also an ambiguous conception.

3.1 Clashing paradigms of professionalism

Traditional professions – law, medicine and divinity – were found on the religious orders of the Middle Age, and the privileged position attached to them was seen as coming with a responsibility towards the society (Cochran 2000). In early 1900s the concept ”professional” became associated with unique knowledge or skill that is needed in specialised work and is usually taught at university level (Freidson 1986). Responsibility was still a central theme in that professions were understood to aim at balancing the forces in society (Larson 1979).

One central representative of functionalist tradition was Parsons (1939) whose work forms the foundation for functionalistic profession studies (Konttinen 1989).[9] Collegial cooperation and collective orientation form the basic ideology of professions (Parsons 1939). He further argues that professional interest is impartial compared to capitalist and socialist thinking, and it would displace those basic ideologies. Parsons constructed an ideal type according to which a professional worker is purely positive, community-oriented, highly ethical applier of science and guarantor of common good (Parsons 1970).

The functionalist harmonious view and its presumption that professionalism is based on moral truth, was turned down by questioning the universality and motives of it, and connecting professionalism to the issues of power and dominance (Cochran 2000). This critical “neo-Weberian” approach explains societal phenomena through conflict, as it wants to reveal the power-relations and dynamics of self-interested actors who try to achieve their own goals (Krejsler 2005). Profes-

9 Functionalist tradition is founded on Emile Durkheim's thinking (Koskinen & Mykkänen 1998).

sions were claimed to be only tools for achieving power and serving one's own interests. For instance Larson (1979) criticised constructions of the ideal type of professions by arguing that they are not telling what professions are but instead are telling what professions pretend to be. Johnson (1972, 45) saw professions as an instrument of control: “profession is not, then, an occupation, but a means of controlling an occupation”.

The conflict approach can be seen reflecting the general radical orientation typical to 1970s, and the shift from functionalist to neo-Weberian paradigm in profession theories as part of a wider cultural change: radical movements wanted to abrogate the service-bureaucracy and abandon the conservative regulations which professions accepted without questions (Konttinen 1989). Researchers started to pay more attention to the conservativeness of professions and negative aspects of high-level specialisation, and the critique towards functionalistic paradigm became so strong that supporters of it showed scarcely any attempts to defend their views and some of them radicalised and became supporters of neo-Weberian paradigm (Konttinen 1989).

During the functionalist paradigm profession studies focused on trying to define what qualifies as a profession focusing on the characteristics of a “pure profession”. This model, sometimes referred as a trait model, is still used in contemporary profession studies (see e.g. March 2007; Picciotto 2011). The approach aims at finding characteristics that separate professionals from non-professionals and it could also be labelled as a differential view (Mieg 2009).

After the two above mentioned major paradigms of profession studies, functionalist and neo-Weberian traditions, a “third wave” started to emerge in 1980s (Puustinen 2006). This approach is typically constructivist and some call it historical and others the cultural approach (see Torstendahl 1990; Konttinen 1989; Abbott 1988). Brint (1994, 124) talks about a shift from traditional “elite professionalism” to “expert professionalism”. This means abandoning the old “social trusteeship”[10] approach and seeing professionals as purveyors of expert-services in the world of consumer markets and powerful corporations (Brint 1994). Expert professionalism highlights the “specialized marketable scientific knowledge” of the professionals (Sandall et al. 2009, 531). Noordegraaf (2007) points out that in contemporary world all professions are shaped by new professionalism, based on managerialism and consumer control, which abandons traditional autonomous occupational groups and emphasises new forms of quality control and proving added value.

Some scholars reject the new interpretations of professionalism (Noordegraaf 2007). For instance, Freidson (2001) seems to prefer pure professionalism. He explains professionalism as institutional conditions where control of work is in the hands of the members of the occupational group instead of managers or consumers (Freidson 2001), and hence, he calls professionalism the “third logic” of control. While in managerial control systems, decisions lean on a number of variables

[10] In the “social trustee professionalism” (Brint 1994) the professionals’ commitment to provide “safe, competent and ethical service” was rewarded by the state by giving the profession autonomy and not interfering the markets (Sandall et al. 2009, 530).

based on the logic and interests of managers, consumer control leans on the affect that consumers' decisions have on the markets. Professional control is presented as more objective way of making decisions based on expert knowledge instead of selfish interests of managers or consumers (Freidson 2001).

The paradigm shifts in profession studies reflect the meta-trends in scientific fields and societies. While Brint (1994) talks about expert professionalism Collins and Evans (2002, 239, 250) when separating three waves in social studies of science interpret the contemporary era as "the age of expertise". The first wave they explain as the golden age of un-problematized authority of science, the age of positivism, which existed dominantly until the 1960s. The rise of social constructivism started the second wave, the age of democracy, which in the early 1970s swept away the strict distinction between the laity and "truth class" of scientists, with its relativist interpretation of science as a social activity. Truth became socially constructed and the boundaries between different types of knowledge, as well as expertise and non-expertise, became blurred. The second wave is still running but, as Collins and Evans (2002) explain, next to it has emerged a third wave which proclaims normative theory of expertise and reconstruction of knowledge: instead of applying boundary-free co-construction of knowledge to all situations it needs to be acknowledged that there is also esoteric sciences and decision-making situations that require specialised expertise. In a way, the third wave takes a reflexive step back from the extreme constructivist thinking, and re-introduces the authority of scientific knowledge. Collins and Evans contend that the significant difference between the current thinking and the first wave is that the authority is seen as based on specialised expert knowledge and not on being part of scientific community per se. The third wave thus shifts the focus to defining what expertise is, and how it relates to science.

Current professionalism studies also suggest a more individualistic trend which seems to emphasise individual's perception regarding their careers and work-life in general. Jones and Green (2006) identified a form of "new professionalism" while studying young GPs (General Practitioners – family doctors) in the United Kingdom. The early-career doctors were committed to professional standards and developing their skills but they also emphasised the work-life balance and rejected the idea of vocation. Mieg (2009) takes an individual perspective but the approach is different. He understands professionalism as one of the two factors of expertise, the other being excellence. Excellence refers to individual's work performance whilst professionalism is about performance of the occupational group (Mieg 2009).

Table 6 compiles different approaches on professionalism and places those on a timeline considering also the underlying meta-trends in science. The Table is merely a sketch that tries to illuminate that while there seems to have been a variety of different research trends in profession studies they can be reduced to three main approaches based on their main focus: (1) characteristics of a profession, (2) societal relations, and (3) performance.

TABLE 6 Different approaches on professionalism

Era		Approach	Key aspects	Focus of study
Positivism	Early 1900s modernity	cultural model in US (Sullivan 2005)	social stratification: expertise brings status and responsibility, impact on society	characteristics, societal relations
	1930s modernity	trait model (Parsons 1939)	defining what qualifies as profession	characteristics
	Post-war 1950s modernity	trait model, structural-functionalists (Wilensky 1964)	special expertise, altruistic service which produces harmonious society	characteristics
Social constructivism, Critical theory	1960s–1970s postmodernity	conflict model, neo-Weberians (Illich 1978; Larson 1979)	criticising the motives behind professionalisation	societal relations
	1980s postmodernity	competition approach (Abbott 1988)	interprofessional competition, positions and relations in labour market	societal relations
	1990s–2000s late modernity (Giddens 1991) or liquid modernity (Bauman 2000) contemporary trends in globalised western world (information society, risk society etc.)	third logic approach (Freidson 2001)	professionalism as third logic compared to entrepreneurial or managerial ways of organising work, organisation of the markets, expertise, impact on society	societal relations
		technical approach (Sullivan 2005; Brint 1994)	competence approach: professional as purveyor of expert services	characteristics
		expert knowledge approach (Brante 2011; Eraut 1996)	knowledge based competence	characteristics
		social control approach, (Evetts 2003a, 2009; Noordegraaf 2007)	value-system or ideology controlling/guiding, control within or from above	performance, societal relations
		quality approach (Mieg 2009; Di Luzio 2006)	professional performance and outcomes as basis for trust and accountability	performance
		identification approach (Mieg 2009; Hodgson 2005; see also Evetts 2011; Noordegraaf 2011)	professional identity, loyalty, commitment to organisation or occupation, performativity	performance
		individual approach (Sanghera & Iliasov 2008; Krejsler 2005; Sullivan 2005)	professional identity, loyalty, individualism, career orientation, fragmented interests of professionals and the clients	performance
		civic professionalism (Sullivan 2005)	reconstructing the civic approach	societal relations

The new economy has been seen as a threat to professionalism. While markets are more competitive and the focus turns more on how to sell and manage expert services it weakens the collegial approach to professionalism and emphasizes educational merits over actual talent of a professional (Sullivan 2005). Competitive markets can also be seen increasing un-equality and blurring the concept of professionalism. It is claimed that people do not in reality have equal rights and possibilities to use the services of the experts. Instead, professionals are "hired guns" who offer their services to those customers who can afford them and who in effect tell the expert what to do, and thereby "in postmodern world professionalism may mean whatever the practitioner wants it to mean" (Cochran 2000, 311).

Hargreaves (2000) talks about interaction between experts and clients in a more positive tone by suggesting that in the post-professional era[11] professionals (in this case teachers in Anglophone nations) need to involve themselves in co-production of expertise with the clients, and when necessary find optional routes to get pass the market-oriented governance in order to promote the professional values and goals. Sullivan (2005) argues that professionalism is still associated with wider ideals of life. Collective professional culture enables individual professionals to develop and utilise their expertise to best serve the clients' needs within particular contexts, and to "contribute to the maintenance of public goods in society" (Sullivan 2005, 11).

Although the conflict approach turned the attention to issues of domination, and the new economy sets its challenges for the idea of professionalism the focus on societal relations still has a footstep in profession studies. More recent studies on professions or professionalism tend to focus more on issues of controlling the performance, seeing professional performance as guarantee of quality and accountability, or constructing a professional identity. Also the old notion that associates professions and professionalism with vocation appears still to be alive, although, many times seen as something to do with only exceptional talents or personalities. Professionalism is understood as a way to identify oneself with certain values and to find fulfilment from devoting oneself to a calling e.g. in arts or science (Sullivan 2005).

Scholars seem to look at the phenomenon of professionalism from very different point of views. The shift from functionalist trait approach to neo-Weberian conflict approach is perhaps the best example of the clashing paradigms. While the functionalist attempts to differentiate professions from other occupations, neo-Weberian attacks the differentiation itself. The former tries to categorise while the latter wants to unmask domination behind that categorisation. Therefore, these paradigms can be seen as ontologically incompatible: they do not investigate the same phenomenon. The late modern profession studies are neither one clear approach nor another. They borrow from various paradigms and create their own approaches, and thus shed light on professionalism, professions and professionali-

[11] Hargreaves (2000) divides the history of teaching profession in four eras: (1) the pre-professional age, (2) the age of the autonomous professional, (3) the age of the collegial professional, and (4) the post-professional or postmodern age.

sation from variety of perspectives. For instance Eraut's (1996) work on different knowledge types and ways to develop competence help to understand professionalism from the competence point of view but it does not give answers regarding how professionalism connects to societal relations (Kanes 2010a). The following chapter sections discuss the essential features of the three different focuses in profession studies disconnecting them from the perspective of chronological development.

3.1.1 Focus on characteristics

The definitions of the concept of profession and descriptions of ideal type profession include a number of various attributes such as theoretical body of knowledge, university education, development of professional association, licensing, ethical codes and so forth (Millerson 1964; Abbott 1988). From most of the definitions and descriptions, three common dimensions can be found: cognitive, normative and evaluative dimensions (Larson 1979). For instance, Eraut (1996) identifies three central elements of professionalism: specialised body of knowledge, service and autonomy and these are largely overlapping with Larson's dimensions. Both Larson and Eraut see theoretical body of knowledge as important characteristic of professions. Both also acknowledge service-orientation and ethics although one calls this trait as the normative dimension and the other as service. Both refer to the prestige of the profession and the monopoly to certain area of expertise, although in Eraut's vocabulary these are labelled as autonomy while Larson calls them evaluative dimension.

Eraut (1996) contends that professionalism is an ideology which means that practitioners aim at realising these elements because they believe it is worth the trouble: being a professional or developing the occupation towards becoming a profession is considered to be worth aspiring. However, this does not tell anything about the motives of becoming a professional. Believing in the power of expert-professionalism, as Kunelius (1998) explains, does not reveal if the power is seen important because of the benefits individual practitioner gains along with it or because it is believed to be serving the good of the community. The characteristic-approach does not aim at revealing the motives behind professionalisation or making statements about power relations but settles simply with describing the elements that are considered as typical to professions. The issue of autonomy, on the other hand, connects clearly with the issue of power relations and division of labour, and can thus be seen more as a reward from being a profession than an actual trait of a profession. This dimension is thereby presented more closely in the next section, which discusses profession studies that focus on societal relations. The remaining characteristics of professions or professionalism, cognitive and normative dimensions, are presented below.

Cognitive dimension

Cognitive dimension relates to the theoretical body of knowledge and education. The power and status of professionals depend on how indisputably professions convince to possess specialised expertise in particular field and how high this expertise is valued. The theoretical body of knowledge and its "aura of certainty" is understood to have a key role here, because if the field is considered to be highly demanding it is justified to require long education and specialised examination (Eraut 1996, 14).

However, another point of view suggests that more important than university education and academic degree is that professions deal with knowledge that is needed in markets and that it is relatively esoteric and difficult to reach by laymen (Brante 1990). Scientific character of expert knowledge has been questioned also by arguing that it is based solely on emotion, feeling and intuition (Pirttilä 1997). There is a lot of intimate, tacit knowledge in the work of professionals. Professional competence can be seen to be leaning on the practitioner and contextual circumstances: competence is bound to experiences which often cannot be described verbally, and to the ability to discuss, persuade and convince (Svensson 1990).

Abbott (1988, 8) defines professions loosely as "exclusive occupational groups applying somewhat abstract knowledge to particular cases". Abbott divides occupations into two groups based on how they control knowledge and skills. In the first group are occupations that concentrate mainly in controlling techniques. These are often called *craft* occupations. In the other group practical techniques are generated from abstractions and professional competence means control of the abstractions. The practical techniques that are produced from abstract knowledge may be delegated to other occupations. Abbott considers abstract body of knowledge as the only criteria of profession which really distinguishes professions from other occupational groups. Any occupation may acquire licensing or develop ethical codes but only a system of knowledge that is controlled by abstractions may redefine its problems and tasks and defend them from interlopers (Abbott 1988).

Brante (2010) criticises definitions of profession for not explaining what kind of knowledge or education professions deal with. Elaborating Foucault's conceptualisation, Brante formulates a professional triangle, which consists of three interdependent entities: science, profession and object. The key feature of profession is that the professional is applying scientific knowledge on specific object.

> Science informs emerging occupations conducting treatment. These are called professional occupations. Professionals intervene in the object in order to transform it. Through practices of implementation, professionals mediate between science and its object.
> (Brante 2010, 849.)

Building on the French philosophy of science, Brante (2011, 10) argues that reality consists of two separate layers: "one observable surface (the empirical level) and one level involving structures and mechanisms", and the task of science is to explain the former, empirical phenomena, by using the latter, abstract conceptualisations.

Brante elaborates the philosopher of science Giere's (2006) work, which suggests that instead of reality science refers to 'representational models' of reality. Giere (2006, 60) comprises this relation in a simple formula:

> S uses X to represent W for purposes P.

In this formula S stands for scientist (or scientific discipline), X for the representational model, W for the studied phenomenon of the world, and P for the purpose where the knowledge is going to be applied. Brante argues that using representational, or ontological as he calls them, models is what connects professionals and scientists, and separates professions from other occupations. Brante (2011, 14) adjusts Giere's formula as follows:

> Pr uses X to intervene into W for purposes P.

In Brante's formula professional or an entire profession (Pr) uses the ontological model based knowledge (X) to affect a specific phenomenon or situation (W) in order to achieve the goal of the client (P). Brante (2011, 14) explains that the knowledge of the professional consists of "know-why and know-how" which are based on certain ontological models that are connected to scientific theories and empirical research. Ontological models thus link science and professional work together. If the ontological models behind the knowledge applied in a specific occupation are not linked to scientific representations that particular occupation cannot be called a profession (Brante 2011). Essential is also the application to real life cases: professionals use their know-why and know-how in open systems, in contexts influenced by multiple factors and uncertainties, and this makes it ever more crucial to be able to connect the theoretical knowledge to the situational reality through the ontological models and evaluate the usefulness of the models and theories in the light of the success or failure of each case (Brante 2011).

Normative dimension

The normative dimension is concerned with service-orientation and ethical aspects. Kanes (2010b) argues that codification of knowledge is insufficient (see also Eraut 1996 and Brante 2010) but an essential element of professionalism is ethics. He describes professionalism as "an ascethic practice" because he sees professionalism as fundamentally intertwined with ethics of work which guide practitioners through the challenges they face (Kanes 2010b, 188, 197).

Sullivan (2005) contends the gestalt of professional ethics is shaped by two philosophical approaches: liberalism and communitarianism. Liberalism emphasises liberty and equality, and individual's right to make autonomous decisions within the rules and norms that guide the society. Ethics is thereby based on deontological, rule-based, philosophies such as Immanuel Kant's theory of ethics. The communitarian approach highlights that everything is interdependent and even the liberal values of freedom and equality are dependent on establishing "reciprocity, trust, loyalty, and public-spiritedness, the bedrock of civic culture" (Sullivan 2005, 265). Thus, the ethics are based on individual's character, "ethos", a virtuous mindset that considers the others involved and respects good values. Virtue ethics relates to Aristotle's concept of "phronesis" which means "practical wisdom", the ability to make judgment in a complicated situation (Sullivan 2005, 265–266). Interconnectedness of everything means also that by acting professionally individual practitioners produce, and are simultaneously dependent on, the social capital of the profession (Sullivan 2005).

Sullivan (2005, 22–23) suggests that American society needs professions today as "examples of ethical work". The fundamental dimension of professionalism is that it does not only mean becoming a practitioner of an occupation but, to "assume a civic identity" (Sullivan 2005, 23) which means that a profession contributes to some public value and Sullivan argues that this principle should not be lost within the current competitive market fields.

It is said to be characteristic to professions that the work aims at serving the public (Konttinen 1997). Goode (1960) contends that instead of looking for one's own interests professional decision making is based on the benefit of the customer and the ethical principles of the profession. This self-sacrificing attitude of the professionals is sometimes seen as deriving from altruism but it has also been said to be based on professional communities' control-systems which reward obeying ethical codes (Goode 1960).

Defining service-orientation strictly to serving the general public and society restricts any occupation that serves the profit making of businesses. A different interpretation was presented by Goode (1973) presents a different interpretation of service-orientation in that decisions of a professional expert are based on the needs of the customer and not necessarily the needs of society or material benefits. Along with this interpretation, the criteria of profession become more flexible. For instance, Brante (1990, 81–83) included "professions of the capital" in his classification of professions, [12] which he explains aim at serving the interests of the one who buys the services instead of the public or society in general.

Professionalism is essentially related to the importance of trust in economic relations in modern society (Evetts 2003a). Laymen have to trust to experts who reciprocally have to be worth that trust. In return for professionalism in customer-relations professional is rewarded with authority, privileges and higher status (Evetts 2003a).

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12 Brante's classification of different types of professions: (1) free professions (classic Anglo-American type of profession) which means generally market oriented, occupations dominated by traditional petit bourgeois, specialised craft, small-scale business, contractors, entrepreneurs, etc.; (2) academic professions which means researchers in natural science, humanities, etc. ; (3) professions of the (welfare) state, that is public sector work which increases welfare; (4) professions of the capital which refer to experts who work in capitalistic enterprises and aim at increasing profit, (for instance lawyers and experts of technical sciences); (5) political professions which include ministers, leaders of political parties, workers of trades unions and government bureucrats (Brante 1990, 81–83).

Individual level trust has been understood as a fundamental requirement for the relationship between professional and the client and, on the broader level, it has been associated with the trustworthiness of the profession, which is a presupposition for trusting public tasks for the profession (di Luzio 2006; Evetts 2011). Trust is

> enabling social action in decision situations where the actor is uncertain about the course of future events and in which the resultant damage of action might be greater than the advantage of acting.
>
> (di Luzio 2006, 551.)

In the 21st century dealing with uncertainties and risk is inevitable and this emphasises the essence of expertise and trust. Clients need the help of experts in order to be able to better confront complex situations and multifaceted problems (Evetts 2011). The fundamental feature in professional-client relationship is thus the competence gap – the professional has the expertise which the layman does not possess but needs – which is bridged by leaning on trust (di Luzio 2006). Trust is also linked in moral values: professionals are believed to be doing their job according to professional standards which are based on ideals of common good and economic disinterest (di Luzio 2006).

3.1.2 Focus on societal relations

The previous section presented two of the three often mentioned dimensions of professions: cognitive and normative dimensions. The third, the *evaluative dimension,* refers to the level of autonomy the profession has regarding its tasks and control mechanisms. It therefore connects also to the societal structure and division of labour and is thus discussed in this section.

Functionalist theorists believe that the normal state in the social structure is equilibrium: society is an organism which operates according to certain logic and different parts of it all have a function and together they tend to create balance (Krejsler 2005). Classical age functionalists saw both the self-interest of business and the political labour movement as forces that are disintegrating the society. Professions, instead, were seen as forces that are integrating into society because they are characterised by community-oriented approach, service-ideal and high ethical standards (Konttinen 1989).

The rise of the postmodern thinking in 1960s–1970s turned the attention to hidden power structures. The functionalist view of professionals being seekers of common good was criticised by neo-Weberians who argued that professions are striving for their own – though possibly collective – benefits (see e.g. Freidson 1979; Illich 1978; Larson 1979). Old attributes of profession were rejected or they were given new meanings: for instance, the theoretical body of knowledge along with specialised education which had been seen as more or less self-evident and unproblematic attributes of professions were seen as a tool of power in striving for monopoly (Konttinen 1989). One of the key voices of the cynical approach, Illich

(1978), argued that professions had been idealistically considered as benefactors of the society who allegedly tried to help and serve others, but in reality were using their position to increase the inequality in society. Illich claimed that professions were based on the power to define customers and their needs, and a right to give orders and instructions to the customers, which made some the users of power and others the objects of that power – the latter becoming therefore dominated by those who were, according to the service-ideal, supposed to be serving and helping them.

Evetts (2003a) scrutinises the different approaches in professionalism studies focusing on the motives behind aspiring to professionalism, and identifies two approaches: professionalism as a normative value-system and professionalism as an ideology. Those interpretations that present professionalism as a value-system are optimistic to the phenomenon and see that professionalism effects positively on normative social structure. By contrast, those interpretations that see professionalism as an ideology tend to understand it as hegemonic system of beliefs and controlling-mechanism of professionals.

As already mentioned, the motives behind striving for autonomous expert positions are sometimes claimed to relate only to desire for status, material rewards, prestige and power. However, a more profound reason is argued to be the concern for the content and quality of the work (Hellberg 1990). The high degree of autonomy regarding the tasks of a profession is said to be based on possessing such specific knowledge that the laymen and non-experts are not capable to evaluate or criticise it (Larson 1990).

The autonomous position requires some sort of public acknowledgment. Occupational groups that are aspiring to autonomy are typically organised around professional associations which are trying to influence governmental and political decision-makers to secure their position by giving them a monopoly for certain tasks (Konttinen 1997; Pirttilä 1997). In some cases the accreditation is granted by the legislative system, which gives the jurisdiction for practicing the profession and delegates the formal control over the tasks to the profession (Abbott 1988). This functional connection between professions and government works as a cycle: the better collective control-mechanisms of an occupational group function, the more autonomy government grants for that occupational group (Konttinen 1989). Failures in controlling the quality would mean losing the legitimacy and thereby also autonomy would be reduced.

Another route for gaining expert status is to build the image at the arena of public opinion or at the work place (Abbott 1988). Taking this route requires strategic occupational identity work where occupations have to solve how they deal with tensions caused by inclusive-exclusive dialectic (problematics related to claims for autonomy), and define what is the special nature of the occupation and how it develops over time (Ashcraft, Muhr, Rennstam & Sullivan 2012). To be recognised as a legitimate expert function that deserves to have independent occupational control over its own work (Freidson 2001) the occupational group needs to convince the public about the special expertise and the accountability of the practitioners (Sullivan 2005). Occupations also need to explain their value claims: what kind of material or symbolic value the occupation is producing, modifying or wiping out (Ashcraft et al. 2012). Thus, it can be concluded that whether the ultimate motives for seeking for recognition as an autonomous occupation were selfish or truly service-oriented, the position requires cherishing and constant evaluation of the expertise and accountability, in other words the cognitive and normative dimensions presented in the previous chapter.

3.1.3 Focus on performance

Professional work is typically associated with competence, human capital, autonomy and client-orientation which call for confidence and trust in professionals and their organisations (Svensson 2006). Svensson (2006) argues, however, that the concept of professionalism is not directly rooted in confidence and trust but only through concepts such as ethics and responsibility. This turns the attention from occupational groups and their motives or status to individuals and their performance: central question are how the profession is practiced and what is considered to be ethical.

In the 2000s, the studies on professionalism have approached the topic from variety of angles. Besides the question of characteristics of professionalism or the aspects that relate to power and societal relations the current debates often deal with quality and control of work (e.g. Thomas & Hewitt 2011), developing a professional identity (e.g. Hotho 2008; Sommerlad 2007; Stronach, Corbin, McNamara, Stark & Warne 2002), loyalty, ethics and value issues (Sanghera & Iliasov 2008), and professionalism rhetoric (Evetts 2006a). All these topics are more or less connected with work performance. These studies discuss questions like how professional identity is constructed, what makes practitioners perform professionally, what it means to act professionally, and to whom professionals are responsible for. They are neither trying to differentiate professions from other occupations nor are they particularly interested in professions' impact on society or position in labour markets.

Professionalism as a value system was an elementary part of how functionalist profession scholars saw the phenomenon. After the rejection of this viewpoint in 1970s and 1980s when the critical approach and the "professional project"[13] (Larson 1979) became the dominant viewpoint (Evetts 2003b) it seems to be resurgent as one of the many current interpretations. Already in 1990's the debates about the power relations between professions and states led to re-introducing the normative value-system approach: professionalism was seen as a way to adapt the new workers to the professional culture and norms (Evetts 2003b). Besides value

[13] Larson (1979) called a process where an occupation got itself a monopoly to a set of services and improved thus its status moving upwards in societal hierarchy a professional project. Evetts states that the concept and analysis of Larson have been over-simplified and consequently it has been understood that the only thing occupational groups or professional associations are doing in professional project is securing the monopoly to their expertise (Evetts 2003b, 400–401).

oriented normative approach professionalism is discussed in a way that relates to control of the work performance. Professionalism appears as a micro level control mechanism where it is seen that to act as a professional means following and reaching the standards of the employing organisation (Evetts 2003b).

The difference in the value and control approaches seems to be in the motivating force: professionalism either stems from internalising the values or it is forced upon people by the ideology. The motivation behind professionalism has also been scrutinised from the point of view of where the push or demand towards reaching certain professional standards or respecting certain values comes from. Evetts (2003b) contends that in the contemporary world the demand for accountability increases the managers' expectations that professions should regulate themselves and work for the best of the organisation. This approach Evetts calls professionalism from above (see also Svensson 2006). When the professional occupation promotes its own values, quality standards and working for the best of the client, it can be called "professionalism from within" (Evetts 2003b). Professionalism can also rise "from below" when workers entreat for professionalism in a situation where they defend themselves against abusive and despotic managers (Vaidyanathan 2012, 218–223).

While getting acquainted on the contemporary profession research it is fair to conclude that during the years instead of stabilising into a commonly accepted concept, professionalism has become wider and ever more vacillating phenomenon. Its notion of value system or control mechanism is no longer tightly associated with certain occupational groups but many times professionalism is associated with more general work life principles and standards of professional behaviour. Two main approaches can, however, be detected: occupational and organisational professionalism (see e.g. Evetts 2009; Noordegraaf 2007; Evetts 2003b). Noordegraaf (2007) calls occupational professionalism as "pure professionalism" which focuses on controlling the content of expertise, service ethics and performance of the professionals in order to distinguish the profession from other occupational groups. Organisational professionalism he explains as being "situated professionalism" which, in contrast to pure professionalism, emphasises adjusting to organisational contexts and control and applying professional principles in those conditions (Noordegraaf 2007, 767–769, 778). This conceptualisation abandons the autonomous position of professions and sees professionals as embedded in their organisational contexts which thus affect the decisions of professionals but do not totally force to exclude occupation's own standards and values (Noordegraaf 2007).

In the same vein, Kemmis (2010, 141, 146) points out that how an individual professional practices one's profession is not only affected by how that practitioner thinks about the profession but "practice is also socially, discursively, culturally, and historically formed": professionals and clients do not live in a social vacuum but, instead, their communities and current and past experiences affect the way how they perceive society. These socially constructed patterns of thinking and experiencing are labelled as "habitus" by Bourdieu (1990). Bourdieu analyses the interplay between the social structures and individual players in his "theory of practice", in which he describes different social spheres as fields where different capitals –economic, social, cultural and symbolic – are valued differently and pursued with various logics. Elaborating his approach on Bourdieu's thinking, Kemmis (2010, 160) highlights the importance of understanding that "practice is constructed in cultural-discursive, social and material-economic dimensions, through history and the living traditions of communities of practice" and suggests that "technicist view threatens to empty practice of its *moral* dimension".

In order to overcome the juxtaposition of occupational and organisational professionalism Noordegraaf (2007, 772) introduces the idea of "hybridized professionalism". Hybridized professionalism does not see organisational and occupational approaches as mutually excluding competitors but as two approaches which together form a normative value system that creates shared understanding of the fragmented realities and gives legitimacy to the work (Noordegraaf 2007). Also Daniels (2010, 168) discusses "notion of hybridity" suggesting that instead of consolidating boundaries, professional groups should focus on inter-professional collaboration and building shared meanings. Engeström (2007 cited in Daniels 2010, 179) contends that "agentic collaboration" is a new form of capital which provides better chances for linking expertise within and between organisations.

By contrast, Kanes (2010b) points out that boundary-crossing disrupts and weakens professional roles and identities. Overall, the notions that occupations are in danger of losing their independence to organisations and that managers are enemies of professionals, seem to die hard (Noordegraaf 2011). Noordegraaf calls for management-minded professionals, who aim at improving the organisation of professional services, and connective approach which does not set professionals and managers against each other but instead links "professional practices to broader strategies, as well as to economic and other developments" (Noordegraaf 2011, 1364).

Scott (2008, 233) argues that the "primary social function" of professions "can be described as variously specialising in creating, testing, conveying, and applying cultural-cognitive, normative, and/or regulative frameworks that govern one or another social sphere". In the institutional model of professions Scott developed, he defines three types of professionals: (1) cultural-cognitive agents who possess special knowledge which authorizes them to delineate what is considered normal, make diagnosis and solve problems, and thereby they have influence on construction of reality, (2) normative agents who prescribe how anything should be, and thus set standards and principles of accepted behaviour within the occupational group as well as in regard of the outside world, and (3) regulative agents who have authoritative power to set and apply rules and laws to control behaviour of individuals and groups (Scott 2008, 224–226). Scott sees the concept of professions as an institution per se: as all institutions professions lean on symbolic elements – cultural-cognitive, normative and regulative pillars – which do not remain only on symbolic level but come alive as social behaviour. The shared understandings are represented in the discourse which then produces certain action and reproduces the discourse. In other words, professionalism can be seen having socio-symbolic power (Noordegraaf 2007).

Thomas and Hewitt (2011) point out that meanings are not clear and fixed but complex and varied, and constructed by social actors in certain socio-cultural contexts and within moments of time-space, which support the idea of scrutinising professionalism discourses. For instance, the discourse approach to professionalism investigates how professionalism discourse has been used for framing and positioning the occupation in the related fields (see Thomas & Hewitt 2011; Evetts 2006a, 2006b). In this light professionalism has been seen as a control mechanism for guiding workers towards professional standards and as a marketing device to gain legitimacy and respect (Evetts 2006a, 2006b; Brante 2010). The discursive processes take place in many forms, they are continuous and ambiguous (Thomas & Hewitt 2011). Stronach et al. (2002) argue that professionalism is connected to "discursive dynamics" of the attempts to articulate and affect the issues related to their work. Professionals construct their identities and shape the understandings regarding their occupation in the cross-swell of two forces, which Stronach et al. call "economy of performance" and "ecologies of practice". By the first they mean the demands of efficiency and measurable results and by the latter individually and collectively produced professional mindset and dedications. The tension between these approaches is feeding the identity work of an individual professional, and professionalism is defined and articulated in every decision and performance the professional makes (Stronach et al. 2002).

In general current professionalism discourse often aims at convincing clients and authorities about quality and trustworthiness of the occupational group or individual practitioners (Evetts 2006a; Fournier, 1999). Discourse-based approaches on professionalism research reveal the interconnection between micro and macro level phenomena. On wider level professionalism discourses shape the perceptions regarding occupations and good work practice, and on micro level the professionalism discourses affect the work performance and professional identities of individual practitioners. Hodgson (2005, 56–58) applies Judith Butler's (1993) conceptualisation of perfomativity, and understands becoming a professional as a process where one actively carries out "identifiable performances" which compose the professional self: one becomes professional by performing professional and adopting the professional discourse typical to the occupational group in question.

While the focus of profession studies has been merely emphasising occupational groups or the societal relations and labour markets, some researchers have also set the scope of the investigation at the individual level. The individualising trends of late modern society (see Beck 1992, in particular Part 2; Giddens 1991; Foucault 1977) force a professional to invest one's personality in the work and consider the unique needs and wishes of each client case instead of simply leaning on professional authority and text-book answers (Krejsler 2005). The substance-bound expert knowledge and skills are no longer sufficient but a professional is required to have variety of personal competencies (Krejsler 2005). Since professional knowledge, skills, and values are constantly regenerated (Hargreaves 1994, cited in Krejsler 2005) the one who has established a strong personal identity and style as a professional is more and more relying on one's inner judgment when facing the multifaceted challenges of one's work (Krejsler 2005).

Hargreaves (2000) calls the contemporary era the post-professional or post-modern professional age, and contends that there are two main forces that has influenced societies and thereby also professionalism since 1970s: globalisation and communications revolution. Accelerated competition and global markets have forced companies to be more agile in making changes and adapting to new circumstances and developments in communication technologies have shrunk time and space (Hargreaves 2000). These developments have challenged traditional bases and forms of professionalism. For instance, as Krejsler (2005) points out, a result of the contemporary trend of individualisation is a professional not only has to engage in a coequal conversation with the clients. Furthermore, the professional has to create their own personal professional touch in order to be able to understand their own and the clients' character and needs along with the never-ending reforms and changes within the profession (Krejsler 2005). Individualising trend can thus be seen affecting professionalism in at least two ways. On the one hand the diversity of the needs of clients and variety of ways to responding those has increased. On the other hand, the demand for finding one's own way of performing – personal input and involving one's character in the work – has challenged the collegial nature of professionalism. Also, the basis for trust on professional work lies in people's perceptions regarding professionalism, and these are based on individual professionals' success or failure (Svensson 2007).[14] Personal reputation of an individual professional becomes thus an important element.

Individual perspective on professionalism is emphasised also by Sanghera and Iliasov (2008) who argue that in addition to the consensus approach and the social control approach to professionalism there is a third approach, that is, the moral sentiments approach. Whereas in the consensus approach judgments are based on collegiality and professional norms, and in power-focused social control emphasis is on professional legitimacy, the moral sentiments approach is based on individual professionals' reflexive thinking, care for others and commitment on professional goals (Sanghera & Iliasov 2008; see also Oakley and Cocking 2001; Archer 2000). In this approach professionalism leans on individual expert's moral sentiment and one's capability to evaluate the current context and make autonomous decisions on how to behave in that particular situation. Focus is on individual's perception on what is professional and what not. The traditional "ethic of vocation" has developed into professional integrity, which cannot be forced but can be fostered when free individuals "find an important part of their identity and meaning in the work they undertake" (Sullivan 2005, 261).

Occupational, organisational and individual perspectives were combined – although articulated differently – in Fournier's (1999, 288–289) conceptualisation where professionalism is understood as a "disciplinary logic" according to which professions have to prove their license to exist and operate to certain network of

14 The argument of Svensson is based on a survey made in Sweden 1995.

actors. The network of these actors includes legislators, clients, markets etc. who define what is considered legitimate. The acceptance of the profession depends on how well the professional competence meets the expectations and norms. Professional competence is seen here mainly as "personal conduct" and only loosely connected to knowledge and control over practice and acts (Fournier 1999, 288–289). In Fournier's model, professionalism comes down to the compatibility of different expectations, norms and the competence of individual practitioner. This highlights on the one hand the legitimacy criteria set by the surrounding society and its actors and, on the other hand, individual practitioner and one's personal capabilities and motifs.

It is apparent that professional performance and the discourses guiding and fostering it may be approached from many perspectives. Three main points of views can be said to be occupational, organisational and individual perspectives. This research constructs its framework on these perspectives, elaborating on Fournier's insights (1999) as well as the later conceptualisations of Evett's (2003b, 2006b) and Noordegraaf (2007, 2011), among others. The framework will be explained in section 3.3.

3.2 PR through the lens of professionalism

In a recent paper presented in ICA conference Edwards (2014, 1) argues that "Existing research on PR as an occupational field is minimal". Edwards mentions couple of viewpoints from which PR profession has been studied, such as professional identity discourses (Pieczka 2002), and how different elements of PR practice compose professionalism (David, 2004, Lages and Simkin, 2003). She argues to bring new input to the discussion by investigating legitimacy, jurisdiction and societal impact of PR profession.

Claiming that PR has not been studied much as an occupational field could be seen as an exaggeration. The field is scrutinised from various perspectives in many countries. For instance, in Europe annually conducted European Communication Monitor[15] provides a rich overview on the recent trends of PR industry in Europe (and even more widely), and more in-depth analysis of this occupational field has been reported for instance in the book Public Relations and Communication Management in Europe (van Ruler & Verčič 2004). Many research articles focus on professionalisation or professional trends of PR in a certain country (see e.g. Elving, van Ruler, Goodman and Genest 2012; Gregory 2011; Carayol 2010; Bartlett, Tywoniak & Hatcher 2007; Gupta 2007; Raupp & van Ruler 2006; Kirat 2006; Molleda & Moreno 2006; Molleda & Suaréz 2005; L'Etang 1998).

Regarding the professionalisation of PR van Ruler (2005) outlines four different professionalisation models: (1) knowledge model, (2) status model, (3) competition model, and (4) personality model. In the knowledge model an occupational

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group formulates a body of knowledge and defines a set of tasks which it will take care of in order to benefit the client and wider society. In the status model an elite group defines a set of tasks which it will take care of in order to gain status, power and autonomy. The competition model focuses on competition between expert groups. In the personality model a group of experts use their enthusiasm, creativity, commitment and personality to gain value for their clients. Van Ruler explains differences in PR practitioners' and academics' thinking and suggests that academics tend to base their perceptions regarding professionalisation on knowledge model while practitioners' conceptions might follow more the personality model.

To mention couple of research projects that focus on a specific area of PR professionalism Merkelsen (2011) investigated legitimacy challenges of PR and its professionalisation project, Kristensen (2010) studied the professional challenges of the communication sector, Cameron, Sallot and Weaver Lariscy (1996; see also Sallot, Cameron & Weaver Lariscy 1997 and 1998) studied professional standards and professionalism in PR, Yang and Taylor (2013) scrutinised the relation between PR and society using public relations professionalisation index, Berger (2005) studied power relations and PR's organisational and societal position, Bowen (2006) scrutinised autonomy as an important element of PR profession, and Sha (2011) compared accredited and non-accredited PR professionals.

Ethics is considered to be an essential element of professionalism. Numerous articles about empirical research on PR and ethics have been published (e.g. Fuse, Land & Lambiase 2010; Kang 2010; Bowen 2009; Lieber 2008; Kim & Choi 2003). For instance Lee (2012) has studied ethical knowledge as a professional construct of PR professionals, and Coleman and Wilkins (2009) have compared moral development between PR professionals and practitioners of other professions. Also several literature based papers have been written about the topic (Stückelberger 2009; Fawkes 2009, 2007; Messina 2007; L'Etang 2003; Skinner, Mersham & Valin 2003; Starck & Kruckeberg 2003).

Besides directly testing some criteria of professions on PR (e.g. Cameron, Sallot & Weaver Lariscy 1996), the characteristics approach can be found on for instance studies that aim to define PR as a discipline and delineate it from the neighbor fields (e.g. Hutton 2001) or construct more integrated view on the field (e.g. Zorn 2002), and investigations which focus on defining the theoretical body of knowledge and research agenda for the field (e.g. Verčič, van Ruler, Bütschi & Flodin 2001; Gower 2006; Heath 2006). These are all shedding light on what are the borders or key elements of PR as an occupational field.

Many investigations have also been conducted about PR's position in relation to strategic management (e.g. Swerling, Thorson & Zerfass 2014; Raupp & Hoffjann 2012; Van Gorp & Pauwels 2007; Phillips 2006; O'Dwyer 2005; Moss, Warnaby & Thame 1996) which relates to the issue of PR's recognition as a legitimate expert function.

When taking a brief glance over the inquiries that concern PR as an occupational field and applying the three approaches presented in the previous section – focuses on characteristics, impact on societal relations, and performance – one can find examples of each of them. Numerous studies have been conducted from more specific points of views which relate to professionalism or different aspects of the phenomenon one way or another. However, coming back to the statement by Edwards (2014), that there is a lack of research on PR as an occupational field, it is fair to say that the variety of approaches is so wide and the usage of concepts so ambiguous that the picture of the field is far from clear. That is, of course, not a surprise, considering the versatility of the profession studies as such, the multidisciplinary nature of PR and the overall complex (if not chaotic) conditions of contemporary world we live in. Following sections review briefly some of the research conducted in this field of study in order to form an outlook of how PR sits in this conceptual framework, and sharpen the scope for the next phase of the this investigation.

3.2.1 PR's motives for professionalisation

Aspiring to professional status and professionalism seem to be discussed frequently in PR field. It seems that professional status is seen as a public recognition which will bring along society's respect and the trust of the clients and it would help PR to be finally clearly distinguished from propaganda (Grunig 2000; L'Etang 1996; L'Etang & Pieczka 1996). It would also improve the appreciation of PR field and PR practitioners in the organisations and help to achieve more strategic position as a management function (Tjernström Ottestig 2002).

Reaching for professional status has sometimes been seen as a self-serving and misleading image-campaign and striving for power. For instance Steiner (2001) claims that aspiring to professionalism in PR field has to do with the fact that traditionally professions are associated with mastery in effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness and efficiency create power which brings along material benefits.

Kruckeberg (2000) argues that instead of status and power, PR's worldwide professionalisation aims at forming a concise definition of PR practitioner's role and function in global society. Professionalism is important for PR field because it gives PR practitioners monopoly and autonomy for defining the field, which would mean that PR can no longer be defined from outside serving whose and whatever interests (Kruckeberg 1998). Also L'Etang (2000) understands that professionalisation means for PR clarifying its position and authority, more specifically distinguishing it from advertising, marketing and journalism.

Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006) contend that whatever the profound motives for professionalisation are, it produces quality and ethics in the PR field. They argue professionalisation institutionalises the best practices and creates quality standards, which serve the publics' interests. The true value of professionalism is in the ideal of offering competent and ethical services: by trying to achieve the status of profession PR practitioners and academics are trying to guarantee the quality and ethics of the services in PR field (Cutlip et al. 2006).

3.2.2 Components of PR expertise

Whether PR is a craft occupation or a theory based expert occupation has been debated. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) contend expert knowledge consists of skills, formal knowledge and tacit knowledge. Both experts and non-experts have these forms of knowledge but there are differences in amount of the various forms of knowledge, and in how well they function together and how efficiently the knowledge is transferred to the performance.

Pieczka (2002, 304) suggests a model of PR's body of practical knowledge which would consist of "picture of the world; conceptual frame; and professional knowledge, the last of which is composed of problems, tools and truths". Pieczka explains this means knowing the different aspects and tasks of the occupation, being able to apply appropriate methods to them, and assimilating the beliefs which guide the thinking. Pieczka's conceptualisation differs slightly from Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1993) model of expert knowledge but mainly the idea fits well to their thinking: both explain that expert knowledge consists of three intertwined types of knowledge: theoretical knowledge, experience-based knowledge, and tacit knowledge.

The theoretical body of knowledge of PR and the position of the discipline at the field of science is multifaceted (see Toth 2010). PR is often considered to be part of communication science but sometimes it is seen as an independent discipline and communication is seen as part of it. There are also scholars who see PR as part of economics. (See section 4.1.1.) PR's theoretical body of knowledge includes theories about communication and relationships, and also theories about management and organisations. PR uses at least social and behavioural sciences, economics and humanities in its theories. In the Delphi-study, which aimed at conducting a European body of knowledge for PR, interviewees considered PR's most important areas of knowledge to be (1) knowledge about how communication functions (as a process) and (2) knowledge about how to keep the relationships open while organisational and persuasion theories were at the end of the list (van Ruler et al. 2001, 10).

The competence required in PR professional's work has been described widely in various research articles and other publications. Most basic PR textbooks provide descriptions of competence profiles of PR experts (see e.g. Wilcox et al. 2015; Tench & Yeomans 2014; Vos & Schoemaker 2011). Based on the results of the Excellence-study, Dozier et al. (1995) argue that PR expertise is based on three key factors. Firstly, the essential basis for PR expertise is body of knowledge. Secondly, the knowledge or expertise is not individual PR practitioner's property but it consists of the competencies of the whole PR department. Thirdly, knowledge alone does not produce excellent communication programs but also practical applying is needed. Furthermore, the central areas of PR competence are (1) strategic and operational management skills, (2) research skills, (3) negotiation skills and (4) persuasion skills (Dozier et al. 1995).

The environment where PR is practiced has developed dramatically since the times of Excellence-study. The challenges that digital evolution and especially coping with social media set for PR practice are remarkable. They have been ranked as most important challenges of PR in European Communication Monitor from 2010 until 2012, dropping to second place in 2013. In 2014 the boom seemed to have turned down and connecting to organisation's strategies had taken the place of the most important challenge while coping with digital evolution and social media were seen as fourth important challenge (Zerfass, Tench, Verčič, Verhoeven, & Moreno 2014). Luoma-aho and Vos (2010) point out that the new environment of issue arenas sets new challenges for PR: for instance monitoring issue arenas becomes an important task of PR.

The professional profile of PR practitioners has been mapped in different surveys and other investigations during the years nationally and internationally. In Finland, such a survey has been conducted frequently since 1983 (former "Yhteisöviestintätutkimus", currently called "Viestinnän ammattilaiset"). Above mentioned European wide survey called European Communication Monitor has been conducted yearly since 2007. Another major research project providing European perspective is a European Union funded "ECOPSI" (European Communication Professionals Skills and Innovation Programme) which has conducted a large survey in 42 countries and in addition some focus groups and 53 individual interviews about the competence and trends in PR expertise (Tench et al. 2013). Based on the interviews the research team formed a communication role matrix which categorised PR professionals' competency areas that consist of most important knowledge, skills and personal attributes (see Table 7). The matrix summarises comprehensively the competence needs of PR professionals. The six central competence areas found in ECOPSI study are (1) counselling, (2) organising and executing, (3) managing, (4) performing and creating craft, such as writing, design or presentations, (5) analysing and interpreting and (6) supporting and guiding the vision and standards, the ethical issues, other issues that have to do with developing others (Tench et al. 2013). All of these areas consist of knowledge, skills and personal attributes.

TABLE 7 European communication professionals' competence matrix. (Tench et al. 2013)

Competency	Knowledge	Skill (hard and soft)	Personal attribute
1 Counselling (build relationships, consulting, coaching)	Languages Intercultural theory and issues Learning curves of co-workers Personality profiles	Hard: Diversity Consulting Consensus building Negotiation Soft: Team building Conflict resolution Persuasive communication Motivation	Empathy Trustworthiness Team minded (worker) Negotiation Sympathetic Political intuition Authenticity Integrity Patience/tolerance Participative Sociable Authority Calmness Self-criticism Responsiveness Self awareness Humour
2 Organising /executing (planning, making it happen)	Corporate strategy Financial systems Planning systems Project management	**Hard:** Writing strategy Planning Project management Time management	Composure Energy Competitive Leadership Enthusiasm

(continues)

TABLE 7 (cont.)

		Administration Organisational skills Creativity with budgets **Soft:** Strategic thinking Planning Decision making	Perseverance/resilience Self-reliance Multi-tasking Proactivity Agility/Flexibility Results orientation
3 Managing (cross functional awareness, business focus)	Management Economics Branding Law Knowledge about own organisation Business systems General knowledge Risk management Stakeholder management Public affairs /political dynamics Change management Language of the Board Understanding of own	**Hard:** Mapping (organisational network systems) Leadership **Soft:** Negotiation Influencing Delegating Managing people Sense of timing (when to communicate)	Confidence Global and strategic vision Diplomacy Experience Courage Daring /Risk Taking (and being willing to fail and learn from this) Stress resistance Adaptability
4 Performing and creating (craft, e.g. writing, design, presentation)	New technologies Communication processes Web 2.0 tools and effects on organisational communication Media systems and structures Intercultural aspects of communication messages and products Global media environment	**Hard:** Writing, Editing Design skills Computer writing skills Multimedia skills Visioning Verbal coherence /concision **Soft:** Communication Presentation Creative problem solving Story telling	Communicative Entrepreneurial Polyvalence/supporting diverse and differing perceptions Initiative Lifelong learner Innovative and creative Enquiring Openness Pioneering
5 Analysing/ interpreting (research, listening)	Research and analysis methods Human Resources (HR) policies and links to communication Prediction /forecasting Monitoring tools Web monitoring tools Listening, understanding and interpreting trends, linking them to business strategies Recognising trends	**Hard:** Critical thinking Reading comprehension Research Social environmental analysis **Soft:** Forecasting Listening	Curiosity Questioning Good judgement Strong instincts
6 Supporting/ guiding (vision and standards, ethics, developing others)	Corporate governance Ethics/ethical frameworks Legal issues	**Soft:** Visioning	Ethical and socially responsible Authority Integrity Honesty Influence Reputation Sincerity Objectivity Sensitivity/humanity

What skills are considered important depends naturally on what kind of tasks are in question. The experienced communication manager who is participating in strategic decision making needs to possess different skills and knowledge than for instance new-comer communication assistant. Management role requires ability to integrate in many levels of business-life and society, and ability to develop more integrated management processes (Pohl and Vamdeventer 2001). Communicating at the same level as top management means that PR practitioners should understand economics, business contexts, and organisational strategies of change (Crop & Pincus 2001; Stone 1995). A managerial role also requires consulting and advising skills, skills for planning, evaluation and budgeting, and skills for acting as a superior (Moss 2000). Excellence-researchers highlight the importance of knowing symmetrical two-way communication process: communicators must act as eyes and ears of the organisation, spanning boundaries between organisation and its environments (Dozier et al. 1995). Gregory (2000) points out PR experts need to have great power of analysing, wisdom and authority.

In her doctoral dissertation, Salminen (2014) formulates a model for the ideal expertise of a communications director in the business sector. According to the model the expertise of communications director consists nine competence areas which are (1) personal communication skills, (2) management of substance knowledge, (3) management, evaluation and development of communication capital, (4) self management, (5) relation and cooperation with top management, (6) business knowledge, (7) monitoring and creating new knowledge, (8) ethics, change management and strategic management, and (9) management of people.

In the global study of leadership in public relations, researchers define excellent leadership in PR as follows:

> Excellent leadership in public relations is a dynamic process that encompasses a complex mix of individual skills and personal attributes, values, and behaviors that consistently produces ethical and effective communication practice. Such practice fuels and guides successful communication teams, helps organizations achieve their goals, and legitimizes organizations in society.
>
> (Berger & Meng 2014, 298.)

Berger and Meng conclude that the "Holy Grail" of good leadership in PR lies in "soft people skills – better listening, cultural sensitivity, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution capabilities, and change management skills" (2014, 298). Meng and Berger also confirmed the seven dimensions of excellent leadership, which they had constructed based on literature (2014, 47):

- Possessing communication knowledge to develop appropriate strategies, plans and messages
- Participating in your organization's strategic decision making regarding the issue
- Possessing a strong ethical orientation and set of values to guide actions
- Having the ability to build and manage professional work teams to address the issue
- Providing a compelling vision for how communication can help the organization
- Having the ability to develop coalitions in and outside the organization to deal with the issue

- Working in an organization that supposts two-way communication and shared power

The numerous key competences of PR, found from researches and sources presented above (Wilcox et al 2015; Berger & Meng 2014; Salminen 2014; Zerfass et al. 2014; Tench et al. 2013; Vos & Schoemaker 2011; Pauwels & Van Gorp 2004; Crop & Pincus 2001; Pohl & Vamdeventer 2001; Gregory 2000; Moss 2000; Siukosaari 1999; Dozier et al. 1995; Stone 1995) can be grouped as follows:

Basic level PR skills

- Communication skills – written and spoken expression, performing, visual eye, photography, web-communication
- Organising skills – project management, event organising, outsourcing, budget management
- Social skills – cooperation, interaction
- Research skills – measuring and evaluation, monitoring, segmenting audiences

Strategic level PR skills

- Problem-solving skills – conflict management, crisis communication, negotiation
- Observing and reflecting skills – understanding contexts and linkages, deduction skills, predicting, issues management
- Media relations – maintaining media relations, media follow-ups, media communication
- Strategic view – analytical thinking, communicating on top management level, strategic planning, understanding the needs of the management, consulting the management
- Management skills – leadership, coaching, motivating, coordinating, change management

Expert knowledge

- Knowledge of media – local and global media environment, social media tools and processes, processes of public sphere
- Knowledge of organisation and its environments – understanding business, management and administration, cultural understanding, economical systems and political philosophies, international view
- Knowledge of theories and methods of PR – theoretical body of knowledge and ability to apply it, communication and attitude theories

Personal characteristics which are considered beneficial for PR practitioners are for instance ability to stay alert and up-to-date, integrity, self-discipline, endurance, discretion, consideration, flexibility, openness, curiosity, vibrancy, creativity, and being initiative.

3.2.3 Organisational and societal role of PR

The societal relations approach has been applied in various researches, some of them taking a functionalist standpoint and some more critical view. In general, the functionalist PR researchers tend to see PR as corporate conscience and promoter of social responsibility, and the critics accuse PR of serving selfish interests of big companies and using power to dominate others. Both performing strategic management and taking the role of an ethical advisor require autonomy (Bowen 2006) which is considered to be one of the key elements of professionalism. Without autonomy, PR cannot contribute properly to strategic management.

Several researches have been conducted regarding the managerial role of PR (see section 4.2). A recent study by Swerling, Thorson and Zerfass (2014) compared American and European PR practitioners' perceptions regarding their position in their organisations and regarding their role as the voice of the organisation in the new media environment. They conclude from their investigation that in general both American and European PR practitioners considered their position within the organisation influential and appreciated, although American respondents were slightly more optimistic about their strategic position. Being the voice of the organisation divided opinions more. American practitioners seemed to be more concerned about loss of control in messaging within new media environment and its "proliferating touch points" whereas European practitioners were more likely to adopt the "central but flexible" approach (Swerling et al. 2014, 9).

The European Communication Monitor 2014 employed a new method for evaluating excellence of the PR units where the respondents operate in. The method is based on self-assessments on the factors of internal influence (advisory influence and executive influence, referring to the position of PR function within the organisation) and external results (overall communication success and department competence). It turned out that only 21.2 % of the respondent's evaluated their unit to score high enough to be considered excellent. The excellent PR departments showed not only that they were more effective and influential in communications but they also seemed to promote "social reflexivity" because those organisations that had excellent PR function had for instance significantly higher level of gender equality. This might imply that there is a connection between the worldview and the level of performance of PR function (Zerfass et al. 2014).[16] This notion supports the idea that the worldview of PR could eventually influence also the worldview and behaviour of the organisation with positive outcomes regarding the success and legitimacy of the whole organisation. The findings of the ECM 2014 showed that most of the respondents were in a sufficiently strategic position where they either can influence decision making in the organisation or they support business strategies with communication (Zerfass et al. 2014).

Managerial position and autonomy also relate to issues of power and domination. There are negative connotations which stem from PR's past connections with questionable means like manipulation and propaganda (Cheney & Christensen 2006). Although the defenders of PR contend that PR promotes dialogue, symmetry and democracy in the societies (Grunig 2006; Verčič et al. 1996) the critics argue that there may be dialogue but that is not the same thing as symmetry, and democracy does not actualise just by adding more participants in conversations (Cheney & Christensen 2006). Cheney and Christensen also note that the

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16 This linkage is of course difficult to prove especially with a survey where the issues are operationalised through a choice of words which the respondents then interpret. Also self-assessment is always a matter of individual's interpretation in one's unique situation.

seemingly symmetrical communication activities are sometimes in reality ways of controlling others.

Bartlett et al. (2007, 282) scrutinise PR in the light of structuration theory (see Giddens 2009), concluding that although PR literature has largely described PR through static objectives and body of knowledge, consequently seeing PR as an occupation that "defines and controls". Bartlett et al. (2007) argue that PR would be better understood as constant reflexive processes of constructing and renewing the legitimacy of the organisation. PR's role as constructor of organisation's legitimacy can be seen, however, problematic because PR's own legitimacy has been questioned ever since the rise of the profession in its modern form and because securing organisation's legitimacy contradicts the assumption of serving public interest (Merkelsen 2011).

3.3 Conclusions and confusions

Understanding professions or professionalism requires considering the wider societal context they are situated in (Brante 2010). This is also the underlying assumption in the framework this research builds on. Organisational professionalism connects profession to the organisation and its environment: the organisational culture and the field where the organisation operates affects also to how PR can be practiced. Occupational professionalism links the professional efforts and norms to professional community within which the profession's body of knowledge and central practices are constructed and developed. Individual professionalism stresses the competence and professional identity of the individual practitioner who is also "prisoner of his/her own time" and is affected by the norms and power structures of the cultural, political and societal fields.

This first phase of this research aimed at constructing a conceptual framework for the whole research. The chronological review of profession studies indicates the discussion seemed to fade away after the radical attacks of the critical school in the 1970s. Recent research on the topic is fragmented and in many cases repeating the "same old stories". Since no clearly defined approach follows after the functionalists and neo-Weberians could be found, the chronological path was abandoned and the issue was approached differently. When looking at the main focus of different investigations three main approaches were found: characteristics, societal relations and performance approaches.

Within the characteristics approach researchers have formulated lists of traits, which define a profession. Larson (1979) and Eraut (1996) provide descriptions of the dimensions that resemble each other and seem most compact and constant. Larson's choices of words for the dimensions are: cognitive, normative and evaluative. Evaluative dimension focuses on prestige and monopoly of a profession and thus this dimension actually links to the societal approach to profession studies. In this approach the main paradigms are functionalists who see professions as serving bigger societal purposes, and neo-Weberians who see professions as forms of social closure in the labour markets. The performance approach focuses more on how professions are practiced and how professional identities are constructed.

In this study the concept of professionalism is not bound to the status of a profession in the labour market or to the general criteria of profession typical to trait theories. Regardless of the extent to which the criteria of profession are fulfilled the occupational group may emphasise and support professionalism in practicing the occupation. On the other hand, organisations may promote professionalism as a form of control and steer towards better work performances. These two perspectives, occupational and organisational professionalism, are sometimes seen as cause of loyalty conflicts but they have also been combined as "hybrid professionalism" (Noordegraaf 2007). Hybrid professionalism can be considered as stronger and more up-to-date conceptualisation for professionalism but there seems to still be a piece missing from this picture. The individual approach to professionalism stresses commitment to one's own career and values as basis for professional performance. In the potential value conflict, individual values may be stronger than occupational or organisational values. Hybrid professionalism does not have much meaning if individual professionalism dominates on practical level. Thus this research suggests a three-dimensional construction for professionalism (Figure 12) consisting of organisational, occupational and individual aspects of professionalism.

FIGURE 12 Three dimensions of professionalism

Section 3.2 took a glance at studies on PR professionalism. Although there is a rather wide range of studies that deal with professionalisation of PR or dimensions of PR professionalism the diversity of the investigations supports the need for further research. A widely studied, but still debatable, topic is the role of PR in the organisation. This cannot be studied without considering the question of PR's societal role. Also the special area of expertise of PR calls for ever more attention.

Whatever field of science PR is positioned the definitions and depictions seem to emphasise that PR is not just a line function but also a management function that requires more profound and strategic competences and thus PR's body of knowledge needs to include content, which prepares for strategic planning and complex reflective approach.

It all boils down to the question of what is good PR from the perspective of the organisation, the PR profession and the individual PR practitioner. This brings the three dimensions of professionalism together in the context of public relations. The next phases, the two subordinate studies, will shed light on this from two different directions: the interpretative study of concepts reviews academic literature more comprehensively trying to create a unified conceptualisation of PR professionalism. The interview study aims at gaining in-depth understanding on how PR experts themselves perceive their work and professionalism.

4 PHASE II: PR PROFESSIONALISM THROUGH THE EYES OF THE ACADEMICS

FIGURE 13 Focus of Chapter 4

This chapter will report the results of the first subordinate study, the interpretative study of concepts, which aims at finding out how PR professionalism is constructed in academic literature. In the previous chapter the trends in profession studies were divided into three focused approaches: characteristics; societal relations; and performance. From these approaches three main areas of interest were derived for this subordinate study. Instead of asking directly how professionalism is defined in PR literature this subordinate study asks, what is PR's special area of expertise and what is its position within an organisation? This relates to the characteristics-approach. Societal relations approach raises the question of whom is PR serving. From performance-approach derives the question as to how PR should be practiced. These themes are compressed into the following research questions:

- How are the elements of PR professionalism constructed in academic PR literature?
- What empowers PR to act in a strategic expert role?
- What are the core values of professional PR?

In the next sections, these issues will be brought together in an interpretation of how PR professionalism is pictured in the (scholarly) literature.

4.1 Area of expertise: dimensions of professional PR

From textbooks and different researches one can find many lists of important skills and qualifications of PR professionals. However, instead of focusing on the competences or skills of PR professional this study tries to grasp a broader understanding of what PR as an area of expertise is focused on.

PR academics seem to lack a consensus regarding the definition of PR: for instance, some understand it as management of communication whereas others prefer defining it as management of relationships (Verčič et al. 2001). Lehtonen (1998, 119) defines PR as an organisation's goal-directed, planned and continuous actions which aim at establishing and maintaining understanding and trust between the organisation and its publics. Lehtonen does not mention communication or relationship building but instead the definition stresses the goal of PR. This section scrutinises different definitions of PR in order to find the essential dimensions of PR expertise.

4.1.1 PR, CM, CC or OC – different labels for the same package?

Definitions of public relations are numerous and they include many expressions of communication, interaction and relationships. What are we talking about when we talk about "public relations" or use the corresponding acronym "PR"? What is meant by "publics" or "relations"? The picture becomes even more ambiguous when comparing concepts that are used as synonyms for PR: sometimes different terms mean exactly same thing, sometimes same term has several slightly or totally different meanings, and most terms have their own translations in different languages. What is PR's relation to corporate communications, organisational communication, communication management or business communication? Definitions vary regarding the content, purpose and boundaries of the field. This section points out a couple of schools of thought regarding PR, its definitions and names.

PR is taught in universities and other educational institutions under many names. Preferred labels, their definitions and overall approaches differ between disciplines and countries. In the University of Jyväskylä the subject is labelled Organizational Communication and Public Relations (OCPR, in Finnish Yhteisöviestintä) and its aim is to "analyze communication between organizations and various stakeholder groups" in a changing context and to provide "knowledge to better understand the strategic function that communication fulfils for organizations"[17].

The full name behind the acronym, OCPR, acknowledges that organisational communication and public relations have been seen as two different, parallel concepts. This reflects the traditional division where organisational communication refers to internal communication of an organisation whereas public relations refer

[17] www.jyu.fi/hum/laitokset/viesti/en/subjects/org

to external communication (see e.g. Shelby 1993).[18] Nowadays organisational communication is also considered an umbrella concept that includes both internal and external aspects of an organisation's communication (Vos & Schoemaker 2011) and the same goes with PR although there is a wider variety of views on what PR is and how it is positioned in relation to other fields.

PR and communication

Grunig (1992) contends that PR is management of communication between an organisation and its publics. This means planning, implementing and evaluating the communication of an organisation, including communication both with external and internal publics, i.e., groups that may one way or another influence how an organisation manages to achieve its goals (Grunig 1992). That puts PR on top of the hierarchy: PR includes both internal and external communication. Then again, PR is also said to be part of the organisation's external and internal communication (Larsson 1997) or part of organisational communication (Van Riel & Fombrum 2007).[19]

Goodman (1994, 1) encapsulates corporate communication as "total of a corporation's efforts to communicate effectively and profitably" and contends that it is used "to lead, motivate, persuade, and inform employees and the public as well". Goodman places corporate communication in a business environment and understands the aim of corporate communication as creating competitive advantage for the company. Christensen, Morsing and Cheney (2008) take a wider perspective to corporate communication describing it as a mindset or vision that combines all communication functions of an organisation into a single, coherent wholeness, which is driven by a need to achieve social legitimacy. Their view suggests this mindset is put into practice through integrated communications. Christensen et al. (2008, 37) define integrated communications as "the efforts to coordinate and align all communications so that the organization speaks consistently across different audiences and media." Vos and Schoemaker (2011, 27) state that integrated communication is an approach that aims at "making organisation's communication more effective by emphasizing cohesion and social orientation". For Vos and Schoemaker (2011, 20) the umbrella concept is "communication for organisations", which includes concern communication, marketing communication and internal communication. Communication for organisations is defined as

> The management function within an organisation which is responsible for communication processes which are initiated from within the organisation and thus try to promote a sustainable interaction between organisation and groups of the public in the internal and external environment.
>
> (Vos & Schoemaker 2011, 20.)

18 This division is a simplification and as such it gives a limited picture of this diverse and complex field but as a label of an academic subject it is at least sufficient.

19 Van Riel and Fombrum (2007, 20–22) use *corporate communication* as the umbrella concept which encompasses management communications, marketing communications and organizational communications and the last one of these include "public relations, public affairs, investor relations, corporate advertising, environmental communication and internal communication".

Compared to the relatively neutral sounding expressions like "promoting sustainable interaction" or "management of communication between an organisation and its publics" some definitions of PR take a stronger stand on the purpose of PR. For instance, Bentele adapts Grunig's definition and comes up with the following definition of PR as

> management of information and communication processes between organisations on one side and their internal and external environments (publics) on the other side. Public Relations serves functions of information, communication, persuasion, image building, continuous building of trust, management of conflicts, and the generation of social consensus.
>
> (Bentele 1998, cited in Bentele & Wehmeier 2003, 204.) [20]

Bentele (1998, cited in Bentele & Wehmeier 2003) lists different functions of PR, which seem to suggest that PR is about influencing and building understanding. In the same vein, Heath (2001, 50) sees PR as a management function, which accommodates organisations with the interests of people and vice versa. Heath contends that in this accommodation process PR uses rhetoric as a tool for creating shared meanings and cultures.

Merten (2004, 45) argues that "Public Relations is a strategy for using communication processes to generate desired effects by constructing desired realities". He claims that in media-society fictive and real realities may replace each other. Media offer people a daily sample of reality and relevance and thus the image that media offer becomes experienced reality. PR is that profession of media-society, which is created for building, maintaining and changing images. PR may turn less relevant issues more important and create "pseudo-events", and the power and competence to choose the daily sketches of reality is shifting more and more from journalists to PR practitioners (Merten 2004, 48–53).

Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič and Sriramesh (2007, 3) present "strategic communication" as an emerging paradigm and define the concept as "the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission". By organisations they mean all kinds of groups from corporations to activist groups and social movements operating in private, public and non-profit sectors. The essence of strategic communication is that it is goal-oriented and intentionally practiced by social actors, as a contrast to unintentional interaction processes which naturally occur among people[21] (Hallahan et al. 2007). Holtzhausen and Zerfass (2015, 4) contend that

> the strategic communication process typically is a communication process that follows from an organization's strategic plan and focuses on the role of communication in enabling the organization's strategic goals and objectives.

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20 It can be questioned whether the functions PR is in this definition claimed to be serving belong as concepts on same level. Social consensus, for instance, is clearly a goal while persuasion is a mean. On the other hand, generating social consensus might be seen as a tool which is used in order to achieve some other purposes.

21 Mainstream research on organisational communication is, as Hallahan et al. (2007) see it, merely focused on interaction processes between people, groups and networks, and is disconnected from any business contexts.

The concept of strategy is burdened by being strongly associated with the modernist paradigm and its power-structures and desire to control the world (Hallahan et al. 2007). From that perspective it has been argued that strategy (because of its self-interested nature) fits poorly together with communication which is supposed to be genuinely two-way, unselfish interaction[22]. Also, it has been claimed that goal-oriented communication is top-down oriented and contradicts with ritualistic model of communication where communication is seen as co-creating meanings (Hallahan et al. 2007). However, the constitutive approach to communication has found its companion from the concept of emergent strategy which focuses on "continuous shaping of strategy through communication" (Holzhausen & Zerfass 2015, 9). This strategy process leans on participation of internal and external stakeholders of the organisation (Holzhausen & Zerfass 2015). Moreover, in "strategy as practice" thinking strategy and communication are seen as inseparable: "communication is an inherent reality of the process for developing strategy as practice in contemporary organisations" (Marchiori & Bulgacov 2012, 203). Torp (2015, 48) contends that the strategic turn[23] in the history of organisational communication puts emphasis not only to the management perspective but also to the "informal aspects of the organization's life and informal means of communication" which set new kinds of challenges to the organisations. This way of thinking pictures strategic communication as a more comprehensive approach than the functionalist understanding of strategy.

Although Hallahan et al. (2007) see strategic communication as a wider concept than PR[24] many similarities can be seen between the two. Both use communication with internal and external stakeholders in order to help the organisation to achieve its mission. Both are involved in strategies of the organisation they are working for, and deal with reputation management and processes of public sphere. Thereby, when seeing PR from a wider perspective than which Hallahan et al. (2007) use, PR and strategic communication could be seen synonymous.

The definitions of PR show how variously PR may be seen from different perspectives. PR may be understood as a superordinate term under which the communication functions of organisations or communities belong. Alternatively it may be limited to mean only an organisation's external communication, or a narrow part of it. PR can be defined as a process of transmitting messages or as a pro-

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22 E.g. Habermas, in his theory of communicative action, distinguishes understanding-oriented communicative action from strategic action where actors are mainly trying to reach their own goals (Bohman & Rehg 2014).

23 Torp (2015, 34) divides history of e history of Western communications theory to following phases: "the Athenian or Greek understanding of communication as revealed in Plato and Aristotle, the Roman understanding of communication as seen in Cicero and Quintilian, notions about communication associated with St Augustine in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the seventeenth century, the Age of Enlightenment, the nineteenth century, modern rhetoric, the communicative turn, and finally the strategic turn." With communicative turn he refers to the thinking that communication is everywhere and (nearly) everything is communication. With strategic turn he refers to the desire that (nearly) all communication can and should be utilised strategically.

24 PR is in their view understood narrowly as building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships.

cess of constructing meanings. Comparing the definitions is difficult because worldviews, experiences and philosophies of scholars all vary and affect how they emphasise different aspects (Crop & Pincus 2001).

Although the above mentioned approaches differ from each other, they are similar in a sense that in all of them the phenomenon they try to define is tightly related to communication. However, not everybody agree that communication is a correct framework for PR. For instance Hutton (2001) argues that PR should not rely so strongly to communication as its central doctrine but it should instead build more on relationship management.

PR and management

Besides communication another commonly mentioned aspect in PR definitions is its connection to management (more about the research on the roles of practitioners in section 4.2). Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006, 6) define PR as

> the management function that establishes and maintains mutually benefitial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends.

Being a management function refers to the position of PR in an organisation: PR is one of the many functional areas – such as finance, human resources, marketing, and production – that support the goals of the organisation (Vos & Schoemaker 2011). For instance Baskin, Aronoff and Lattimore (1997) define PR as management function which helps organisation to achieve its goals and define its philosophy, and supports the organisation during processes of change.

Defining PR as management function does not say anything about which discipline PR belongs to. PR may be seen as management by communication (Heath 2001; Merten 2004) or management of communication (Grunig 1992; Bentele 1998, cited in Bentele & Wehmeier 2003), in which cases PR is positioned in communication sciences. It may also be defined as management communication and be positioned in economics (Kruckeberg 1998; Argenti 1996).

Grunig (1992) concludes in the Excellence-study (see section 4.3.1) that PR managers should be involved in the decision making of the organisation but their role should be as communicators. Later on, Grunig started to highlight PR's connections to economics and management. He argues PR professionals use communication programs in order to build symbolic relationships with publics. Grunig calls implementing and evaluating communication programs as micro level PR and points out that symbolical relationships alone are not enough because actions of organisations have also real effects on publics, and vice versa. What is also needed to fully utilise the potential of PR and show its value for organisations is macro level PR which means developing behavioural relationships with publics and evaluating the quality of them (Grunig 1993, cited in Verčič & Grunig 2000).

Verčič and Grunig (2000) understand micro level PR as communication, but on the macro level they see that PR is related to management theories and economics. The purpose of PR is to generate trust between an organisation and its publics. Trust is essential for the functioning of an organisation and thus the contribution of PR to management and decision making of organisation is indispensable: PR facilitates the continued existence of the organisation (Verčič & Grunig 2000), or in other words, its functioning in a changing environment (Vos & Schoemaker 2011).

Verčič and Grunig argue that other disciplines increase the understanding about PR but the real value of PR should be examined in the framework of management. Problem is that generally PR scholars and PR practitioners have not been able to address PR's theoretical connections to economics and management (Verčič & Grunig 2000).

PR and marketing

In PR texts, marketing is usually understood as sales and functions related to that and, on the other hand, among marketing texts PR is usually seen as only publicity work (Fawkes 2001). In the marketing field PR is often understood as part of integrated marketing communication (IMC) (David 2004). Marketing communication can also be seen as a sub field of PR (van Ruler, Verčič, Bütschi & Flodin 2004).

Sometimes PR practitioners understand PR as a sub-field of marketing (Pohl & Vamdeventer 2001, Lages & Simkin 2003). Many PR agencies name their services as PR or simply as communication even if they actually work only with marketing and promotion (Juholin 2003). Sometimes the concept ”marketing PR” comes up, meaning using PR strategies and techniques for marketing purposes, that is to raising awareness, stimulating sales supporting consumption, and building relations between consumers, companies and brands (Harris 1993, cited in Kitchen 2003). Marketing researchers and practitioners are trying to re-define the field by re-naming the methods of marketing as PR (Hutton 2001). Marketing and PR have, indeed, a lot in common: both operate with communication, persuasion and relationships and are interested in public opinion and segmenting audiences (Hutton 2001). However, both have also their own distinctive nature and areas of interest: marketing is involved with product development, distribution of products, retail trade, pricing and customer service whereas PR is concerned with media relations, governmental relations, community relations, investor relations and employee relations (Hutton 2001).

The blurring of the boundaries between PR and marketing has been seen as a threat to PR's role and function in organisations (Kruckeberg 1998). On the other hand integration is claimed to bring about opportunities for being more strongly involved in strategic management and having access to top management (David 2004; Van Gorp and Pauwels 2007). For instance, Johansson and Ottestig (2011) argue that it would be beneficial if PR and marketing functions would be integrated. They reason that “Communication with external and internal stakeholders really does form two sides of the same coin” (Johansson & Ottestig 2011, 161). This explanation seems to associate communication function with internal, and marketing function with external stakeholders, which is an over-simplification to say the least.

Among others, Phillips (2006, 222) opposes integration of PR and marketing arguing that relationship management, which is at the heart of PR "does not sit easily under the wing of marketing because it requires a very wide and cultural approach to value creation." David (2004) contends that there is a danger that integrating PR and marketing would lead to the narrow approach of emphasising the consumers at the expense of public. The essential difference between marketing and PR lies in the concepts of public and markets. In marketing communication, the organisation defines the markets it wants to approach whereas in PR the interest emerges from the stakeholders (Raupp & Hoffjann 2012). David points out three basic differences between marketing and PR. (1) Markets are aggregations of customers defined from top-down by the organisation, whereas publics usually develop from bottom to top and act as collectives. (2) Markets participate in concrete exchange with the organisation and competing needs of target-markets may be resolved with creative re-compositions of 4P-model (price, product, promotion, place). Publics for their part act as stakeholders and competing interests of different stakeholders may not be easy to combine. (3) Markets are formed from consumers but publics consist of citizens. Because of the dualism between consumerism and citizenship organisations need to be sensitive to both of these forces (David 2004). Basically, markets are formed out of consumers who are interested in exchanges that benefit themselves. However, sometimes consumers may rise to a role of responsible and devoting citizens, and the self-interest is replaced with an interest and concern towards common good and societal responsibility which makes integrated marketing interested in symmetrical PR and its possibilities (David 2004).

Sometimes PR is also contrasted with advertising, as advertising is promoting sales and using paid media coverage while PR aims at increasing understanding and tries to get journalists to publish material based on its news value (Fawkes 2001). Fawkes (2001) points out that the advertiser always controls the content of the advertisement, whereas PR practitioners cannot control how the message is eventually published. The line between PR and advertising may blur when PR uses the means of advertising, such as in corporate advertising, issue advertising or advertorials.[25]

[25] Corporate advertising is advertising which does not aim at promoting product or services but transmitting such message about the organisation that supports the strategic goal of the organisation (Fawkes 2001). Issues advertising is using the means of advertising in order to raise issues that are important to public discussion (Lehtonen 1998). So called advertorial is an advertisement which is made to look like editorial story (Fawkes 2001).

Protean PR

Some of the different approaches to defining PR or labelling the field with another name have been presented in this chapter. Table 8 provides examples of different approaches to PR and its relation to communication.

TABLE 8 Different approaches of how PR relates to communication

PR is…					
Part of communication	Management of communication	Management by communication	Management function which aims at mutually beneficial relationships	Management function	Part of management communication which belongs to economics
Hallahan et al. 2007; Larsson 1997	Bentele 1998 (cited in Bentele & Wehmeier 2003); Grunig 1992;	Merten 2004; Heath 2001; Lehtonen 1998	Cutlip et al. 2006	Baskin, Aronoff & Lattimore 1997	Argenti 1996

The variety of definitions could imply that PR is still developing and searching for its true identity but it could also be seen as telling about ability to adjust to different organisations, situations and market circumstances (Crop & Pincus 2001). Cheney and Christensen (2001) warn that the theoretical agenda of the discipline should not follow only the societal trends because that may harm the capacity of the field to act in management role on practical and moral basis.

PR has close connections to economics and management sciences, journalism, mass media, speech communication, social and administrative sciences and humanities but as Kruckeberg (1998) points out in order to fully understand the professional identity and interests of PR it is it important that it is seen as an independent discipline.

Verčič, van Ruler, Bütschi and Flodin (2001) conclude that it is impossible to find one common definition for PR which would satisfy everybody. They suggest there is also not only one specific phenomenon called PR with various names and definitions but PR is differs according the environment. Deetz (2001) concludes the same discussing about organisational communication. Because of the diversity and complexity of the field, too narrow and simplified definitions do not suit PR.

4.1.2 European dimensions of PR

Van Ruler and Verčič characterised (2004, 8) European PR field as "complex, under-researched and, above all, misunderstood by other continents". Europe is diverse area in many ways. For instance, the American PR scholars Hazleton and Kruckeberg (1996) argue that a European PR will not exist before a culturally unified Europe has developed.

The European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA, formerly CERP Education and Research) started in 1998 the European Body of Knowledge project (EBOK) which aimed at gathering a bibliography of European originated PR literature and thus facilitate its wider use and recognition (Verčič, van Ruler, Bütschi & Flodin 2001). Related to this project the researchers conducted a so called Delphi-study[26] in which PR practitioners and academics discussed about special characteristics of European PR: what PR is, is it an independent discipline and where it should be taught. The original intention was to interview one PR practitioner and one PR academic from as many European countries as possible. In practice, however, there were 37 interviewees from 25 countries and most of the countries the only participant was an academic (Verčič et al. 2001). Based on their analysis the researchers concluded that on the one hand European PR practitioners lack the strong theoretical basis and, on the other hand, also on academic level theoretical body of knowledge is poorly developed and defining of some central theoretical concepts is rather tenuous (van Ruler, Verčič, Flodin & Bütschi 2001). From those times, however, the European PR field has developed a lot. Various studies have been conducted nationally and internationally during the last 15 years and positive development has been reported in the findings of European Communication Monitor (Zerfass et al. 2014; for other investigations see e.g. Elving, van Ruler, Goodman & Genest 2012; Gregory 2011; Raupp & van Ruler 2006). For instance, a national survey among PR professionals in Finland shows that PR professionals tend to be well educated: approximately two third of PR professionals have university degree and little over half of them had studied communication/PR as their main subject (Mikkonen & Niklander 2013).

Also the European PR academics have been actively developing the PR body of knowledge and organises regularly scientific conferences (for instance, the annual research symposium BledCom www.bledcom.com and annual conference of EUPRERA www.euprera.org). As Tench and Yeomans (2014, 114) explain: European PR researchers "have developed an impressive research base". Nevertheless, the Delphi-study still provides meaningful insight for the characteristics of European PR field.

The Delphi-study showed that at least in Europe, even PR academics are unable to make any clear distinction between the concepts of communication and relations. It seems that among the interviewees there were two main views on what PR is: some define PR as management of the communication between organisation and its publics, while others define it as management of the relationships between organisation and its publics. When evaluating different key concepts related to PR in order to construct a definition for PR, communication and relations were equally supported. While trying to make respondents choose between com-

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26 Delphi-method is a research method which studies complex ambiguous targets. It is based on repeated anonymous group interviews where the respondents are asked questions and provided with summary of different answers for the next interview round. The idea is that from round to round the responses get closer or there will be a clear polarization when the answers adapt to what is thought to be the "correct" answer or there is a reasoned disagreement of the issues in question (Verčič et al 2001).

munication management and relationship management, many of them refused to make a decision. The researchers concluded that it is irrelevant to argue whether PR is management of communication or relationships (Verčič et al. 2001).

The respondents in the Delphi-study admitted that European PR has had lot of impact from Anglo-American PR when it comes to the concept, theories and practicing the occupation. However, they mentioned some traits where European PR differs from American: European PR is a wider concept and its roots are in the Enlightenment period, the field is more public than business-oriented in Europe, and PR is more interested in long-term effects than making profit. Also lobbying practices were considered to be different in Europe compared to America (van Ruler, Verčič, Bütschi & Flodin 2000).

As the main conclusion of the Delphi-study the researchers formulated four dimensions or roles of European PR: managerial, operational, reflective and educational dimensions (Verčič et al. 2001). First, *managerial* is related to the mission and strategy of the organisation and focuses on developing strategies for building and maintaining relationships between organisation and its publics in order to achieve public's trust and/or mutual understanding. Second, *operational* is about applying communication plans by producing and evaluating different communication tools and services for organisation and its members in order to help organisation to formulate its internal and external communication. Third, *reflective* aims at analysing the changing standards and values in society, and discussing about them with the members of the organisation in order to accommodate the standards and values of the organisation to corporate social responsibility and legitimacy. Fourth, *educational* means helping the members of the organisation to develop their communicative competence in order to be able to respond better to the societal demands (Verčič et al. 2001).

Van Ruler et al. (2001) state that the managerial and operational roles correspond with the manager and technician roles defined by Broom and Dozier (see section 4.2), and they are not typically European roles. Instead the reflective and educational roles are more typically European. Van Ruler et al. contend that rather than using the manager/technician dichotomy European PR could be divided to strategic and tactic PR. In this dichotomy operational and educational roles are tactic in nature whereas managerial and reflective roles are representing strategic PR.

In the book "Public Relations and Communication Management in Europe" which was conducted as a follow up to the Dephi-study (van Ruler & Verčič 2004), European PR experts describe the PR field and its development and current situation in their countries. Many of them comment in their articles also how the European dimensions of PR found in Delphi-study are in their opinion actualising in practice. Many articles suggest that the operational role of PR is dominant and especially the reflective and educational roles are still just marginal phenomena. For instance Soares and Mendes (2004) evaluate that in Portugal PR is practiced mainly on the operational level. They argue the reflective and managerial dimensions of PR are difficult to put in practice in organisational culture of traditional

Portugese companies. Falconi and Kodilja (2004) contend that in Italy the technical/operational role is dominant and the managerial role sometimes exists in bigger organisations whereas the reflective and educational roles are very rare. Moreno Fernández (2004) reports a similar situation in Spanish companies' PR departments but points out that in PR consultancies all four roles are used, though also the educational and reflective roles are used less than operational and managerial roles (see also Yannas 2004).

Verčič et al. (2001) contend however that the reflective and educational roles are becoming a core of advanced PR skills in many European countries such as Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. For instance in the Netherlands ever more attention has been paid to evaluation methods within the PR profession and in professional magazines and congresses where the discussion focuses on the consulting and training roles of PR (van Ruler 2004b).

The four dimension model of the Delphi-study has also been criticised. For instance, Horsle (2004) argues that the reflective, educational and operational dimensions should be seen as supporting roles of PR's management function and strategic dimension. Bentele and Junghänel (2004) contend that the educational and reflective dimensions are not independent but they should be seen as dimensions of the managerial role.

4.1.3 Other views on dimensions of PR

Some researchers have suggested that the Delphi-study's findings do not adequately describe the nature of PR in post-communist societies. The former Soviet Republics in Central and Eastern Europe experienced in the 1990's the unique historical process of transition from planned to market economy, from dictatorship to democracy and from socialism to capitalism (Mygind 1994, cited in Ławniczak 2004). PR practitioners had a significant role during the transition and the ordinary dimensions of PR are not enough to describe that role (see e.g. Ławniczak 2004; Hajoš & Tkalac 2004; Verčič et al. 1996).

The old system reflected in ways of thinking, structures of economy and mechanisms of allocating resources, and this created special challenges for PR practice (Ławniczak 2004). Tampere (2003) argues that very little strategic planning and research-based information was used in communication management and PR in Estonian organisations during the years after the transition because of the negative experiences of the planned economy: planning was associated with the communist system and people did not want to have anything to do with that system. Tsetsura (2003) claims the legacy of Soviet Union impacted especially on the views of older managers in companies and in the public sector in Russia making it difficult for them to value open communication and the benefits it brings. Karadjov, Kim and Karavasilev (2000) reported that in Bulgaria PR practitioners valued in principle the ideals of two-way symmetrical communication but in practice they used manipulation of audiences as their primary PR strategy.

Verčič et al. (1996) argue that there are universal principles of good PR which can be applied in any political and economical surroundings, although in some circumstances applying these principles may be more difficult than in others. Ławniczak (2004) agrees in principle, but argues that the influences of the political-economic system have to be considered much more profoundly in transition PR. Ławniczak (2004) contends the Delphi-study's four PR dimensions describe only Western European PR. He suggests a fifth dimension, ”transitional PR”, which would infer ”helping to introduce and adopt the mechanisms and institutions of the market economy and democracy in former command economies” (Ławniczak 2004, 223). Ławniczak explains that this role takes into account both the special role of PR as promoter of transition and the special challenges the circumstances of transition set for PR. He argues that the task of transitional PR is firstly to evaluate what public is thinking about prerequisites, ways and speed of transition to market economy. Secondly the challenge of transitional PR is to develop tasks of relationship work and create tools for commercial and non-profit organisations for these tasks. Thirdly, transitional PR plans, and implements actions which aim at achieving public's acceptance and support for the market economy principles and mechanisms and effective implementation of them (Ławniczak 2004).

Ławniczak's (2004) suggestion of transitional PR as a fifth dimension of European PR in addition to the four dimensions found in the Delphi-study considers well the special challenges of transition circumstances. However, as a concept transitional PR seems to be on a different level than the dimensions described in Delphi-study. In Delphi-study the dimensions of PR are related to different forms of PR whereas the transitional PR seems to be about using different forms of PR for achieving certain goals in certain circumstances. The tasks of transitional PR do not include anything that would not fit to the four PR dimensions of the Delphi-study. The tasks Ławniczak mentions – assessing the attitudes of the audience, developing the tasks and tools of public relations practice, and planning and implementing actions that aim at gaining acceptance and support of the public – are the basic tasks and strategies of PR which are included in the dimensions of PR in Delphi-study. Ławniczak (2004) mainly specifies what kind of targets and objectives the circumstances of transition set for the PR roles described in Delphi-study. However, implementing tasks of PR in exceptional circumstances does not constitute an exceptional role of PR.

Tampere (2004) suggests making the fifth role of PR, in addition to those mentioned in Delphi-study, an integrative one. In her view this type of role is needed in Europe to deal with the problems that arise when national cultures, religious views and worldviews are inter-relating. Furthermore, the economical, political, ideological, ethical and cultural variances cause problems, which are much more complicated than dissimilarities related to nationalities: to be able to find ways to integrate experiences from a variety of economic systems and societies, all of which need good ethical pedagogical practices, special skills and tolerance (Tampere 2004; Tampere 2008). The core of the integrative role, as suggested by Tampere, is in acting as interpreter and mediator between deeply rooted views. In other words it is about different point of views coming together and seeking for mutual understanding. At least in some sense the integrative role seems to be included in the Delphi-study's reflective role where PR practitioner aims at analysing the changing standards and values in society, and also the managerial role where the PR practitioner is said to be building relationships that aim at mutual understanding.

Tampere also suggests a different interpretation for the Delphi-study's educational role. In the Delphi-study, the educational dimension of PR was defined to be aiming at helping the members of the organisation to improve their communicative competence in order to be able to better respond to the societal demands (Verčič et al. 2001). However, in transition societies PR should also consider another pedagogic aspect: PR should be educating public and different target groups to adjust to the new cultural, philosophical and economic conditions of the society (Tampere 2003).

These divergent approaches to dimensions of PR show that attempts to grasp the ambiguous subject reveal different conceptual approaches: while one research group focuses on what PR does, the other emphasises what PR aims at. Next, this research approaches the topic from practitioner roles' point of view.

4.2 Positioning PR as a management function

When referring to dimensions of PR expertise, the discussion turns easily to PR practitioner roles. Practitioner roles are said to be the key for understanding the function of PR and organisational communication (Dozier 1992, 327). The term "role" is defined by MOT Collins English Dictionary as follows:

1. a part or character in a play, film, etc. to be played by an actor or actress
2. *(psychology)* the part played by a person in a particular social setting, influenced by his expectation of what is appropriate
3. usual or customary function: what is his role in the organization?

The concept of role can be defined as an "organized sets of behaviors identified with a position" (Mintzberg 1990, 168). Katz and Kahn (1978, 189) define role behaviour as "the recurring actions of an individual, appropriately interrelated with the repetitive activities of others so as to yield a predictable outcome". In the context of work life, the concept "role" implies thus that somebody is expected to have certain function in relation to others in a particular context. It relates to expected behaviour in social setting and the socially constructed meaning of this action.

Positioning PR in relation to other functions within an organisation inevitably brings up the question of PR's role within organisational hierarchy. The Excellence-study concluded that the relationship to the dominant coalition is crucial for excellence of PR (Grunig 2006). This idea has been criticised for instance by critical scholars (e.g. Pieczka 1996; Berger 2005), and postmodern scholars (e.g.

Holtzhausen 2002; Holtzhausen & Voto 2002), who claim that as part of the dominant coalition, PR would become part of the power structure and could not genuinely consider the interests of the stakeholders. For instance Berger points out that the demand that PR should be included in the dominant coalition includes an assumption that in such a role a PR professional would act according to the symmetrical worldview "and do, or try to do, the right thing in the interests of the profession, organization, and society" (2005, 8). However, the power relations are complicated and "the pressures of organizational compliance and corresponding material and social benefits that accrue to public relations managers in the dominant coalition may render doing the right thing even more difficult" (Berger 2005, 14).

Grunig (2006) argues that the critique is based on misinterpreting the concept of the dominant coalition.

> The dominant coalition does not necessarily consist of those in formal positions of power. The dominant coalition is an informal coalition, whose members can be both inside and outside the organization and who can come from different levels of an organizational hierarchy. It also can be enlarged by empowering larger numbers of people.
> (Grunig 2006, 164)

Berkovitz and Hristodoulakis (1999) describe the practitioner role research stating that the findings have shown that that in general PR practitioners can be divided into two groups: those practitioners who perceive themselves as communication managers and those who perceive themselves as communication technicians. The approaches and outcomes of different practitioner role investigations are, however, more multifaceted than that. In addition, it can be noted, that it is one thing how practitioners portray their roles and yet another what they are actually doing. The following sections form an overview on the wide field of PR practitioner role research.

4.2.1 Modernist approach to PR's position

Ferguson (1979) examined practitioner roles[27] among the members of Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) using a questionnaire that included 45 practitioner roles drawn from literature. Eight roles of PR practitioners were found: (1) problem-solving manager, (2) journalist/technical communicator, (3) researcher, (4) staff manager (5) good-will ambassador, (6) organiser of meetings, (7) personnel-industrial relations and (8) public community relations (Ferguson 1979, cited in Dozier 1992).

Better known than Ferguson's research is Broom and Smith's role typology. Based on literature analysis they formulated five roles of PR consultants: *technical service provider, expert prescriber, communication process facilitator, problem-solving process facilitator* and *acceptant legitimizer* (Broom & Smith 1979)[28]. Broom and

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27 Ferguson conceptualised the tasks as role-norms, in other words in the questionnaire it was not asked which of the tasks were part of respondents' actual work but instead which of the tasks they considered appropriate for PR practitioners.

28 The conceptualisation of Broom and Smith (1979) is often quoted in PR literature but

Smith explained that most PR practitioners start their career as *technical service providers* who implement different communication tasks, are not involved in decision-making processes of the dominant coalition and do not necessarily always know the motives or expected results of the communication activities. Furthermore, Broom and Smith argued that in the *expert prescriber* role PR practitioners are seen as authorities in PR-problems and solving of those. The management leaves PR in the hands of PR expert. The *communication process facilitator,* for one's part, is a sensitive listener and mediator, who serves as a communication link, interpreter and negotiator between organisation and its publics offering both sides necessary information in decision-making processes. In the *problem-solving process facilitator* role, the PR practitioner works together with the management of the organisation in order to define and solve problems participating in the strategic planning as members of the team. In *acceptant legitimizer* role the emphasis is on giving supportive feedback to the clients in order to legitimise their decisions (Broom & Smith 1979).

Broom tested these theoretical roles in 1982 in a pilot study[29] and found out that three of the roles correlated strongly with each other. Expert prescriber, problem-solving process facilitator and communication facilitator proved to be very much overlapping roles and therefore the typology was reduced to include only two roles (Dozier 1992, 331). Dozier re-analysed Broom's study with factor analysis in 1984 and found two roles: *public relations manager* and *public relations technician*. The public relations manager role included characteristics from expert prescriber, problem-solving process facilitator and communication facilitator roles.

In Dozier's typology PR managers

- make decisions concerning policies;
- are responsible in results of PR programmes;
- perceive themselves and are perceived as communication and PR experts in the organisation;
- support communication between management and publics of the organisation and guide the management through a "rational problem-solving process". (Dozier 1992, 333.)

The public relations technician role found by Dozier in his factor analysis was matching closely with Broom's communication technician role. Technicians

- are not participating the management's decision-making processes;
- are generating communication products that implement policy decisions made by others. (Dozier 1992, 333.)

Dozier found also two minor roles: media relations specialist and communication liaison role. Media relations specialist corresponded with technician role in salary and organisational status but it was clearly specialised in external media relations.

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presenting only four roles: *communication 6echnician, expert prescriber, communication facilitator and problem-solving process facilitator*, see e.g. Cutlip et al. 2006, 38–41.

29 Pilot study was conducted among members of Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and in the study respondents evaluated statements about role behavior of PR practitioners with 7-grade ”never”– ”always” scale.

Communication liaison role was corresponding with manager role in salary and status but it was excluded from decision making of the management. Due to the strong correlation Dozier decided later to combine the roles so that he ended up with technician and manager roles of PR (Dozier 1992).

These well-known role-studies have inspired plenty of further research and discussion within the PR field. Bentele and Junghänel (2004, 163) argue that the role-divisions neither in Delphi-study nor in American studies are meaningful in practice in Germany. The PR managers in bigger companies and senior consultants in PR agencies work in management role whereas the rest of the PR personnel work as technicians. Bentele and Junghänel present an alternative way of describing PR practitioner roles based on empirical studies of Böckelmann (1988, 1991a, 1991b, cited in Bentele & Junghänel 2004). Böckelmann found that PR practitioners have three professional roles: *representative of the organisation*, *public sphere oriented journalist* and *negotiator between organisation and its publics*. Although these roles bring a slightly different perspective to PR professionals' work in Germany they still approach the question similarly to the previous ones: what is the PR practitioner doing?

Moss, Newman and DeSanto (2004, 8–10) suggest, also in the same vein, based on results from a large survey conducted among the PR practitioners in Great Britain that PR would be best described by five dimensions. The first is being a *monitor and evaluator*: PR practitioners thought that essential in their work is to set goals and evaluate how these goals are met. The second is the *troubleshooting/problem-solver* where PR practitioners aim at noticing different threats the organisation is facing, and finding solutions to them. The third is *key policy and strategy advisor*. In this role PR practitioners advise management regularly, regarding both business and communication, for instance by providing them knowledge about how media will most likely interpret the strategic decisions of the organisation. The fourth is the *issues management expert*, who monitors and analyses current issues in the environment of the organisation and advises the management on how it should be prepared and how to react to those issues. The fifth is the *communication technician*. In this role the PR practitioner is working with craft and technical aspects of PR and communication (Moss et al. 2004). These five dimensions represent the tasks and responsibilities PR professionals may have. They are thus not mutually exclusive roles but areas of the work, on which varying emphasis may be placed according to the situation.

Van Ruler (2004a) found seven roles of PR practitioner when reviewing 50 years of Dutch PR literature:

1. The town crier – PR is about broadcasting (management's) messages
2. The steward – PR is about taking care of atmosphere and everything running smoothly
3. The traffic manager – PR is about delivering information
4. The conductor – PR is about influencing people in order to create harmony
5. The creator – PR is about creating mutually beneficial relationships
6. The facilitator – PR is about facilitating dialogue
7. The seat-of-the-pants – PR is a magic un-definable talent without which organisation cannot survive

Although admitting that all of these roles have some connection to reality van Ruler states that "from the point of view of social scientific communication theory, we have to argue that a model which views communication in a pre-scientific way, as a sort of magic bullet, cannot be classed as appropriate" (2004, 138). Consequently she abandons the models of the town crier, the steward, and the seat-of-the-pants. From the remaining roles of the traffic manager, the conductor, the creator, and the facilitator form a communication van Ruler constructs four situationally applicable communication strategies: information, persuasion, consensus-building, and dialogue.

In their study Johansson and Ottestig (2011, 159–160) came up with three managerial roles of communication executives: the *organizational leader* who is involved with all strategic decisions of the organisation, the *communication leader* who is in charge of communication matters within the dominant coalition, and the *communication manager* who runs communication but is not included in the top management level and was thus not considered to have a genuine executive role. The analysis about the management role here is elaborated further than in the original professional roles studies but still the basic setting is similar.

4.2.2 Postmodern, critical and interpretive approaches to PR's position

Modernist tradition in professional roles research has clearly dominated this area of investigation. Sison criticises research on the roles of PR for not progressing much beyond the manager-technician division created in 1980s.

> A singular functionalist approach to public relations roles neglects the interplay of interpretation, rhetoric and organizational power in the practitioner's workplace.
> (Sison 2010, 319.)

Some new approaches – also to role research – have indeed emerged especially within the last 15 years. These approaches pay more attention to power relations and the underlying presumptions of rationalist thinking typical to modernist role research tradition.

One of the underlying presumptions of rationalist thinking is the strategic nature of PR or communication management. It has often been taken for granted and communication is "a decisive factor in a corporation's value chain" and therefore PR is said to belong to upper-level management (Raupp & Hoffjann 2012, 149). Grandien and Johanson (2012) note that in a strategist role PR professionals may have access to the decision-making tables whereas technicians remain an important producers of information. However, it is not self-evident that PR professionals could have a significant impact on the discussions in those tables (Grandien & Johanson 2012; Reber & Berger 2006; Berger 2005). Reber and Berger (2006) conclude that having a position in the top management team does not necessarily mean that PR professionals would have more influence: other factors like having close communication connections, having proved the importance of PR with previous actions, and having strategic and political ability and will, may be even more important than the actual seat at the decision-making table.

The issue of having a seat at the decision-making table goes deeper than whether PR has decision-making power or not. It has been questioned what PR is supposed to do with that power? Holtzhausen (2002) argues that in modernist paradigm PR is used to legitimate the management's domination by utilising internal and external communication functions to promote the management's view as the objective truth. According to her postmodern view, PR would instead use its tactics to promote polyphonic voices of the organisation and other actors. Conflict of interests is the obvious problem to be stressed when discussing about PR's managerial role and imperative of symmetry, and postmodern role research brings the conflict of interests from possibly contradictory stakeholder interests to the heart of the organisation.

Holtzhausen also criticises the managerial-technician dichotomy for overemphasising the managerial role and underrating the technician role: "managers and technicians are mutually influenced by and influencing internal and external role players and publics, thus all shaping an organisation's public relations agenda on a continuous basis" (2002, 256). Holtzhausen and Voto (2002) confirm that power is important to PR practitioners, but they argue that personal power may be more important than authoritative power which could corrupt PR professionals and make them part of the dominant power structure.

The approaches of postmodern and critical researchers tend to shift the attention in PR role research from tasks and rationalist hierarchies to influence and value issues: can PR be more than a tool or mechanism? Does it also take a stand on different matters? The focus is not only in the amount of influence PR has, but also in the quality of influence that PR has in the organisation and in the society. Hodges argues that PR practitioners should be seen as "cultural intermediaries" who "mediate between organisations and groups within wider society" (2006, 88; see also Curtin & Gaither 2005).

Sison (2010) concludes that PR practitioners are involved in value setting processes of organisations but mainly on the implementation level. She, however, proposes three roles for PR practitioners: *agency of corporate compliance*, *agency of concertive control*, and *agency of critical conscience*. In practice, she states that adopting the agency role means that "competing individual, professional, organizational, and public interests could emerge and reveal a tension between the organization and the individual practitioner's values" (Sison 2010, 321). This implies that while taking an agency role, which means working for somebody else, the PR practitioner is not an empty and neutral channel which just sets oneself as an instrument of power but also critically evaluates different issues – sometimes even taking the role of conscience in the organisation.

Berger (2005) distinguishes three kinds of power relations, with which PR is involved: "power over", "power with" and "power to". In the first, PR is an instrument of power and dominance. In the second, PR facilitates dialogue and shared power. In the third, PR professionals resist the domination and take the side of those with less power. This position Berger calls the activist role of public relations (see also Holtzhausen & Voto 2002):

> [I]t is time to consider a third role for public relations professionals—that of activist. This role grows out of power to relations, or forms of resistance to a dominance model. In the activist role, a practitioner must go beyond advocacy of doing the right thing to carrying out actions to support and supplement advocacy in the organization and larger social system.
>
> (Berger 2005, 24.)

Grunig rejects the idea of public relations performing as an in-house activist, and argues that without involvement in decision making it would be a futile function that could not fulfil its key task: "Power does influence public relations, and its major role is to empower those with less power" (Grunig 2006, 165). Grunig argues, that the critics have misinterpreted the Excellence theory, and the concept of a dominant coalition.

> In the Excellence study, we conceptualized power as empowerment, the expansion of power throughout the organization and to its external stakeholders. In fact, the study showed that the more people inside and outside the organization that were included in the dominant coalition, the more likely it was that the head of public relations and outside stakeholders and activists were included.
>
> (Grunig 2006, 165.)

Grunig argues that besides those who have formal power also other actors both inside and outside the organisation may be part of the dominant coalition. With this Grunig tries to locate his thinking in more polyphonic and interpretive perspectives than the narrow functionalist point of view he has been accused of (see also Weaver 2001).

Scholarly attempts to argue that PR has a strategic role in organisations get more puzzling when attention is focused on the concept "strategic". The meaning of "strategy" can vary a lot. Botan (2006, 225) splits the concept between "grand strategy" and "strategy". The former, Botan explains as decisions that relate to an organisation's policies and the latter to campaign-level decisions, which are then put into practice by different tactics. Vos and Schoemaker (2011) provide a similar viewpoint in distinguishing the processes of planning and decision making on the level of organisational policy, functional areas and implementation.

Raupp and Hoffjann (2012) explain that strategic communication management means that in every communication-related decision all the aspects connected to it in the communication management or organisational context are considered. Thus, all communication actions have a strategic nature. Furthermore, Raupp and Hoffjann point out that the strategic decisions also have symbolic power: they frame how the past is seen and construct the mindset regarding future. Strategic decisions thus both prescribe and interpret our realities.

> Strategic communication management can therefore be understood as communication management which deliberately creates such decision-making situations in which several alternatives of action are evaluated.
>
> (Raupp & Hoffjann 2012, 157.)

First-order strategies focus on detecting and responding to what is going on in the environment of the organisation, while second-order strategies set goals regarding how to develop and try to influence the organisational environment (Christensen et al. 2008).

Heath and Coombs (2006, 8) refer to PRSA's definition and contend, that PR is a management function and therefore PR managers "should be intimately involved in selecting and implementing the organization's strategic goals by working alongside other managers who lead the organization". This means providing input in strategic decision making. In order to do that, the PR professionals "anticipate, analyze, and respond to opinions of people and groups" (Heath & Coombs 2006, 8), which may have an impact on an organisation's operations. This as such does not seem different from the modernist point of view. However, in their rhetorical approach to PR Heath and Coombs (2006, 8) emphasise that strategic planning requires considering the needs of others, and therefore PR practitioners should

> master strategic rhetorical processes of listening, appreciating what is heard, and responding to and even yielding to comments by stakeholder groups whose opinions and actions can make or break an organization.

Heath and Coombs (2006) contend that the core of the rhetorical approach to PR is its focus on mutually beneficial relationships which lean on openness, trustworthiness, cooperation, alignment, compatibility of views/opinions, and commitment. At the heart of rhetoric is "the open discussion of ideas and the careful examination of facts and information" (Heath & Coombs 2006, 14). This distinguishes PR from being merely expressive activities or purely serving the selfish interests of the organisation. Where PR accommodates organisations with the interests of people and vice versa, rhetoric is a tool for creating shared meanings and cultures and thus achieving mutually beneficial relationships. The rhetorical approach believes that PR practitioners are for their part constructing community and society: rhetoric is the voice of the community with which the members of the community are creating unity and coordinating their actions (Heath 2001). It is a self-repairing and self-maintaining process which aims to form meaningful truths and procedures (Heath 2001, 36, 50). The rhetorical approach represents thereby a paradigm for constructing meanings. Heath argues that PR is management by constructing meanings with communication.

The problem of conflicting interests and the debate regarding whose interests PR is serving are not a problem in Heath's approach. Advocacy is a necessary part of the common process of creating meanings: participants have both selfish and altruistic reasons to be involved in the dialogue (Heath 2001). Large organisations in the private, public and non-profit sectors are in a central position when forming opinions in society. Individual and collective voices react to the voices of organisations. Everything that is done and said by organisations, markets, and publics or groups of publics will become meaningful through the interpretations of people (Heath 2001).

4.3 Defining good PR

Professional expertise is more than proficient combining and applying of theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Eriksson (2002) describe professional expertise as a constructor of communal moral, which is based on general human values. Essential to professionalism is a commitment to ethics and those values the profession has adopted. However, if professionalism is understood as a value system, which guides the profession, it requires a more specific ethical point of view than just general human values. Skinner, Mersham and Valin (2003) note that a PR professional's value judgments are especially demanding because they should fit together with societal, organisational, professional and personal values. Indeed van Es & Meijlink (2000) argue that in ethical questions, PR professionals rely largely on personal values.

Service-orientation and ethical aspect of profession are intertwined. Besides defining the ethical standards or the moral philosophy behind them, the profound question regarding ethics and service within professions is whom they are supposed to be serving. In functionalist profession studies, professionals are claimed to be using their expertise for the good of the society and that justifies the special position of professions. This approach was strongly objected by the neo-Weberians who argued that professions are only serving their own interests by controlling the markets and demanding special status.

PR seems to fit like a glove to this debate. Although many PR definitions, codes of ethics and declarations of PR principles speak about public interest and PR's role in promoting corporate social responsibility, the critical voices question whether PR can ever truly serve stakeholders' or society's interests, like it has served capitalism and big companies for many years (Berger 2005).

The fact that PR may be different in different societal surrounding (Verčič et al. 2001) sets a special challenge to developing common professional commitments. PR, without a commonly accepted professionalism, will be whatever each PR practitioner wants it to be and thereby PR will become a construction which helps to sell the kind of expertise and services that potential buyers and users desire (Mortensson 1996). As Fitzpatrick and Gauthier explain: "Just like guns, strategic communication can be used for legal and ethical purposes as well as for illegal and unethical purposes" (2001, 194–195).

This section focuses on the ethics and quality of PR and sketches the PR profession in the light of the ethical service-orientation debates. It presents some attempts to define what good PR is, and points out some central issues and recent developments in the academic debates about the topic.

4.3.1 Excellence-theory – cornerstone of the field or ancient history

In 1985, Grunig and his research group started an extensive research project known as the Excellence-study. This research project concentrated on the relation between successfulness of the organisation and the excellence of the PR departments. The factors that were found to affect most on the excellence of PR were the management function of PR and the use of two-way symmetrical communication. In those organisations where PR departments were excellent, CEOs thought that involvement of PR departments in strategic management was important. Symmetrical communication combined with the use of two-way asymmetric communication was characteristic of these PR departments, and strategic communication managers led these PR departments (Grunig et al. 2002).

The basic conclusion of the Excellence-study is that an excellent PR department is guided by a symmetrical worldview. According to this worldview, PR uses research and dialogue to manage the conflicts and increase the under-standing, and to build relationships with the audiences (Grunig & White 1992). Grunig and White argue that in the symmetric model both organisations and their publics may be persuaded and both can change their behaviour. However, Grunig and Grunig (1992) highlight that symmetrical PR aims primarily at increasing understanding and not at persuasion.

From the perspective of game-theory Murphy (1991) suggested that a mixed-motive game would describe PR better than a purely symmetric model, because in PR professionals' work both symmetrical and asymmetrical methods are used together. In terms of game theory, Murphy described two-way symmetrical PR as games of pure cooperation. There the organisation wants to accommodate the will of the audience and vice versa, which usually is dissatisfying for both sides. Instead, in a mixed-motive game both sides are reaching to their own goals but at the same time they are trying to find a solution, which would be acceptable for both sides (Murphy 1991).

Based on the critique presented by Murphy and the results of the Excellence-study, Grunig and his colleagues combined the two-way symmetric and two-way asymmetric models into a ”mixed-motive” model. According to this model PR practitioners use mainly symmetrical methods but temporarily it is possible to also use asymmetrical methods in order to achieve the interests of the organisation in the mixed-motive game. Short term use of asymmetric practice is therefore seen appropriate in the larger context of symmetrical philosophy (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig 1995).

Grunig (2001) argues that describing excellent PR, as a mixed-motive model is the solution to the critique, which argues that the symmetrical model forces organisations to sacrifice their own goals for the interests of public. In the mixed-motive model while communicating with publics PR practitioners are trying to make them understand and support the interests of the organisation, and while communicating with the organisation's top-management PR practitioners are trying to make them understand and support the interests of publics. In this way PR practitioners try to balance divided loyalties that they face when trying to serve both the interests of the organisation and the interests of publics (Grunig 2001).

Grunig and Grunig (1992) placed the four models of PR in the continuum of professional and craft PR. The one-way models of PR, press agentry/publicity and public information, are placed on the continuum of craft PR whereas the two-way models of PR are placed on the continuum of professional PR. Accordingly, those PR practitioners who practice only craft PR consider their work as applying communication techniques and think that the goal is to provide information and achieve publicity. Instead, those PR practitioners who practice professional PR base their work on both the theoretical body of knowledge and the techniques. They also understand that their work has a strategic goal, and it aims at management of conflicts and building relationships with those groups that may limit the autonomy of the organisation (Grunig & Grunig 1992).

According to the Excellence-study, in the excellent departments PR is practiced both on technician and manager levels. While traditional craft PR practitioners act only with implementation, a systematic and productive practice requires also competence and knowledge to act in a manager role and apply two-way communication models (Dozier et al. 1995). Although professional PR uses both asymmetric and symmetric tactics the best results are achieved with symmetric PR (Grunig & Grunig 1992).

While developing the Excellence-theory further Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) conclude that four models of PR are a too inflexible division and they split the dimensions of PR three-way: (1) one-way or two-way, (2) asymmetrical or symmetrical, and (3) mediated or interpersonal techniques. Described by these dimensions, excellent PR is two-way and symmetrical and, depending on the situation and the public, is based on either mediated or interpersonal communication.[30] Grunig and his colleagues state that a fourth dimension, ethics, could be attached to the model. Symmetrical PR is ethical by nature whereas the ethicalness of the other models depends on the rules, with which they are applied (Grunig et al. 2002).

In the light of the Excellence-study Grunig et al. (2002) consider that the basis of the four models of PR is formed by both positive and normative theory. The two-way symmetric model functions as a normative ideal for PR practitioners and PR practitioners can use the power their knowledge gives them in order to defend the symmetric worldview (Grunig et al. 2002).

Excellence as a set of universally applicable principles of PR

Verčič, Grunig and Grunig (1996) concluded, based on the research conducted in Slovenia, that the principles of Excellence-theory may by applied globally but that it is necessary to take the local culture into account. They formulated nine globally applicable characteristics of excellent PR:

30 Grunig and his colleagues decided later to split the twofold dimensions and add the dimension of ethics and thus they came up with seven dimensions of PR: (1) one-way, (2) two-way, (3) asymmetrical, (4) symmetrical, (5) interpersonal, (6) mediated, and (7) ethical dimensions (Grunig et al., 2002). These dimensions, however, never reached such interest among other researchers as the original four models (Laskin 2012).

- PR has to do with strategic management
- PR practitioner belongs to the top management team or at least PR-department has a direct, fixed reporting-system with management-team
- PR is integrated, i.e. activities of organisation's all PR units are coordinated together
- As a management function PR is distinguished from other functions like marketing, because the purpose of PR is to discuss with all audiences and not only for instance with customers
- There are two main roles in the PR field: the strategic manager who is responsible of planning, and the technician who is responsible for implementation (in small organisations one person may be in charge of both tasks)
- PR is based on two-way symmetrical communication, i.e. PR is based on information gathered by research, and it uses communication in order to manage conflicts and create mutual understanding with strategic audiences
- An organisation's internal communication is symmetrical
- PR practitioners have adequate body of knowledge for practicing strategic management level and symmetrical PR
- Diversity appears in all PR tasks and i.e. genders, ethnic groups etc. are treated equally in recruiting and division of tasks.

(Verčič et al. 1996, 36–39)

Verčič et al. (1996) identify five contextual variables which may make excellent PR practice more difficult or even impossible: political-economic system, culture, amount of activism, level of development and media-system. Sriramesh and Verčič (2003) derive from these factors a framework according to which (1) country infrastructure (i.e. the political system, level of economic development and activism level), (2) media environment and (3) societal culture should be considered in each country when studying PR strategies and affecting factors. Sriramesh and Verčič (2003) argue that in developed (market) economy countries, strategic PR seems to be appreciated much more than in developing countries. When the resources are limited, organisations cut of all activities that are considered additional and PR might not be considered a profitable asset. In developed market economies strategic PR has proven its place by turning out to be helpful in achieving attention, understanding and support of publics in situations of tough competition. Also the political system affects the economy by controlling companies' possibilities to operate. In those countries where the public sector is more dominant than corporations the state becomes the main or only audience of PR (Sriramesh & Verčič 2003).

Verčič et al. (1996) argue that the general principles of Excellence-theory form a basis for global PR principles. Applying general principles requires strategic research which clarifies how these principles can be accommodated to different cultural and political systems. The Excellence principles are difficult to apply in centralised, authoritarian or totalitarian political systems where propaganda is used instead of two-way symmetrical communication. However, Verčič et al. claim that by carefully applying the general principles of Excellence-theory it is possible to influence, little by little, the circumstances, which are complicating their use. Thus, eventually the situation can be achieved where it is possible to use these general principles (Verčič et al. 1996).

The views of Verčič et al. (1996) concerning applying the principles of Excellence theory seem to be based on an assumption that excellent PR is an ideology that is admired and promotes two-way symmetrical communication, and with that ideology it is desirable and possible to change societal conditions and political-economic systems of nations. Thus the global principles of good PR could be understood as cultural imperialist principles.

Contestants and followers of Excellence

Excellence theory and the four models of PR have been widely discussed within academic PR community. Especially the symmetrical model of PR has had its share of – sometimes spicy – critique. Laskin (2009) summarised the critique towards four models of PR and concluded that the loudest critique has focused on the two-way symmetrical model which has been accused of being normative or unrealistic ideal (e.g. Leitch and Neilson 2001; Dover 1995; Kunczik 1994a) or it has been completely rejected even as an ideal (e.g. Roper 2005; Holtzhausen 2000; Pieczka 1996; Creedon 1993). For instance Stoker and Tusinski (2006) point out that symmetry cannot be the goal of communication because organisations would not communicate just to reach mutual understanding – they would not communicate unless they have something to say or something they want to reach – nor does symmetry qualify as a criterion of the ethics of the process:

> The common ground sought by competing parties is not as important as the common principles of truth, freedom, liberty, and human rights that both espouse.
> (Stoker & Tusinski 2006, 174)

Also Porter points out that while focusing only on "the process of conflict management" Grunig's work neglects "one of the most important end goals of real-world public relations strategy, which is to persuade and ultimately influence behavior" (2010, 127).

There has also been methodological criticism towards the models, for instance regarding the definitions of the concepts used and the reliability and validity of the models (Laskin 2009). Pieczka (1996; 2006) contends that Grunig's work includes ontological and epistemological incoherencies. She points out that different models or paradigms of the systems theory have been used purposively based on what supports the models best, and overall the Excellence-theory can be seen as a product of the research agenda.

Pieczka (2006, 356) contends that Excellence-theory is no longer just a theory but it has "grown into a discourse". Brown (2006) accuses Grunig and other symmetry-theorists of evolutionism and progressivism when they describe PR as evolved from one-way asymmetric models to the symmetrical PR, which is equated with being the ethical model of PR.

> As distinguished from Darwin's scientific theory of natural selection, evolutionism is a belief system – specifically, a belief that the species do not merely change, they improve. As the social Darwinists believed, the strong were meant to triumph over the weak.
> (Brown 2006, 207)

Brown (2006) suggests such a belief-driven approach does not describe the history of PR adequately. It can also be argued that it does not fit as ethical guideline for

PR in today's complex world. Holtzhausen, Petersen and Tindall (2003) contend that applying symmetry as a normative model for PR in other societal, political or cultural contexts may be harmful. "Consequently, the concept of symmetry should be rejected as a normative practice in international public relations" (Holtzhausen, et al. 2003, 332).

For example L'Etang (1996) argues, that the statements of PR helping organisations to change their actions if they violate the common good, are a myth. Moreover, Juholin (2003) questions whether symmetry is even possible in a society where there is competition between different stakeholders: a company may find consensus with one group and same time drift into a conflict with another. Similarly, Cheney and Christensen (2001) note that an organisation may have symmetrical communication with its strategic stakeholders but not with all of them – there may be groups which do not have resources to communicate of their own accord and companies do not actively try to make contact with them. Cheney and Christensen agree in principle that symmetry is desirable, but they point out that it should not be taken for granted and used as an excuse for excluding the question of using power from PR theories. They argue that symmetrical dialogue is an illusion and in reality many communication systems, which are presented as two-way symmetrical communication actually include corporatist and anti-democratic tendencies (see also Miller & Dinan 2007). Cheney and Christensen argue that PR's theoretic-practical reflection should be aimed at raising thoughts, provocation, enlightenment and widely understood societal superiority. Although Cheney and Christensen are critical concerning the hidden attitudes in PR theories, their own view also includes values and attitudes. The pair argues PR's mission may and should be securing democracy and developing society (Cheney & Christensen 2001, 167–181).

Despite of the critique that the Excellence-study and the four PR models have faced and although it has been said that they are currently losing the "leading place without creating a notable alternative" (Laskin 2012, 358), there have been many investigations and research projects that draw from the Excellence-study and the four models. For instance Laskin (2012) re-evaluates the models and dimensions, and creates an evaluation instrument which consists of five continuous and measurable scales:

- strategic nature (reactive – proactive);
- direction of communication (from organisation to public – from public to organisation);
- intended beneficiary (organisation – public);
- role (managerial activities – technician activities); and
- timeframe (long-term collaboration – short-term practices).

Also David (2004) elaborates Excellence-theory by combining symmetrical ideals and situational pragmatics in a model for evaluating PR. David (2004) suggests that besides rational thinking and maximising utility there are other factors like perceived risk and uncertainty that affect the decision making and these are lacking from most conceptualisations. The 3Ps-model consists of: public relations practice, professional values, and pragmatics. Each dimension is divided in three sub-dimensions. The dimension of public relations practice includes the sub-dimensions of advocacy vs. accommodation, one-way vs. two-way communication, problem-solving vs. relationship-building. The dimension of professional values is divided into social, organisational and personal values. The dimension of pragmatics includes sub-dimensions of perceived control, uncertainty and perceived threat or opportunity (David 2004). The model thus brings together applying theoretical knowledge and considering different value-related aspects in a (potentially) complex situation.

4.3.2 Codes and standards for good PR

Codes of ethics and codes or professional conduct are manifestations with which professions articulate their trustworthiness and service-orientation, and legitimate their position in the society. They represent formal instructions to articulate what are the moral obligations of the professionals and what kind of behaviour is appropriate and what is inappropriate for a professional worker (Lee 2012). Different PR associations have formulated several codes, agreements and declarations on local and international levels to guide the professionals in their work and to prove the professionalisation of the industry. The first international code of ethics in the PR field was the Code of Venice, which was adopted at the meeting of IPRA (International Public Relations Association) in Venice in 1961. Next IPRA and CERP (Confédération Européenne des Relations Publiques) declared in their joint meeting in 1965 the Code of Athens. The European ethical principles were articulated in the Code of Lisbon in 1978.

The Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Manage-ment (GA) has also formulated ethical codes for the field. The ethical codes begin with a declaration of principles where it is first articulates the distinguishing characteristics of a profession which are mastery of a particular intellectual skill through education and training, acceptance of duties to a broader society than merely one’s clients/employers, objectivity, and high standards of conduct and performance. The basis of the codes is formed by human values: “We believe in and support the free exercise of human rights, especially freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the media, which are essential to the practice of good public relations”[31]. Besides the declaration of principles the code of ethics includes a code of professional standards, code of practice, and appendixes advancing the code. The code of professional standards declares commitment to advocacy, honesty, integrity, expertise, and loyalty. While PR professionals are supposed to serve the interests of their clients/employer and give them a voice in the “market place of ideas, facts and viewpoints to aid informed public debate” they are also supposed to “serve the interests of society and support the free expression”.[32] PR professionals are also instructed to base their practice in their professional knowledge, keep de-

31 www.globalalliancepr.org
32 www.globalalliancepr.org

veloping their expertise, and protect and promote the profession (see Skinner, Mersham & Valin 2003).

The World Public Relations Forum 2012 formulated the Melbourne Man-date as "a call to action for new areas of value in public relations and communication management" to answer the new challenges in the era of social media and increased public accessibility of communication. According to it "public relations and communication professionals have a mandate to:

- define and maintain an organisation's character and values;
- build a culture of listening and engagement; and
- instill responsible behaviours by individuals and organisations.

(World Public Relations Forum 2012)

The Melbourne Mandate locates PR in building values of the organisation, constructing a culture of communication and listening, and promoting societal responsibility and meaningful engagement with stakeholders. Instead of telling how PR should be practiced the Melbourne Mandate emphasises how organisations should operate. Instead of means the focus is in the end result which endorses the symmetrical worldview of Excellence-study.

The best known of the national codes probably are the codes of ethics of Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the code of conduct of Char-tered Institution of Public Relations (CIPR). They closely resemble the ethical codes of the GA. In Finland the professional PR association ProCom mentions on their website[33] general principles of PR, ethical principles of PR and the Melbourne Mandate. The general principles (adopted on 21.11.2012) describe the mega-trends and current baselines, tasks and prerequisites of PR, and mentions that general responsibility of communication is always on the top management of the community, communication issues are delegated to communication professionals and moral responsibility lies on each member of the community. The ethical codes of ProCom were updated in 2005 and are based on the Codes of Athens and Lisbon.

Alas codes of ethics are difficult to enforce and seem to offer little useful advice in ethical issues at the practical level (Lee 2012; Fawkes 2012). The existence of the codes does not guarantee that they are followed and, since the profession is not protected by licensing, it is difficult to control how it is practiced (Nordenstreng & Lehtonen 1998). For instance, ProCom mentions in its ethical principles that it may suspend a member for violating ethical codes. Parkinson (2001) accuses professional codes (of PRSA) for not providing real guidelines for practitioners but merely being manifestations that aim to reassert the reputation of the field. Holtzhausen takes a postmodern approach and denies the justification of any moral or ethical codes by arguing that they are all social constructions and thus serve some hidden agenda (Holtzhausen, 2012).

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33 www.procom.fi

Quality criteria approaches

A more pragmatic approach to defining and enhancing good PR has been developed by setting quality criteria for PR. For instance, Vos and Schoemaker (2004) set out quality criteria for PR, which consist of clarity, environment orientation, consistency, responsiveness and efficiency of the communication. Clarity refers to a clear profile and mission, and positioning of the brands. Environment oriented communication seeks to maintain networks for reputation, distribution and sales. Consistency implies coherence between business units and other functions. Responsiveness refers to following and reacting to external and internal trends (such as consumer trends). Effectiveness and efficiency of the communication means showing the impact and value of communication activities by for instance measuring corporate and brand images, and conducting internal audits. Vos and Schoemaker (2004) also created a balanced scorecard based reflection and measurement tool for evaluating the quality of an organisation's PR. They also established a version of the scorecard especially for governmental organisations (Vos 2009).

Based on a literature review, Zaremba (2006, cited in Marques 2010) defines five quality criteria according to which good PR is "Timely, clear, accurate, pertinent, [and] credible". Marques (2010, 52) formulates four additional criteria: responsibility, conciseness, professionalism, and sincerity. At first glance these additional criteria do not seem to belong to the factors that enhance effectiveness and efficiency. Marques, however, says that together with the foundational criteria they result in "improved interaction, greater trust, greater understanding, enhanced efficiency, better performance, and enhanced gratification" (Marques 2010, 55). These outcomes could be seen as the desired of PR in general.

4.3.3 Achilles heels and attempts to heal the trauma

Fawkes (2012, 865; see also Fawkes 2010) contends that PR has a "divided ethical identity": while PR's idealistic codes of conduct – coloured by the American Excellence-project – characterise PR almost as a saint, the critics point the accusing finger at the hidden side of PR and associate it with persuasion and propaganda (Fawkes 2012; Miller & Dinan 2007). There seem to be two especially sensitive issues when it comes to ethics and PR. One is conscience and the other is persuasion. Both are linked to PR's role in the organisation: conscience relates to the role of the PR professional as an ethical guardian and servant of public good, and persuasion relates to the advocacy role being an instrument of power. Should PR mind its own business or remind business of what is right and what is wrong? If there is a conflict of interests whose side should PR take? Furthermore, is persuasion the evil twin with whom PR is not on speaking terms or are they actually one and same creature?

Persuasion – the evil twin of pristine PR?

Gregory (2002) argues that there are two basic approaches in the PR field. The first, she explains, is based on the principle that the role of the PR practitioner is to persuade an organisation's publics to think or act the way the organisation wants them to think or act. The other approach is to see PR as mediator in the processes of influencing and accommodating to the environment that the organisation is part of: in these processes PR represents the organisation to the external publics and external publics to the organisation with the aim of finding space for co-existence and mutual understanding (Gregory 2002). The discussion about PR's professionalism and ethics often seems to assume that the first of the approaches described by Gregory is unethical and the second is both ethical and professional. Clearly taking public interest into consideration is ethical (Daugherty 2001) and it also produces the best results in the long run (David 2004).

Persuasion is associated with power imbalance and the advocacy role of PR. It is also associated with manipulation and propaganda. PR has been accused of not only persuading but also using – or being – propaganda. For instance Weaver, Motion and Roper state that the critical theory paradigm sees no "substantive difference between propaganda and public relations" (2006, 21). Fawkes argues PR literature has mostly tended to "minimise public relations' historical roots in propaganda" (2007, 315). Although some researchers (e.g. L'Etang, Pieczka, and Holzhausen) have taken more critical approach (see section 4.3.1), and focused attention also to PR's connection to power, in mainstream PR literature persuasion and propaganda are still under-investigated (Fawkes 2007).

> It would appear that the moral repugnance attached to the term propaganda has spread to its neighbour persuasion, despite the fact that our entire culture is permeated with persuasive messages, from health campaigns to toothpaste ads. It is difficult to conceive of organizational communication which does not contain some persuasive content, if only in the selection of material for the particular public.
>
> (Fawkes 2007, 316.)

As Fawkes mentions above, the negativity of propaganda has been transmitted also to persuasion and this manifests in the oversensitive approaches in the PR literature: persuasion is rejected although it, as Messina (2007) points out, is integral to all communication.

There are nevertheless also those scholars who see no problem in combining persuasion and public interest. For instance Cutlip et al. suggest that committing to protecting public interest and social responsibility is one of the essential conditions for the professionalisation of PR (Cutlip et al. 2006). On the other hand, Cutlip describe PR as an advocate of the organisation:

> the social justification for public relations is to ethically and effectively plead the cause of a client or organization in the free-wheeling forum of public debate.
>
> (Cutlip 1994, cited in Baker & Martinson 2001, 173.)

In general it could be said that in a functionalist approach there is no contradiction between the advocacy role and serving public interest. Cutlip (1994) reasons the advocacy role by stating that in a democratic society everybody has a right to be heard and PR practitioners thus act on this principle when defending this right of client-organisations. Advocacy has therefore been a central role of PR which did indeed fit well in functionalist thinking of PR theories but along with the rise of critical and postmodern debates advocacy has been stigmatized or at least questioned as part of unequal power systems.

If an organisation's goals are in balance with the "common good" it is easy to accept the advocacy role. However, for instance big companies are often accused for considering only their selfish interests of making profit. Making profit is not unethical as such if it is aiming at some higher social or individual goal, but without that there is a danger that the practice starts to follow "social Darwinism in which the goal too often is to succeed at all costs" (Baker & Martinson 2001, 153). Baker and Martinson (2001) suggest that to be ethical persuasion should show genuine respect towards those whom the persuasion is directed to, and this is often seen questionable when it comes to advertisers and PR practitioners: the goals of their persuasive efforts may be in conflict with the interests or well-being of the people they are targeting.

Baker and Martinson (2001, 159) suggest that ethicalness of persuasion can be evaluated against five principles which they call the "TARES test":

- Truthfulness (of the message),
- Authenticity (of the persuader),
- Respect (for the persuadee),
- Equity (of the persuasive appeal) and
- Social Responsibility (for the common good)

(Baker & Martinson 2001, 159)

Baker and Martinson lift up respect as the most important factor when defining ethics of persuasion:

> The Principle of Respect for the Persuadee is at the heart of the TARES Test, and is the underlying foundation and motivation for all of its other principles.
> (Baker & Martinson 2001, 163)

Fawkes (2012, 867) criticises the work of Baker and Martinson for not stepping further from the dominating paradigm of Excellence: although they offer "a somewhat ethical approach to persuasion" they stick to the idea of Excellence being the ground for PR ethics. Messina (2007) in turn argues that the mandatory obligation to serve public interest or common good should be abandoned from PR ethics and instead the focus should be in defining ethical persuasion. He formulates a working definition for ethical persuasion:

> An attempt through communication to influence knowledge, attitude or behaviour of an audience through presentation of a view that addresses and allows the audience to make voluntary, informed, rational and reflective judgements.
> (Messina 2007, 32–33).

Messina's definition as well as Cutlip's justification of PR's advocacy role mentioned earlier are based on the assumption that behind all voices in the marketplace of ideas there is objective truth to be found and that people in general are capable of rational decision making (Fitzpatrick 2006). Fitzpatrick (2006, 12) suggests that in the marketplace of ideas PR professionals should act as "advocates of truth".

It seems that, in the discussions of PR and ethics or professionalism, PR is often described as an idea or ideology which can have goals that differ from the client-organisation's goals. For example Berger (2005, 23) claims that PR may aim at defending societal benefits. Heath argues that, instead of condemning advocacy as one-sided use of power, PR should rather embrace responsible advocacy, which could be seen as a way towards fair collective decision making "whereby ideas are refined, facts and values are offered and weighed, and interests are considered and balanced" (Heath 2006, 108).

Dialogue as a cure

Dialogue has become a mantra of good PR. It is presented as a cure for all ills. While PR is accused of selfishness, secrecy and unfair use of power the dyad values of these are presented as the ideals of public communication: reciprocity, openness and fairness which "will find their due place in the dialogical approach" (van Es & Meijlink 2000, 76). There are, van Es and Meijlink (2000) contend, two main approaches to PR ethics, pragmatic and dialogical. The pragmatic approach, they explain, sets focus on actions of individual PR practitioners, while dialogic PR ethics relies largely on the concept of Grunig's two way symmetrical communication and centres the attention to the reciprocal relationships of an organisation with its stakeholders.

Dialogue is, indeed, often associated with Excellence-thinking and symmetrical communication, and therefore one might think that it is incompatible with persuasion. However, this is not necessarily the case. It can also be argued that persuasion as such is not bad and it can be used also in the context of dialogue.

> Human decisions and behaviour are influenced by arguments and convictions, exchanged in dialogues, but also by power and pressure. Powerful pressure is ethically not negative, as long as it is a non-violent pressure. On the contrary, from an ethical perspective, it can be an expression of responsibility of moving things in the right direction.
> (Stückelberger 2009, 337).

Fundamental values for dialogue are human dignity, equality/justice (the Golden Rule and Kant's categorical imperative), freedom of thoughts, convictions, behaviours and actions, participation, sustainability, and unity in diversity (Stückelberger 2009). Stückelberger argues that dialogue is ethical and successful when the parties:

- reflect and respect the fundamental values mentioned above
- allow the participants of a dialogue to define themselves in their identities and goals

- clarify at the beginning the objectives and character of the dialogue and the composition and characteristics of the participating actors
- clarify in the first phase the definition of the problem, linked to the limitation or de-limitation of the themes to be discussed or negotiated
- refuse the idea (ideology) that each dialogue per se is positive but to find the setting of a dialogue at the right time in the right place with the right people on the right subject with the right objectives
- agree on compromises which respect ethical compromise guidelines
- accept that confrontation can be an instrument of communication and conflict resolution and to distinguish between creative and destructive confrontation and use of power
- analyse the power structure of a dialogue and its participants and expose this analysis where necessary
- be aware of the limitations of each dialogue and reflect the combination with other instruments of conflict resolution
- agree on an ethical information policy about the dialogue which respects the fundamental values, and allows trust to be built by confidentiality, public participation and progress by transparency

(Stückelberger 2009, 338)

Dialogue also relates to rhetoric. Heath (2006) believes in PR's mission as supporting a fully functioning society. He contends that instead of emphasising economic values and partisanship PR theory should be built on rhetoric:

> The fundamentals of effective communication and excellent communication management underpin the discussion of how public relations can help make society more fully functional.
>
> (Heath 2006, 97)

Interdependence could be seen as a profound principle of fully functioning society and this requires communication. In today's world organisations are more and more dependent on other organisations and the social environment in general, and therefore it is important to gain "internal and external acceptance", by establishing accountability – "the willingness to take responsibility, to render an account and explain" (Vos 2007, 6).

Pieczka (2011) argues that although dialogue has been in the heart of PR for 30 years it is poorly represented in PR's body of knowledge. Issues of "symmetrical communication, relationship management, and responsibility […] overlap with the key concerns of the theory of dialogue" (pp. 108–109). However, she contends

> despite assertive statements about the importance of dialogue to public relations theory and professional practice, the field has a very poor understanding of the concept, and has so far ceded this area of expertise to others to be found in the broadly-defined disciplines of political science, community development, management and organizational development.
>
> (Pieczka 2011, 109)

Pieczka suggests that when looking at the websites of PR associations and major consultancies PR still appears mainly as advocacy practice. If dialogue is to be presented as center of PR theory and pedagogy, profound research is to be done.

PR as the conscience of the organisation

One of the central themes in PR literature is social responsibility. PR's task is said to be stressing the corporate social responsibility in organisational decision-making processes. For example, van Ruler and Verčič (2002) highlight that PR is separated from other fields especially by its mission to point out the wider societal view in the questions that are related to an organisation's actions in public and for the public. In these discussions PR is interpreted to be the conscience of the organisation and its task is claimed to be increasing general well-being (L'Etang 1996).

In many definitions and ethical codes, PR is said to be defending public interest. For instance, Avenarius suggests that committing to the public is the "fundamental motive for their choice of profession, and thus their prime professional duty" (2007, 111). The Excellence-theory is reflected in the ethical codes of PR which tend to not only guide ethics of PR but position PR professional as a guardian of ethics in the organisation (Fawkes 2012). L'Etang (2003) criticises this view by noting that PR professionals mostly do not have the training to act in such a demanding role. Bowen (2008) examined PR professionals' perceptions regarding PR's role as the conscience of an organisation and discovered that although many of her interviewees did indeed act as ethical advisors for the top management some objected to this role by stating that it would be too difficult or overwhelming a task and PR could only be one of the consciences of the organisation. Having nothing to say in ethical issues would be against good PR principles, but it would be too much to take the position of the one who draws the absolute line between good and bad. Ethics are more than following law or specific code of behaviour, and it is also more than feeling-based following the heart – ethical decisions require profound examination of the goals and the means in particular situations (Tran 2008).

Virtuous character as a cure

Fawkes (2012) offers Jungian ethics as a solution to the problem of PR ethics. This approach shifts the focus from juxtaposition and hypocrisy to accepting the complex nature of ethical issues and simultaneous existence of good and bad: PR professionals – like any human beings – are not just saints or sinners but imperfect and fallible, and ethical issues in public relations – like any ethical problems – are sometimes unsolvable. The end does not always justify the means and thus consequentialist philosophies like utilitarianism or teleology (see Grunig & Toth 2006) are not a sufficient basis for PR ethics. A simple deontological following-the-rules approach seems to lead to justifying any outcome as long as everything is done by the book (see Curtin & Boynton 2001). All of these approaches can be easily challenged and when used in the context of legitimising the PR function, they may be turned against or they may end up undermining the whole idea and be interpreted as empty promises, image polishing or even purposive misleading of others.

In virtue ethics the emphasis is not on "rights and duties" but "in addition to cultivation of character, emphasis is placed on individual and collective responsibility" (Arjoon 2000, 162). Arjoon contends that the virtue ethics can be traced back to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics in which the central idea is that it is not enough to do what you are supposed to do "but virtue lies in the difference between doing something and doing it well or virtuously (excellently)" (p. 162).

Fawkes (2012) suggests that instead of denying the "dark side" and pretending to be purely blameless PR should base the ethics on a virtue approach where the idea is – while admitting that also faults exist in one's nature and doings – to consciously develop the good sides of one's character. This way the attention is shifted from doings into being: what matters is who you are and how you cultivate nobleness by reflexively correcting your actions. In the approach presented by Fawkes instead of rules or idealistic principles ethics can be seen as internalised values and developing a respectable character.

The debate of PR ethics often leads to solving the value-conflict by inflicting personal judgment: common dictum is that one can only work for an organisation the values of which one basically shares. However, the match of personal and organisational values is usually not complete. This kind of right or wrong antithesis is turned down by both postmodern and Jungian ethics (Fawkes 2012).

Virtue ethics approach would also solve the tension between an organisation's interests and the public interest that often is referred to in the discussion of PR ethics. Individuals are not seen as separate from the world and neither are organisations. Arjoon (2000) argues, that therefore common good involves not only the community but also its parts

> the common good cannot be viewed as the mere sum of individual goods which is rooted in traditional thinking (e.g., utilitarianism, social contract theory, etc). Once the atomistic individual is taken as an isolatable unit, then the individual and the community become pitted against each other in an irreconcilable tension. Individuals, corporations, and society are not separate entities like atoms that collide with each other. They are part and parcel of an ontological whole.
>
> (Arjoon 2000, 165.)

Also Baker (2008, 240) elaborates PR ethics on the basis of virtue ethics pointing out that "The virtues do not exist and are not enacted in a vacuum—but rather in relationships and interactions with others in the context of roles and practices." She quotes Hursthouse (1999) who conceptualised virtue ethics as action-guided approach where virtues constitute prescriptions and vices prohibitions, and called these rules of virtue ethics "v-rules". Baker (2008) applies the v-rules and constructs the "Model of the Principled Advocate and the Pathological Partisan" (see Table 9).

TABLE 9 Virtues and vices of PR (Baker 2008, 241)

Principled advocate virtues	Pathological partisan vices
Humility (acknowledges one's moral responsibility)	Arrogance (exempts oneself from moral responsibility)
Truth	Deceit
Transparency (openness)	Secrecy (opacity)
Respect (for others' right to self-determination)	Manipulation (of others for one's own ends)
Care (for others)	Disregard (for others)
Authenticity	Artifice
Equity	Injustice
Social responsibility (for the common good)	Raw self-interest (to the detriment of others)

The virtues and vices defined in Baker's model are based on the literature and the earlier mentioned TARES Test (Baker & Martinson 2001). The PR practitioner's "DO"-list includes accordingly humility, truth, transparency, respect, care, authenticity, equity and social responsibility, while the "DON'T"-list includes reciprocally arrogance, deceit, secrecy, manipulation, disregard, artifice, injustice and raw self-interest. Baker suggests that these lists are more than just rules. Instead of only telling what to do and what not, the real aim of the model is on being: the rules guide PR professional to become more virtuous character (Baker 2008).

4.4 From concepts to construction: "academic view" on PR professionalism

Aim of this subordinate study was to scrutinise how PR professionalism is constructed in the scholarly PR literature. Summarising the wide topic and picking up the key concepts for the interpretation is not easy. However, it is possible to detect the prevalent conceptions and the most significant counterarguments. This section summarises first the central themes and moves the on to building an interpretation of the studied phenomenon.

4.4.1 PR expertise is about enabling and legitimacy

The definitions of PR are numerous and they have different emphasis. However, one can somewhat confidently conclude that they deal with communication and relationship management between organisation and different internal and external publics/stakeholders. When looking at what PR is supposed to aim at the picture becomes more complex. The themes mentioned in the literature in the context of the mission of PR are building mutual understanding and trust, constructing desired image and good reputation, informing and influencing, promoting corporate social responsibility, constructing legitimacy and so forth.

The European dimensions of PR presented in Delphi-study (Verčič, van Ruler, Bütschi & Flodin 2001) provide a relevant picture of what PR expertise is about. In this conceptualisation the managerial dimension refers to developing strategies for building and maintaining relationships which aim at achieving the public's trust and/or mutual understanding. Operational dimension is about producing different communication means for the organisation and its members. Reflective dimension means analysing the changing standards and values in society in order to accommodate organisation's standards and values to social responsibility and legitimacy. In educational dimension the purpose of PR is to help all members of the organisation to improve their communication competence (Verčič et al. 2001).

The dimensions of the Delphi-study are not unanimously accepted throughout Europe. For instance Bentele and Junghänel (2004, 163) would like to combine the reflective and educational dimension to the managerial dimension. Their suggestion would reduce the dimensions to two: operational and managerial dimensions. This resembles often used PR's role dichotomy where PR's two roles are manager and technician roles. Van Ruler, Verčič, Flodin and Bütschi (2001, 23) note that managerial and operational dimension correspond with Anglo-American role dichotomy and suggest that reflective and educational dimensions are more typically European characteristics of PR.

Compared to the other European dimensions of PR the operational dimension seems at the first glance somewhat detached. Managerial, reflective and educational dimension describe both means and the goal, whereas opera-tional dimension is described to be just producing communication means. Communication means are needed both in managing relationships (goal of the managerial dimension) and in reflecting the values in society and organisation improving the communication competences of the members of the organisation. Operational dimension could thereby be defined as a supporting function of the other three dimensions or it could be included to the other dimensions. However, if the meaning of communication means is thought more carefully this dimension becomes equally important as the others: since communication enables the functioning of the organisation providing means for communication is vitally important.

> Communication is the lifeblood of all organizations: it is the medium through which companies large and small access the vital resources they need in order to operate.
> (Van Riel & Fombrum 2007, 1.)

From this perspective the operational dimension is not referring to operative aspects of PR function like technician role does but it refers to enabling the operations of the organisation and is thus a highly strategic dimension.

In the light of the above described European PR dimensions the key outcomes of PR could therefore be defined as trust and understanding (managerial dimension), functioning communication infrastructure (operational dimension), responsibility and legitimacy (reflective dimension) and communication competence (educational dimension). Ultimately all communication and relationship management activities aim at facilitating processes and gaining acceptance. In other words, PR expertise is about internal and external enabling and legitimating the organisation's operations.

4.4.2 Expertise needs empowerment

When reviewing the PR practitioner role research[34] various approaches to the subject can be found. The first investigations concerning practitioner roles were focused on the tasks (or desired tasks) of PR, but along the way the aspect of the hierarchical position of PR has become a widely debated topic. It seems that practitioner role research includes at least four different lines of studies: focus on content and tasks (e.g. Ferguson 1979, cited in Dozier 1992), focus on hierarchical position (e.g. Dozier 1992; Johansson & Ottestig 2011), focus on the degree of influence (e.g. Raupp & Hoffjann 2012), and focus on the beneficiary (e.g. Sison 2010; Berger 2005). Some of the role research studies apply a combination of these approaches (e.g. van Ruler 2004a).

Different approaches to PR practitioner role studies are presented in the Table 10. The role studies that focus on the content of PR practice establish the role categories based on the type of tasks or how demanding the tasks are. Studies that focus on the hierarchical position emphasise the importance of autonomy of the profession and having access to the strategic management level in the organisation. The studies that focus on the level of influence of PR place attention to how strong influence PR has or should have but they disconnect this issue from the hierarchical position. Beneficiary-oriented role studies focus the attention on the question of whose interests PR is serving. Content-oriented role research actually returns to the question of what PR is doing, and beneficiary-oriented research is strongly linked with the ethics of PR. The hierarchical position studies combined with the degree of influence approach connect the question of PR's role more distinctively to power relations.

TABLE 10 Focus of different types of research on roles of PR

Type of role research	Focus
Content of PR	What are the tasks of PR and how demanding they are?
Hierarchical position of PR	What is PR's position in the organisation?
Level of influence of PR	Does PR have influencing power?
Beneficiary of PR	Whose interests PR is serving?

In general it could be concluded that the dominant role typology of managerial vs. technician PR is still strong but many researchers would prefer more fine-grained division and the critical school is questioning the dominating assumption that managerial position would be the right place for professional PR. Other debates bring up the issue of PR's wider influence, for example as cultural intermediary

34 Researches were considered as practitioner role research if they dealt with position or role of PR even if they did not use the concept practitioner/professional roles.

(Hodges 2006), promoter of the existing power structures (Motion & Weaver 2005), or enhancer of democracy (Verčič et al. 1996). According to the dominant paradigm as well as its challengers PR is an expert function with influencing potential, for which critical reflection on its roles, effects and ethics is emphasised.

4.4.3 Legitimacy is earned by being responsible and respectful

The repeating themes in the discussion about PR ethics are persuasion, advocacy, public interest, and conflict of interests/values. The dominant paradigm in the field proposes symmetry and dialogue as the principles of good PR. However, this persistent moral imperative has also been criticised. For instance Merkelsen (2011) points out that it may produce procedural legitimacy where dialogical act is seen more important than the actual behaviour of the organisation, and this kind of hypocrisy should be rejected if PR theory is to develop further from the traditional questioning of PR's ethical status.

These opposing sides, which could be called optimists and pessimists or - loosely interpreted - functionalists and critical thinkers, are deeply entrenched. Somewhere in between them are those who try to look at the issue with an open mind, turning down both functionalist and critical presuppositions. Fitzpatrick and Gauthier (2001) conclude that both those who suggest that PR has developed beyond a traditional persuasion approach to represent negotiation and accommodating different parties to mutual understanding, and those who suggest that persuasion is the central focus of PR, are correct:

> Modern day public relations efforts include both self-interested persuasive tactics as well as genuinely benevolent initiatives
>
> (Fitzpatrick & Gauthier 2001, 194).

In their responsibility model, Fitzpatrick and Gauthier (2001) argue that responsible PR practitioners employ principles of reducing harm, respecting others and communicating all aspects of an issue fairly.

Fawkes (2007) in turn conceptualises four roles for PR professionals: boundary spanner, advocate, relationship manager and propagandist. Boundary spanners are often presented in PR literature as purely ethical promoters of symmetry but Fawkes suggests this role may also include persuasion. The advocacy role may be seen either from the perspective of marketplace theory or rhetorical theory. Relationship managers are typically negotiators and consider persuasion in a pressuring way unethical, whereas propagandists may use persuasion in their communication in a manipulating and dominating way (Fawkes 2007).

Compared to normative models the role conceptualisation of Fawkes gives a more realistic picture of PR practice: there are different ways of practicing PR and different approaches to persuasion and ethics. If the norms or ethical codes are simplified too much, it would cause ethical myopia (Baker & Martinson 2001), which would prevent academia from seeing what is going on in real life, and practitioners from applying the ideals to their work.

The key words that appear repeatedly when reviewing PR ethics literature are responsibility, respect and reflexivity[35]. These concepts come up, on the one hand, as goals towards which PR is supposed to guide organisations and, on the other hand, as characteristics of good PR. In the context of organisations, PR practitioners are supposed to guide organisations to see themselves as part of the community and to take responsibility for their actions (Leeper 2001; Heath 2006). PR's task is to remind organisations to treat internal and external publics respectfully (Baker & Martinson 2001; Fitzpatrick & Gauthier 2001). PR is also expected to help organisations understand how their actions affect their reputation and how they can improve their behaviour (Vos & Schoemaker 2006). In the context of the characteristics of good PR, responsibility refers to PR's role as an advocate of the client and common good; respect refers to cherishing general human values in all PR processes; and reflexivity refers to self-criticism and constant aim for integrity and improvement.

Responsibility, respect and reflexivity could also be seen as characteristics of good PR professional. In the case of value conflicts most PR literature tends to lay the moral judgment on the PR practitioner: a common statement is that one has to agree with the core values of the organisation to be able to work for it. Ethical codes are usually on a rather general level and although some advice about how to apply the codes exist, essentially the individual PR professional needs competence to make the practical decisions – as far as they are in the position to make decisions or give ethical advice. This implies that ethics has become a matter of identity instead of externally imposed framework. As Fawkes (2012, 868) explains: "Ethics is thus de-coupled from rules and codes and re-located in the interior of the individual, becoming an aspect of their identity."

Whether the "goodness" of PR is seen through the lens of the ethical codes or through the lens of quality criteria, their central notion seems to be that they aim at building trust and meeting the expectations that are directed towards the profession. This requires evaluating different aspects and applying PR knowledge and ethical principles contextually.

> Deontological and teleological principles must come together with intuitions and other factors. The function of a wide reflective equilibrium model is to bring the different considerations in a well-balanced thinking process, aiming at an optimal decision on the moral question.
>
> (van Es & Meijlink 2000, 73)

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35 Reflexivity is a controversial term. Among others Holmström (2009, 191) argues that reflexivity refers to ''monocontextual, narcissistic perspective'' where organisation corrects its behavior only to improve one's own performance. However, reflexivity has been used for instance by Beck (1994) in the context of reflexive modernity to explain how organisations become aware of the impact of their actions in the surrounding society and use self-confrontation to improve their behavior. Here the concept reflexivity is understood to mean reflecting the surrounding society and responding and self-correcting one's actions.

Ethical decisions require reflecting the issues through personal, professional and public ethics, and combining and evaluating all relevant facts (van Es & Meijlink 2000).

4.4.4 Dimensions and levels of professional PR

This interpretative study of concepts is trying to shed light on how PR professionalism is constructed in academic literature. The issue is scrutinised from the point of views of the area of expertise, position of the profession and principles of good PR. These themes are tightly intertwined. When looking at the definitions and descriptions of PR in order to understand the area of expertise the attention is focused especially on the goals of PR. Discussions about the goals of PR raise the question of the role PR has regarding serving the interests of the client and general public. This issue is connected to ethics which leads to scrutinising individual practitioner's values and professional identity. Professional identity, in turn, directs the attention to how practitioner understands PR's goals. Thus, the circle begins again: goal leads to question of the role, which leads to question of ethics which leads back to the goal.

Professionalism can be studied from the perspectives of the occupation, the organisation where it is practiced and individual practitioners (see section 3.1). An occupation's point of view includes content and value aspects: what is the area of expertise, what it aims at and what is considered to be good "professional" practice. The organisational perspective includes a structural aspect: how is the profession positioned in the organisation and how is it valued within an organisation's hierarchy and standards. From an individual practitioner's perspective professionalism includes the aspects of competence, identity and moral judgment. Scrutinising all these aspects profoundly would be out of the scope of this research. However, a tentative interpretation of this complex phenomenon is formulated here based on the findings summarised in the previous sections.

From different definitions and descriptions of dimensions of PR a picture of what PR professionalism is and what it aims at can be deduced: PR professionalism is expertise in communication management, which aims at enabling the operations of the organisation and bridging the organisation with the operational environment. At the heart of PR professionalism are three core values: respect, responsibility and reflexivity. These core values are the principles that guide PR practitioners in their work, and also the ultimate outcome of PR.

Reflective processes of identity and legitimacy building (Holmström 2004) and relationship building, reputation management and advocacy (Flynn 2006) within public sphere (Jensen 2001) are essential dimensions of contemporary PR practice.

> Today's public relations managers must be more than communications specialists, more than boundary spanners, and more than strategic advisors. Public relations managers must now be relationship builders, reputation managers, and responsible advocates, for both their Organizations and the stakeholders, to achieve a mutually beneficial end

> state—established and maintained through a collaborative and dynamic process of negotiation and facilitation with each stakeholder group.
>
> (Flynn 2006, 197.)

The central areas of PR expertise are, thus, defined here as management of public sphere, management of relationships and management of identity, which are practiced on both operational and strategic levels. Public sphere is space where an organisation constructs, expresses and reflects its identity and where different actors and point of views meet (see Jensen 2001). Relationships are essential to the interactive processes of reflecting ones identity and managing public sphere. Identity is a presupposition for an organisation to act as a party in a relationship or as a subject in the public sphere.

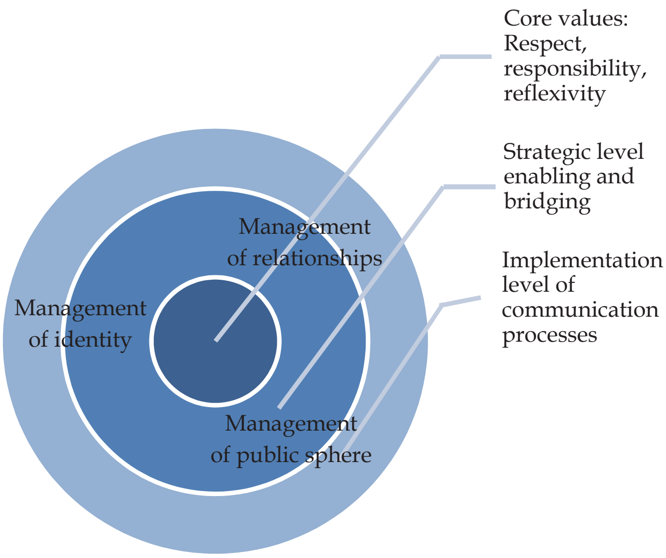

FIGURE 14 Areas and levels of expertise and core values of PR professionalism

Figure 14 illustrates PR's three interrelated areas of expertise and two levels on which PR is practiced. PR expertise's core concerns are management of public sphere, relationships and identity. These areas are overlapping each other so that they cannot always be clearly distinguished from one another. This is why they are not described as separate sectors in this picture. On the one hand, PR is practiced on an implementation level which requires less strategic expert knowledge. This level can be considered equal to the technician role in the traditional manager-technician dichotomy. On the other hand, PR is practiced on a strategic level. Without any strategic level expertise in enabling and bridging, PR know-how is just a set of expressive or technical skills. This level can be considered equal to the manager role in the technician-managerial role dichotomy. Strategic expertise requires the ability to apply analytical thinking, problem solving, issues management and strategic planning. Professionalism is, however, not based solely on strategic expertise. At the heart of professionalism there are the core values that guide the PR practice on individual, professional and organisational levels. It is neither pure management of theoretical knowledge separate from practice nor is it value-free strategising and implementation. Instead it is an interactive combination of implementation, strategic expertise guided by the values of respect, responsibility and reflexivity.

4.5 Conclusions and confusions

The second phase of this research included an interpretative study of concept. This study, first reviewed how textbooks and research articles have explained what PR expertise is, its role in organisations and what is considered to be good PR. From various definitions and research findings it then formulated an interpretation of what PR professionalism is in the eyes of PR academics.

A symmetrical worldview has been said to be the basis for ethical PR because it aims at combining the interests of an organisation and its publics (Grunig 2000; Grunig & Grunig 1996) and enhancing democracy (Verčič et al. 1996, 62). However, the symmetrical worldview and PR's role as an advocate of common good have been widely questioned. If PR works for the public interest is it then neglecting the client organisation's interests and vice versa? Position as a management function is likewise both desired and rejected in PR literature although the challengers of the idea clearly form a minority. The debate seems never-ending and juxtaposition unsolvable. These issues are connected to the question of power relations which divides opinions and due to the lack of profound research it remains exactly as that: a matter of an opinion.

Stepping aside from this debate and examining the arguments it seems that both sides are claiming that PR should enable the functioning of the organisation and help an organisation to communicate with others in a way that it promotes respect, responsibility and reflexivity. Respect, responsibility and reflexivity are also the core principles according to which PR should be practiced. Thus, PR's goal as such can be considered to be ethical even disconnected from the question of whose interests the profession is serving.

The issue of whose interests PR is serving follows the same meta-trends that can be seen in profession studies and science in general: the modernist approach is attacked by critical and postmodern scholars, and positivists and interpretivists are infinitely on opposite sides. Although science and "real life" are interconnected the on-going debate among PR academics, this raises the question how the PR professionals themselves perceive this problematic.

This subordinate study has set the scope for the next phase of the research. How does the picture of PR professionalism look in "real life" from the perspective of the practitioner? Key themes regarding PR professionalism that rose from the conceptual framework – PR's area of expertise and what PR aims at, PR's position and societal role, and ethics of PR – were discussed in this subordinate study but they need to be deepened through empirical research: The academic views presented in this subordinate study are mainly based on research and, more specifically, mainly on empirical investigations. Thus they are not just results of scholars' imagination. However, similar to the different approaches that appear among researchers, it can be assumed that also PR practitioners have different views. The main question that the preceding subordinate study directs to the next subordinate study is what kind of different perceptions PR practitioners have regarding the issues of interest in this research.

5 PHASE III: PR PROFESSIONALS' POINT OF VIEW

FIGURE 15 Focus of Chapter 5

This chapter presents the findings from the interview study among 37 Finnish PR experts who work in a variety of private, public and non-profit organisations. The semi-structured interviews included questions about the position, tasks and goals of Public Relations in the interviewees' current organisation, and questions about how the interviewee perceives expertise and professionalism in Public Relations. The interview questions were derived from the research questions which were constituted based on previous phases of the research. The research questions for this subordinate study were:

- How do the interviewees (PR professionals in Finland) perceive PR's role as an expert function?
- How do the interviewees perceive the meaning of PR for the organisation?
- How do the interviewees perceive the difference between professional and unprofessional PR practice?
- What are the critical aspects that separate interviewees' qualitatively different ways of perceiving professional PR?

The opening three sections report on the most important categories of meanings that were construed during the analysis. Section 5.1 concentrates on the experienced and desired position of PR. Section 5.2 shifts the focus to what PR aims at and what it produces. Section 5.3 deals with the interviewees' perceptions regarding professionalism in PR, discussing the issues of competence, quality and ethics. The interviewees' perceptions regarding the nature of expertise are discussed in Section 5.4.

Section 5.5 takes the analysis further and presents the outcome space of the qualitatively different ways of thinking which seem to guide PR professionals in their work. Finally, the Section 5.6 sums up the main conclusions, and points out some issues that require further investigation.

5.1 Perceptions on the position of PR

This section discusses the position of PR regarding its hierarchical location and relation to the management of the organisation. Besides the question of whether or not PR has a place at decision-making tables, the interviewees were asked what affects the position of PR in their organisation and in case they were unhappy about the position how they think it could be improved.

5.1.1 Importance of the position in the decision-making tables

Seventeen of the interviewees told that the PR manager is a member of the board of management, and one specified that the PR manager is member of a lower level management team. Eight interviewees have a right to be present in the meetings of the board of management, and two act as secretaries of the management team. Eleven interviewees had no access to the decision-making tables. However, five report to the top manager. In addition, one interviewee mentioned that the responsibility of PR issues had been appointed to a certain member of the board of management but that person was not a PR manager. In one case, the issue of whether or not the PR manager sits at the decision-making table was not mentioned during the interview although issues regarding position of PR were discussed.

TABLE 11 Position of PR manager in the interviewee's organisation

Relation to the board of management	
Member	17
Access to the meetings	8
No access to the board meetings but reporting to the top manager	5
No access to the board meetings and no not reporting to the top manager	6
Missing information	1

The perception regarding the importance of being a member of or having access to the top management team seems to vary among the interviewees. There were those who expressed that it is – or would be – important to "sit at the decision-making table" because PR is understood as part of the management of the organisation.

> I'd say that it [role] is important in that way that it [PR] is an essential support function, that it is part of the managing. Meaning, we have communication manager who is a member of the board of management and through that very much involved in all decision making. (F12, PR expert, B2C private sector)

> I try to say that PR is not some kind of management's headquarter unit which would just serve the management but it is part of management, it participates the process of how this 'boutique' is taken forward. (M3, PR manager, public sector)

> I know colleagues and organisations and I have worked in different kind of organisations… it is not self-evident that the position or meaning or role or function of communications would be understood. But here it is exceptionally well… Like there are not many obstacles for doing this job. This offers a great opportunity for communication practitioner, and it means that you have very free hands to construct the communications in this house. (M26, PR manager, public sector)

The importance of the place at the decision-making table is reasoned e.g. by emphasising that communication is a "life and death question for any organisation", that PR could have stronger role in "enhancing business", and that significance of PR would increase if more power would be invested in it.

> Of course the greater power communications is given the greater is also the significance of communications. And if we believe it has significance it endogenously also gives it more significance. And then it also influences more. (F24, PR manager, B2B private sector)

There is, however, no shared opinion among PR experts that PR should be part of organisation's management team or what PR should be doing there. Although many prefer positioning PR among the decision-makers not all see the place in top management team so necessary or desirable. For instance, one interviewee expressed she was not sure what her "contribution in the board of management" could be. Another approach seems to be that not being member of the board of management is "not big problem or a bottleneck" because main thing is to be aware of what is going on in the organisation.

One perception seems to be that the formal position is irrelevant because PR mainly needs information in order to do its job.

> Of course it affects to some things but it is not relevant regarding doing this job. Regarding doing this job it is essential to be informed about things, and for that it is enough to be present [in the meetings of the board of management]. (F35, PR manager, B2B private sector)

> I'd see that it is not an obstacle to the functioning of communications that I don't sit in the board of management. When one takes one's own responsibility that one remembers to ask for news, of course all around the organisation but also from own boss and colleagues. (F33, PR manager, B2C private sector)

The above comments suggest that PR needs information in order to be able to take care of its tasks, which gives an impression of PR being its own functional silo and not necessarily interacting much with other functional areas. PR manager is a link between top management and PR unit and he or she focuses on applying strategically important information to PR tasks.

> And we can say our opinion about any issue in those meetings, that it is not just a right to listen but right to participate those meetings. But then it is expected that you understand in your own area of responsibility that what you heard in those meetings and use it in your communication practice. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

> In our organisation communications is very independent and appreciated unit or function. Wider policies are approved by management but otherwise communications does the operations rather independently. (F20, PR manager, non-profit)

Also expressions like "bring PR issues to the board of management […] so that they would know what I do do around here", having "space to act" and PR being not only support function but doing "also independent and proactive planning" suggest a relatively independent position. Opposite to this would be the situation where PR would not have space to act, PR issues as such would not be worth presenting to the top management, and PR would operate under some other function's supervision and control.

Another perception which sees formal position irrelevant is reasoned differently: a formal place in the board of management is not necessary if PR is in close relation to the top management and involved in the management processes.

> The question is not really about whether the PR person is in the board of management or being close to the top manager. The representation in the board of management isn't necessarily… of course it is magnificent if you are there automatically but even more important is that you are really inside in the operations and involved in management processes, as what happens in the heads and imagination and visions of the management. Actually we [PR field] have stumbled to this that we think that only then we have the mandate to operate when we are in the board of management. We'll never get that justification if we don't first […] prove the value and added value of our actions. (F7, PR expert, B2C private sector)

> We have board of management of the concern and I'm kind of a hang around member there so that I sit in every other meeting or every meeting depending what things they deal with. I think it is useless to sit in them if they don't deal with things in which PR has something to give. I think the formal set up is rather insignificant. What matters is the CEO and CEO's relation to communications. The CEO's interest in communications. (M16, PR manager, B2B private sector)

This approach turns the attention to integrating PR to the operations of the organisation: place in the decision-making table or close relation to the management is important in order to utilise what PR has to offer. This approach could be called an "integrating view" since the emphasis is in applying PR to the management and operations of the organisation and not the other way around as with the above described "independence view".

What these different approaches to the position of PR reveal is that besides the accounts the interviewees come up with there is at least one more factor that affects the position of PR: the PR expert's view about PR. Two approaches were identified: "independence view" and "integrating view". In both approaches a place at the decision-making table would be beneficial but not indispensable. However, the reasoning is different. For those who represent the independence view a place in top management team would guarantee having all necessary information for running the PR function. For the representatives of the integrating view PR is part of managing the organisation and thus the place in the decision-making tables is seen important but not imperative if PR is otherwise strongly involved in the management processes.

5.1.2 Factors that affect the position of PR

The interviewees were asked to explain why they think the position of PR is what it is in their organisations. In those cases when the interviewee expressed that the position of PR is not what it should be, the interviewees were asked how they think the situation could be improved. The perceptions regarding aspects that have affected the current position and those with which the situation could be affected were heavily overlapping and thus the "explained by" and "improving" categories were combined into "affecting factors".

The eight factors affecting the position of PR are: (1) effects of PR, (2) level of PR expertise, (3) character of PR expert, (4) resources, (5) organisational structure, (6) organisational culture, (7) management's view about PR, and (8) PR's importance in the field where the organisation operates. The first three factors relate to the PR expert, and the outcomes of PR. Factors 4–7 focus on the organisation: how well the top management or other actors in the organisation understand the role and meaning of PR, how organisational culture and the structure of the organisation affect to the position, and how much resources are available. The last factor looks at affecting aspects from wider perspective, i.e. the environment, in which the organisation operates.

There was also a comment where luck was mentioned as one of the reasons why PR has reached a good position in the organisation:

> It has really taken courage and holistic view, and luck and right people. (M4, PR manager, B2C private sector)

Luck refers to coincidences and as such it is a factor that cannot be controlled – unexpected incidents may happen and they may have positive or negative impacts. However, all the other factors are issues that can be influenced, although some perhaps more arduously than others. Since the aim here is to find out what kind of aspects affect and can be affected, coincidences are left out of this categorisation.

The factors are partly interrelated: improving one influences the other. For example, tight resources affect to the results of the work which affect to the general view regarding PR. But improving general appreciation for PR happens through showing effects of PR which will eventually bring more resources.

> Resources. If you have pretty hard goals but no resources to perform, either money to perform properly or time to perform properly, it will surely suffer from that. Communi-

> cations is somewhat invisible so that nobody necessarily knows what se are doing here. Like that will of course show rather quickly if something goes wrong but then again it won't necessarily show if everything always goes nice and well and so. So I would say that from our perspective it is the resource side. [continues to how to improve the situation] Not by complaining but by doing things so that is will be noticed and that way the appreciation is built, and like I think that it is kind of a snowball effect that it will produce results also. Then it will be shown in the resources and everything else as well. (F32, PR manager, B2C private sector)

Resources – tight, sufficient or abundant – are one of the four organisation-related explanations for the position of PR. Size of the organisation and the level of hierarchy or complexity, constitute a factor called *organisational structure*. It was also suggested that the top management should give more clear guidelines to what are the tasks of PR. This is categorised under organisational structure because there the emphasis is on management clarifying the division of work. *Organisational culture* relates to such explanations where the position is seen as a result of traditions or lack of those, general attitudes and appreciation regarding PR function, foreign parent company's management culture, outdated thinking etc.

> Our parent company is a German family enterprise, which traditionally are not telling about their own matters because they have no such duty, their culture in communication affects on some level. (F36, PR manager, B2B private sector)

> Ministry is as an organisation rather old-fashioned. […] a business life model marketing communication is really difficult to get through. The operational culture of ministry and extending communications to an essential part of it, it takes awfully lot of time and it requires even change of generation. (M19, PR manager, public sector)

> It [position of PR] depends on who you ask. Traditionally I'd say that the position of PR hasn't been good here, and partly, or quite largely it is not understood what PR does. There is in certain way very old-fashioned way of thinking here. (F35, PR manager, B2B private sector)

These kinds of comments describe how PR seems to be perceived in general in the organisation, whereas the category *management's view about PR* implies that the key to PR's position is in the hands of the top management.

> Most essential in this kind of role is that who sits in the corner office. Meaning, the top management. (M26, PR manager, public sector)

> Our CEO has always understood that things are not as they are but as they appear. That with communications… that there is no decision without communication. Nothing can be done without communication, and the image of the company is constituted through communication. Everything starts from the CEO and that he understands that this is like part of extremely… extremely significant part of making business. (F34, PR manager, B2B private sector)

Management's perception and the category *PR's importance in the field where the organisation operates* are strongly interconnected factors. The latter category includes those situations where the organisation's license to operate requires constant efforts to achieving and maintaining trust and acceptance, and also those situations where communication is central part of organisations basic mission. For instance, the PR expert of a non-profit organisation whose mission is public education explains the strong position of PR through the field and mission of the organisation. PR is considered important because it is central part of what this kind of organisations do, in other words, PR is important because of the field where we operate. The quotation below on the other hand gives an example of a situation where the importance of good reputation is pivotal to the organisation and this is understood well by the top management.

> Reputation management is central strategic issue for this organisation, like also corporate social responsibility matters are strategic issues for us. And they [top management] wanted to raise the weight of these, and therefore they appointed to a board of management a member who is responsible for communications and is thus dealing with reputation management and at the same time responsible for corporate social responsibility issues. So it was a strategic reasoning. I'm not trying to say that it was due to my attractive personality or something like that. (M22, PR and CSR manager, non-profit)

> It [PR] is well instilled in the minds of the management, the meaning of it. Maybe partly because of these challenging times where when the media approaches us it is not necessarily coming to flatter and cherish us but a bit differently, and maybe that catalyzes it so that they seek for help from company's communications. (F33, PR manager, B2B private sector)

Management's understanding and support and, on the other hand, their leaning on the expertise of PR professionals for instance in dealing with media, are emphasised in many interviews. Some interviewees also indicated that there can be cases where the management does not understand the strategic value of PR.

> Maybe it is the old views… that it [communications] is just some pieces of paper on the notice board. […] Maybe men with technical background who have been on this kind of field for a long time haven't thought much that communications would be something significant. (F25, PR manager, B2C private sector)

> […] management has to understand or see that this is important. If they don't see it important then it is of course communication expert's task to try to market it. And sell. And starting point to my understanding is that it is sold by what is the use of communication to that particular organisation, its strategy and taking it forward. (F5, PR manager, public sector)

The advice here is logical: it is PR's job to make them understand, and this is done by telling what PR is worth. This crucial factor, showing the "effects of PR", comes up in many interviews.

> First of all I'd say that in this kind of organisation the position needs to be strong. If it is not then probably they'd change the PR manager. It just is so in consumer business in my opinion. That communication is needed all the time. And the other thing is that the organisation has to be able to respond to the call, and we have to know our profession and understand the business and its needs, and not just live in some ivory tower and do communication because of communication. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

> It's affected directly by how much PR has to give. If we stay in that mode that we just fix grammar then there won't be genuine demand for us. Again, it is about having certain level of understanding about the business. We don't have to consult the management about how they run the business but we have to understand what they are talking about so that we can get the

> situation and are able to offer our own professional communications help in that current situation. I think that is the core: sufficient understanding. And my default value is that our communication people are communication professionals. But then this point of view, it requires bothering, and kind of jumping. For instance, in our company we are still in the middle of restructuring and responding to the challenges of the environment, and there is a long way ahead before we are 'one concern'. There communications should be able to act as a change agent. (F33, PR manager, B2B private sector)

In the last quotation, the PR manager is saying that PR should have "something to give" and this demands "sufficient understanding" of the substance of the organisation to be able to connect the communication expertise to the particular situation. It is self-evident to this interviewee that communication specialists know their own profession but the key questions are how well they can connect their knowledge to what is needed in the organisation. The earlier quotation puts this in other words: communications should not be practiced out of any joy of communicating. Instead, communication – or public relations – is needed because the organisation needs to be able to respond to the demands of the consumers and the environment, and in order to be able to help in that, PR experts need to understand both their own profession and the business of the organisation they are serving.

Ability to connect to the functions and mission of the organisation is understood here as a crucial element of PR expertise. Different perceptions on what is regarded as expertise are analysed further in the section 5.4. Here the category "level of PR expertise" includes basic PR competences, acting professionally, strategic thinking and ability to link PR to the functions of the organisation, and understanding the substance of the organisation's core business. Some interviewees talk specifically about PR manager's expertise when explaining what has affected the position of PR in their organisations. Others speak in general about PR professional or use passive form. While many talk about competences or knowledge some interviewees express that PR expert's personality may affect to the position of PR. Some see the PR manager as the key person and some refer more generally to "us" as PR professionals. These accounts are categorised as "character of the PR expert".

> I have to say that I have thought about how much it is about the person. I can of course only talk about myself, but my way of stating something… that does it immediately raise the hair stand even though I think I'm presenting perfectly good thing, like that when we talk about the mission and vision it would be good that everybody would talk it about the same way... whereas sometimes going after a long day and many other adversities, and strike the fist on the table and shout bloody hell now you do as I say! (F14, PR manager, B2B private sector)

> If you would be really quiet or shy… here you have to be quite tough of course. […] It takes certain kind of grasp, courage to bring up your issues. (F25, PR manager, B2C private sector)

> The first PR manager [name of the organisation and the PR manager] … I think he was as a character, or he took care of things so that he was entitled to vote and he was involved in the work. As a person he was influential. He was involved… he had like a hidden power. (F28, PR expert, public sector)

> Many times the people who gravitate to the PR field are people who don't want to in-

> fluence or don't want power or don't feel that they would as communication people be users of power although it is that to the greatest extent. {…] Then most important would be to get PR people themselves somehow empowered to understand their position and just briskly take their place. (F8, PR manager, public sector)

As shown in the last of these quotations, the PR professional's attitude towards power can be seen having an affect on the way the PR expert perceives the profession and its role. Accordingly, PR's position could be improved by influencing the PR professionals' view on PR, power and themselves. The issue of PR professional's personality and perception regarding power shows the need to pay more attention to the different approaches PR professionals have regarding the importance of the place in the management team.

5.1.3 Key to the adequate position

Secion 5.1.1 discussed PR professionals' perceptions on the importance of a place in a management team. Two different approaches, independence view and integrating view, were found. Then in the section 5.1.2 the attention was focused on which aspects affect to the position of PR or how the position could be changed. Eight categories were construed.

TABLE 12 Factors affecting PR's position

Factor	Weakens	Strengthens
Professional factors		
Effects of PR	failures in proving the results	success in proving the results
PR expert's level of competence	low	high
PR expert's character	unfit to the context	fit to the context
PR expert's view on PR's position	low expectations	high expectations
Organisational factors		
Resources (financial and human)	tight resources	sufficient or good resources
Organisational structure	complex structure	clear structure
	high level of hierarchy	low level of hierarchy
Organisational culture	closed culture	open culture
	old-fashioned thinking	fresh thinking
	lack of PR tradition	strong PR tradition
Management's view	low expectations	high expectations
Environmental factors		
PR's importance in the field	low	high

The explanations behind independence and integrative views can also be seen as justifying the management's choice of whether to include PR manager in the top management team or not: if both the top management and the PR manager see the role of PR same way, either arrangement seems to be satisfying. However, it is also possible that PR professional has lower expectations regarding the position of PR than the management has or should have. Therefore, the crucial question in defining PR's position is what different actors are expecting from PR function and how well the expectations fit together with each other or to the situation of the organisation regarding challenges set by its operational environment.

PR professionals view on the importance of the position within the top management team can thus be added as one of the factors that affect the position. Each of the affecting factors may weaken or strengthen the position of PR. Factors can be divided to three main groups: professional, organisational and environmental factors. Professional factors include effects of PR, level of PR expertise, character of PR expert and PR expert's view on importance of the position. Organisational factors include resources, organisational structure and culture, and management's view on PR. Environmental factor includes the field where the organisation operates.

As mentioned earlier, these factors are interrelated and sometimes overlapping. However, they help to grasp the complex nature of PR's position and how it could be affected in case the situation is not satisfactory. Several factors –PR's effects, PR expert's view on PR, management's view on PR, and partly the organisational culture – are related to PR's contribution and how it is understood by different actors. Therefore, the key to PR's position is found from the expectations for and objectives of PR function.

5.2 What does PR deal with?

The interviewees were asked what the most important objectives for PR are in their current organisations and what kind of added value PR is producing. They were also asked to describe the challenges and trends of PR on more general level. This section reports the findings regarding these issues and interprets the different perceptions on what PR aims at.

5.2.1 What does PR produce?

While talking about the most important objectives of PR in their current organisations, the interviewees sometimes mentioned the concrete tasks of PR and sometimes the aims of PR. Also, some interviewees widened the perspective from specific organisation to more general level. Therefore, the categories formulated from the data are partly on different abstraction level and somewhat overlapping. For instance, influencing was mentioned as an objective of PR but it can also be understood as a process which aims at more specific goals.

The question about the added value of PR brought up very similar answers than the question about the objectives. In the first round of analysis the categorisation was made based on how the interviewees describe the phenomenon in question, and not yet analysed further. During subsequent rounds of analysis, overlapping categories were combined and developed further. This section, first, describes how the conceptions of the interviewees regarding the objectives and the added value of PR were categorised. Then it explains how these two overlapping themes were combined into goals of PR.

Objectives of PR

The first categories for the objectives of PR were (1) supporting the core business of the organisation (commercial business as well as promoting a cause or an ideology), (2) supporting the management, (3) supporting the communicativeness of the organisation, (4) supporting satisfaction within the organisation, (5) constructing identity, (6) gaining "license to operate", (7) managing the reputation of the organisation, (8) influencing, (9) facilitating and promoting dialogue, and (10) formulating and delivering messages.

The category "supporting business" refers to such comments which indicate that PR has direct impact on the core business of the organisation which ever the mission of the organisation is. The category could also be labelled as executing the mission of the organisation. In some cases this means that PR is considered to have impact on the profits of the organisation. In other cases this means that PR is one of the core functions.

> Our main goal is to make our product […] known and wanted within the schools. (F15, Communication specialist, non-profit)

> Communication for its part implements the mission of the whole organisation. […] the actual goals of this organisation which communication is then realising. (M3, PE manager, public sector)

> Well, it is a cliché but true, our main goal is definitely supporting business. Company has vision and goals and we must be able to support those directly. Otherwise we cannot justify our existence. (F7, Communication expert, B2B private sector)

Supporting the management of the organisation, supporting the organisation by affecting its communicativeness, and supporting the satisfaction within the organisation are intertwined and partly overlapping categories which all aim at establishing and maintaining well-functioning organisation.

> In internal communication our goal is to create commitment, or as they say, engagement among personnel. And over all in this company we aim at unified procedures. We talk about 'one X' [the company's name] like everybody these days talk about one this and one that. We try to promote that thinking. (F35, Communication manager, B2B private sector)

> A central goal is in recruiting so that we get here good experts, and we take good care of them. And we aim at maintaining well-fare at workplace in communication means. So that people would have the needed information to do their job. (F30, PR manager, public sector)

Increasing motivation and engagement were considered as part of supporting management of the organisation because these are clearly management tasks which aim at running the organisation towards its goals.

The following quotation is a good example of how PR is part of macro-management by communicating "our way of doing things" and constructing organisational culture.

> Internally the starting point is that if communications function well then people know what they should do and thus we need much less micro-managing. Company needs to have a strategy, and the company has values and policies, and we have "our" [company's name] values and we have "our"-way, kind of the corporate culture, and it is defined. […] And all this we try to communicate to the personnel and if we succeed in that, when we take care well of this kind of macro-management then we don't have to micro-manage and watch behind the shoulder what somebody is doing but people feel that they know this is our way of doing things and this is where we are going, and automatically all we are doing goes to the right direction. We don't have to have a manual-culture or a kind of command-culture like in American culture has. And that is a huge change of culture to many people who come from, let's say traditional Anglo-Saxon management culture which is rather hierarchical, or from traditional Asian culture where also the boss is boss. And as well known, our company is in that sense Finnish that also as a superior you have to earn the respect and only then you can act. […] A Finn does not do anything unless one understands, and our people won't do anything unless they understand why something is to be done. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

One of the objectives of PR is – as implicitly included in the above comment – constructing organisational identity. The interviewees mentioned concepts like creating unity and cohesion, improving being recognisable, constructing strong corporate culture and so on. Identity seems to be constructed by very concrete actions, for instance by visual or conceptual signs and symbols, or by more profound constitution of shared values and beliefs.

> It [organisation] needs to be recognisable and then […] and recognisability is constituted through two ways. It builds on concepts and it is around us also visually. But maybe the concepts are more central elements. (M26, PR manager, public sector)

> […] we are in the situation that we have bought new companies and we have to start from beginning, like, let's see who we have in this company. Actually what is nice and challenging here is that I am building a kind of communicative identity for this company. That is like the main goal here for me. And for others it is to sell. (F25, PR manager, B2C private sector)

> If I think external communications, there our goal is that all people around the world would know us [name of the company] and our products. But that is not enough these days. People want to feel good when they buy some company's products and in that way we also aim at telling a lot about who we are as a company. What kind of corporate responsibility activities we have regarding the environment and regarding all these responsibility areas and so. Meaning, we aim at telling very largely about what our organisation is. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

The last quotation also reveals the CSR (corporate social responsibility) issues. Telling about what the organisation does regarding these issues is part of the identity work and reputation management which ultimately aim at building trust and acceptance, or, as some interviewees articulate it, license to operate.

> […] in our field trust is everything. We have to be able to react to all possible doubts and wrong doings immediately, and correct this kind of things. […] in this business loosing the credibility equals suicide. (M22, PR and CSR manager, non-profit)

> […] one is the license to operate. When you operate in the field where the world in no means is simple, with good PR you can kind of reclaim the license to do your business. (M16, PR manager, B2B private sector)

> […] to support and take care of the reputation of this company as a reliable actor in this field. In our field the reliability is everything. We highlight in all our communication that the company does its part of the business in this field as well as humanly possible. That is our main goal at the moment. (F24, PR manager, B2B private sector)

Good reputation was mentioned many times as an objective of PR. Comments that relate to reputation highlight the vulnerability of the reputation because operating in the field where the legitimacy of the organisation might be easily challenged. In other cases the interviewees refer to promoting desired image or simply getting publicity, promoting being known or managing the processes of public sphere.

The category "influencing" was formulated based on comments that refer to affecting to the thoughts or behaviour of stakeholders, general public decision makers or customers.

> And one of our goals is to influence the general opinion so that they would affect politicians and others [decision makers]. (F9, PR manager, non-profit)

> […] It is quite of an arduous work to make them understand that they should be interested in our issues. […] Lobbying is important for us. We don't put our efforts so much in media publicity because we feel that it is important to visit the 'corner offices' to meet other important gentlemen. We have not so much, or actually we have recently woken up to realise that we should be seen more in the media as well. (F14, PR manager, B2B private sector)

Influencing customers included, on the other hand, comments which referred directly to marketing and sales, and, on the other hand, comments which related to influencing customers more indirectly.

> In the end it's about getting customers. (F21, PR manager, non-profit)

> […] we are about to introduce some prominent services, and launching those… we will be involved in marketing those. Of course they will do real traditional marketing also but we can be there to support that. (F14, PR manager, B2B private sector)

> Our most important goal has to do with the customer communication, that the people would get the information. We have the statutory obligation to inform. (F17, PR manager, public sector)

As in the above quotation, customer communication can also be rather more informative than marketing oriented. One category for the objectives of PR was labelled as formulating and delivering messages. This category consists of comments which refer to informing, guiding people to the sources of information, and getting message through.

> Compared to the companies our wishes regarding what kind of action the information sets off may be very different. We don't hope that people rush into the shop to buy something. Instead, our hope may be that people start to think. In business world this might not be desired at all, that people would start to think, but it's enough that they rush into the shop. But in our communications – well, it might be still a bit idealistic thought but for us the wish is that is should – at least when we talk about decision making – it should raise some kind of thoughts in the counterparty. And it doesn't matter if it is sometimes even a bit negative towards the organisation, in order to get the process started and different point of views in the game and then start to develop it. (M1, PR manager, public sector)

Although sometimes mentioned as an objective, informing is merely a mean which aims at some more specified behaviour or result. In the excerpt above, delivering information aims at raising thoughts and generating interaction. This and similar comments together with comments that directly mention dialogue were categorised as facilitating and promoting dialogue although the concept dialogue was not always used by the interviewee. The issue of dialogue or interaction was brought up by some interviewees but not all. From those who did not mention dialogue by themselves, the researcher asked how they perceive the role of dialogue or interactivity in PR in their organisations. Some saw dialogue as "underdeveloped" or something they are working on. Some considered it very important or commented that communication is "all about interaction". However, when looking at the answers more carefully, it seems that there are at least two ways of thought regarding dialogue: one sees dialogue as conversation whereas the other understands any two-way information exchange, including any form of collecting feedback, as dialogue. It looks like the general approaches regarding communications among these interviewees can be divided into three groups: one focuses in mainly "broadcasting", one-way oriented communication, the other group sees getting feedback or answering to questions as dialogue, and the third group understands dialogue as open conversation and/or taking care of the long-term relationship.

Added value

The question "what kind of added value PR provides for the organisation" brought more perspectives to the issue of what PR aims at. The concept "added value" appeared to be difficult for some of the interviewees and in these cases the question was re-phrased for instance by asking how the organisation benefits from PR function's efforts. The answers dealt with (1) well-functioning organisation, (2) internal cohesion and understanding, (3) supporting the strategy of the organisation, (4) reputation benefits, (5) license to operate, (6) direct financial value and (7) communication being a value as such.

Combining the objectives and the added value

Since both added value and the main objectives of PR describe the same issue, the categories were naturally largely overlapping, and thus it was logical to combine them. The combined categories are called goals of PR.

It was concluded that the objectives of "supporting the core business of the organisation" and the added values of "supporting the strategy of the organisation" and "producing direct financial results" actually all tell about a same thing which was labelled as a goal of "achieving the basic mission of the organisation".

One of the mentioned added values of PR was well-functioning organisation. Original objectives of "supporting the management" and "supporting the satisfaction within the organisation" were considered belonging together with this, and they were combined into a goal labelled "well-functioning organisation". Indeed, many of the objectives of PR – like identity and reputation – could also be understood as sub-categories of this goal. However, what is meant here relates to the more basic level infrastructure aspects: processes that make the organisation function smoothly and members of the organisation in general satisfied with procedures.

Aspects that deal with organisational self-understanding or identity came up as a strong theme while talking about both objectives and added value. Interviewees mentioned concepts like internal cohesion and understanding, and constructing unity, organisational culture, common identity, feeling of togetherness or commitment to the organisation. These expressions refer to having strong shared organisational identity, that is, a common understanding about who we are as an organisation. This goal was labelled as "identity".

Closely related to the idea of shared identity are the reputation related comments interviewees expressed both while talking about objectives and while describing the added value of PR. They were talking about benefits of good reputation, desired image, and being known. PR aims at helping the organisation to gain and maintain positive reputation, and manage publicity. The focus there is to be known the way organisation is (or wants to be). This goal was labelled as "reputation".

In relation to both objectives and added value some interviewees brought up the issue of license to operate. License to operate relates to the acceptance of the actions of the organisation and PR may have role in helping to gain understanding and trust of the stakeholders or general public, and helping the organisation to understand the expectations of publics. This category was labelled as "legitimacy and accountability" because these intertwined issues describe this goal more deeply than just gaining license to operate which as an expression seems too narrow and focused mainly to convincing publics about the acceptability of the organisation's actions.

The objectives of formulating and delivering messages, facilitating and promoting dialogue and supporting communicative organisation were merged and combined with the viewpoint that PR is not producing any added value but is value as such. Together these approaches form the category labelled as "communicative organisation".

> I think that, no, we are not producing any added value because in my opinion we produce value. […] There is a difference in thinking, it's probably most often the case that people think that communications produce some added value but I think it should be that what value we produce. Because basically all communications… all that we do is communicating and everybody in our management […] should have the idea behind that everything they do include communication and that as such should already produce value. (F18, PR specialist, B2B private sector)

In the following longer excerpt from an interview discussion between the researcher and PR manager who works in municipality administration it is shown how the conception of the interviewee regarding the goals of PR developed during the conversation. The researcher repeats with slightly different words what the interviewee had just said and the interviewee continues with the thought. Then the researcher brings up an issue which the interviewee had mentioned earlier, and the interviewee elaborates their thoughts and comes up with a new way of articulating the issue.

> R (researcher): What are the goals of communications?
>
> I (interviewee, M1): Well, it's the delivering of information and basically it goes down to such things as […] the atmosphere of the organisation and is it pleasant to be working there, all these things, they all are intertwined with communications. Communications is a support function, it helps in practice with any issue.
>
> R: Help for all ills?
>
> I: As crazy as it sounds but that's the way it is. People are made for talking. Or the whole society is based on communicating, one way or the other.
>
> R: Ok, any organisation is based on communicating but what then is the communications professional's… if everybody are communicating, what then does the communications professional bring to it?
>
> I: Well, it is maybe what I might have mentioned, that it is precisely about finding clarity and digging up the essential from entireties.
>
> R: And you mentioned being a watchdog…
>
> I: Yes. And at least I have found that as the most difficult task. […] Since, we don't have the criteria, unless we first set them by ourselves. The communications professionals, hey, maybe that is it, communications professional's task is to set criteria of good communications for one's organisation. (M1, PR manager, public sector)

The point of view that communications is inseparable part of all functions of any organisation is presented in this excerpt as well as in many other interviews. Organisation cannot function without communication:

> I think it produces enormously added value. […] It's not just about the image but I think the whole practical functioning. That the organisation cannot function properly if communications is not well taken care of. (F17, PR manager, public sector)

On the one hand the interviewees highlight the importance of taking care of the communication infrastructure and that people get the information they need. These aspects can be seen as basic elements of a communicative organisation but for some interviewees it seems to mean more: being communicatively competitive, and that communication and its meaning are well understood and appreciated throughout the organisation.

> We want to be also communicatively the leading actor in the field. (F32, PR manager, B2C private sector)

It is clear that the goals of PR are intertwined and overlapping. The quote below could refer to supporting the well-functioning organisation (giving consultative advice to managers in internal communication), constructing identity (feeling of togetherness) or communicative organisation (information flow and management understanding their responsibilities for communications).

> The added value is that people know where we [the organisation] are and where we are going. […] Widely speaking, communications is not just the task of the PR unit but it is the managers who are primarily responsible for internal communication. We are just there to help them. And I think that is a responsibility that the managers can't delegate totally. They can kind of buy consultative advices but the responsibility is on all the managers. So, with that they build the kind of feeling of belonging together and the spirit. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

To conclude, the new categories of goals of PR are: (1) achieving the basic mission of the organisation, (2) well-functioning organisation, (3) identity, (4) reputation, (5) legitimacy and accountability, and (6) communicative organisation. In Table 13, the left column lists the combined categories re-labelled as goals of PR and the right column explains the content of the categories.

The original objectives "influencing" and "formulating and delivering messages" were merged into the other goals because they rather describe processes than goals of PR: influencing or messages per se are not ends but rather means to an end and they are used in order to achieve the above mentioned goals.

TABLE 13 Goals of PR – categories of meanings combined from the themes of objectives and added value of PR

Category	Content
Achieving the basic mission of the organisation	supporting organisation's basic mission and strategy; promoting mission or ideology; gaining profit for the company; supporting being market leader; supporting growth; affecting stock value
Well-functioning organisation	supporting functioning of the organisation; communicating mission and vision; supporting managing the organisation; facilitating change; developing and renewing the organisation; scanning the markets to detect changes; helping to minimise risks; getting resources for the organisation; increasing motivation; increasing engagement; developing well-fare at workplace; supporting satisfaction of the members
Identity	to know who we are; building internal cohesion and understanding building strong identity; building organisational culture; building unity; creating commitment; increasing recognisability; profiling; brand management
Reputation	managing reputation; to be known as we are; reputation benefits; gaining desired image; managing processes in public sphere; promoting being known
Legitimacy and accountability	gaining acceptance; communicating CSR; communicating the accountability of the organisation; building trust; building credibility for the organisation
Communicative organisation	communication as a value per se; promoting open dialogue; getting people thinking and discussing; offering possibilities for discussion ; taking care of communication channels and processes; supporting internal communication; interpreting expert language; supporting communication of the substance experts; setting quality criteria for organisation's communication

5.2.2 Challenges and trends that shape PR practice

The interviewees were asked to describe the challenges of PR and how they think the field is going to develop in future. During the analysis it was noticed that the answers were intertwined: while describing the future trends the interviewees were many times talking about what kind of challenges they think PR field is facing, and when describing current challenges the interviewees sometimes mentioned issues that relate to the development of the field. During the further analysis challenges and trends were interpreted together and the categories were reorganised. This section presents first shortly the general categories of both challenges and trends of PR and focuses then on interpretation of the combined categories.

Perceived challenges were first grouped into following categories: PR tasks and expertise, information flow, media and social media, the organisation where PR is practiced, and societal trends. When talking about the future trends of PR the interviewees mentioned, issues that relate concretely to PR tasks and competences, shifting focus of the job, organisation where PR is practiced, information age, changes in media field, and societal trends.

The left-hand column in Table 14 lists the categories of challenging issues the interviewees mentioned PR is currently facing. The right column explains the content of the categories by listing what kind of comments each category includes. The challenging issues of PR field are: (1) developing new methods for PR practice, (2) showing the results and quality of PR practice, (3) clarifying and strengthening different roles and focus of PR, (4) integrating to the strategy and functions of the organisation, (5) strengthening the position of PR as an expert function, (6) helping organisation to adjust to and benefit from the circumstances of information age, (7) keeping up to date with expertise in public sphere processes, and 8) reflecting, and responding to societal trends and changes.

TABLE 14 Challenging issues for PR expertise – categories of meanings combined from the themes of challenges and trends of PR

Category	**Content**
Developing competences and methods for PR practice	demands for broad competence profile; new channels; fragmented publics; meeting expectations of stakeholders; influencing; reflecting
Showing the results and quality of PR practice	measuring results
Clarifying and strengthening different roles and focus of PR	shifting focus in the field; different roles of PR become more clear; change communication; reputation management; CSR; everybody communicates and thus coaching role becomes stronger; focus in dialogue and relationships
Strengthening the position of PR as an expert function	integrating to the strategy and other functions of the organisation; organising PR department so that it serves all levels and stakeholders of the organisation; professionalisation; cooperation with marketing increases; growing expectations for PR strengthen its position
Responding to organisational challenges	limited resources; outsourcing increases; different views on openness; how the meaning and purpose of PR is understood
Helping the organisation to adjust to and benefit from the circumstances of the information age	information flow; finding essential from the increasing information flow; getting messages through; demand for increased reaction speed; availability of information and information technology
Keeping up to date with expertise in public sphere processes	changing media field; digital media; incompetent journalists; decreasing professionalism; individual reporter's voice; sensation seeking; superficiality; commercialism; tough competition; uncontrollability of social media; how to utilise social media; unreliable information
Reflecting and responding to societal trends and changes	internationalisation; globalisation; intercultural communication; bureaucratic systems; trends in market economy; economic recession; demand for efficacy; re-organisations, fusions and other changes going on everywhere; changes in attitude climate and values; demanding customers; ethically aware citizens; decrease of commitment to voluntary work

The issue of *developing competences and methods for PR practice* refers to several PR techniques and skills, and considering the development of new technology and new challenges of changing operational environment.

> Most likely the tools will be diversified and the channels will be diversified, and the audiences will get ever more fragmented. And people get more and more conscious about the attempts of influencing with messages. Already now when we test our campaigns and our visual solutions and other things among young people they are extremely competent in evaluating that what you are trying to achieve here. (F15, PR expert, nonprofit)

> Right now it is the emergence of the social media. It comes like a landslide. Inevitably it means that not everybody has the basic competences in order for the new communications. I'm 51 years old, and I can't say that I'd hang around Facebook all the time and that I would tweet every hour. But I do understand what social media is and what its meanings are and so on. But on practical level this means that we will have to build a lot of new competences and understand the target group. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

The category *showing results and quality of PR practice* rises from the need to prove the legitimate position as an expert function and also the general demand for efficacy which can be seen as underlying societal trend. Creating methods for measuring the effects of PR and defining what is seen as professional level quality in PR practice are considered as an important area where a lot is to be done.

> One is of course the measuring. Measuring and measurement tools need to develop. That way when it develops we will get facts for back up and support, and thereby the credibility will improve. (M4, PR manager, B2C private sector)

Clarifying and strengthening different roles and focus of PR is an issue which relates on the one hand to how PR professionals perceive their profession and its tasks, and on the one hand, to the different expectations within the organisation regarding the role and outcomes of PR. This developing area was combined from the challenge of different expectations within the organisations regarding PR, and the trend of *shifting focus of the profession* which referred to rising dialogue orientation, coaching role getting stronger, relation to marketing and in general the need to clarify the different roles of PR. The dialogue orientation and increasing weight of the coaching role were interpreted as rising issues which PR will focus on, as well as the issues related to corporate social responsibility, which were mentioned as challenges for PR and also in connection to the growing societal trend of ethical awareness.

> I've been wading through many places and ended up here in Finland – and I claim that the corporate social responsibility issues will be starting from 2010 the big thing. And it will grow in big global companies and then it will little by little spread to smaller companies and smaller actors within communications field. But the taking responsibility will be the 2010s big thing. And communications need to find the ways how these questions are answered. It is in my opinion big thing from now on. And when we talk about expertise in communications I feel that it is the biggest challenge of it. I have recently recruited people from NGOs and started to reach for something totally different than tra-

> ditionally because the challenges are not anymore traditional either. And this will bring really big questions for companies, new questions and challenges regarding also, like I said, recruiting, and processes and policies. You have to have this kind of a total 'out of the box'–thinking. (M16, PR manager, B2B private sector)

The relation between marketing and PR was mentioned either as a challenge regarding the need to develop marketing skills or directly as an inevitable future where PR and marketing will get more closely intertwined or, according to some interviewees, will merge together.

> Communications and marketing and sales and everything will be done ever more together so you need to have quite wide competence. (F12, PR expert, B2C private sector)

> The surface between communications and marketing will blur and collapse. (M4, PR manager, B2C private sector)

> I think the integration of communications and marketing is at some level a done deal. These days I don't want to draw a strict line between what is purely communications and what is purely marketing. I think they are very tightly same stuff. (F2, PR manager, non-profit)

Identifying PR's special areas of expertise and PR's relation to the functions and goals of the organisation is perceived as a path to a more stable and appreciated position. *Strengthening the position of PR as an expert function* is an issue which is closely related to *integrating to the strategy and functions of the organisation.* The issue of integrating to the strategy of the organisation or the cooperation with other functional areas is explicitly or implicitly present in many comments of the interviewees. For instance, a challenge of organising PR department referred to the problematic of how to structure and manage the PR processes in a complex global organisation so that they meet the needs of the different levels and units of the organisation.

> One hot topic in communications probably in all of these internationally operating organisations is how to organise communications. If we think that in this kind of industrial company like us, […] we have certain global businesses […] which operate in a certain country under same roof. Just like we in the headquarters are under same roof. These businesses have their special stakeholders, including communicative special stakeholders. We have the concern and the stakeholders of the company, and these are partly overlapping. Globally and locally overlapping. Meaning, what kind of matrix you build for the organisation of communications so that the needs of the businesses, and the needs of the whole concern, and the local needs are considered. This is an issue that is discussed not only among us but also elsewhere, and not only in Finland but also globally. (F34, PR manager, B2B private sector)

> One is that how communications genuinely integrates to be an organic part of the strategy of the company. How that trick is done? We are doing it here and we have very modern three dimension communications matrix organisation which aims at such way of operating that is very largely business oriented. (M16, PR manager, B2B private sector)

Strengthening the position of PR as an expert function is not only about individual cases but it includes the aspect of professionalisation of PR field. The excerpt below refers to standardising PR expertise by establishing professional degree but the emphasis is actually more in the status of the profession.

> I hope that the appreciation of communications professionals will improve. This is a female dominated field so there is again this 'handicap', so to say. So in a way the standardising of professionalism… there could be a communications MBA or whatever it could be, which sounds robust and fancy enough so that we speak the same language with the economists because most of the top managers come from economics or engineering. (F25, PR manager, B2C private sector)

The challenges that related to information flow and the trend that was labelled as information age included very similar comments regarding how the new information technology and the related phenomena impact PR practice: speed of information, amount of signals, short life-circle of information, and "24/7 demand". It is more difficult to pick up the essential from the enormous flow of information and also ever more difficult to get your voice heard among all other voices and noises. There seems to be a twofold stance regarding new innovations in communication technology: on the one hand they are needed and welcomed but, on the other hand, they bring along the challenge to keep up with the development while the amount of communication channels is already large and sometimes the incompatible information technology systems cause problems.

Another significant phenomenon of the information age shows in the availability of information technology to common people. This enables them to act as information producers, and brings the freedom of expression to a new level and brings new dimensions to the processes of public sphere. A rise of the social media has challenged traditional communication and media processes and the reputation management of organisations. Also, as some interviewees mention, the level of openness and transparency that is demanded from the organisations these days is not unambiguously accepted by everybody. The power of public sphere is shown in the fragility of reputation: the reputation may be damaged by a "public conviction" in media or social media.

> When the conviction comes by media before any other conviction, but then no other [juridical] conviction comes after all, the media's conviction still remains. (M22, PR and CSR manager, non-profit)

The interviewees also mentioned several other aspects related to changes in the media field, which affect PR practice: international media relations, commercialism and superficiality, negative news-perception and pulp, tough competition and demand for speed which are seen as potential threats to quality of journalism and professionalism of the reporters.

> When we think of television for instance, how the field has become terribly wide along the digitalisation, and then the media publicity, how it has become ever more sensation centered and somehow things are not approached as issues but through some celebrity. (F17, PR manager, public sector)

> It's the short life-cycle of information. And the so called clicking journalism of contemporary media. If we look at the external communication, the information lives very short

> period these days. And when it is taken to the web it is often made much more superficial. Or at least media think it is important for it to be superficial so it gets more 'hits'. (M19, PR manager, public sector)

> […] they have cut down resources of the editorial offices and same time the internet as a competitor forces to greater speed and yellow press as competitors forces to be ever more dramatic. And this simultaneous increasing of speed and drama can't happen without compromising checking the sources, like double-checking the authenticity of the facts and bringing up different point of views as the code of conduct of journalists instruct. […] And this development can't go on forever but something has to happen. This is what they talk about now, many talks about power of media, or some use another term there. I think this forms a challenging operational environment also for communications because its future development is terribly difficult to see at the moment. (M22, PR and CSR manager, non-profit)

> The trend has been already for a long time that […] communication technology gets cheaper and available for everybody, and all these different tools get cheaper and anybody can use them, which is of course a good thing, I don't want to say it would be somehow bad. It means that a lot of communication tools and communication actors, interactors, come to the field [...] but the incoming money does not increase. […] When there is less money and more tools it certainly doesn't mean that the quality would somehow improve but just the opposite. […] and in some cases the level of competence may be rather low. And this means, regarding the public sphere, that communities need to have even stronger professionalism in taking care of the communications function. It requires stronger grasp. Stronger professionalism, better competence, better abilities in all aspects because the partner in the conversation has weaker capacities than before. (M26, PR manager, public sector)

Although media relations and social media issues are not the only important aspect of PR, they form an area which is clearly an essential specialty of PR expertise: PR is the function that has the knowledge and experience for dealing with public sphere processes. Thus, *keeping up to date with expertise in public sphere processes* is particularly important and worth mentioning as a special challenging issue and developing area for PR although it could have been also included in the category of developing PR methods and competences.

Reflecting, and responding to societal trends is an issue which is related both to operative level PR practice and to more strategic aspects of connecting to the management of the organisation. The interviewees gave examples of how their work is affected by, for instance, changes in consumer behaviour, attitudes of general public, changes in value climate, and demanding and critical citizens or customers. When talking about societal trends that set challenges for PR the interviewees mentioned globalisation and internationalisation, capitalism, entertainment business, selfishness, nature protection regulations, and recession. While merging the categories that relate to societal trends, the "entertainment business" and "recession" were considered as phenomena relating to a larger trend of the market economy, and "selfishness" was understood as relating to a larger trend of individualism.

The underlying bigger trends that were mentioned either while describing the challenges of PR or the future trends of PR were combined as seven somewhat intertwined meta-trends: globalisation, market economy, demand for efficacy, information age, changes in media field, individualism, and ethical awareness. Figure 16 illustrates these meta-trends and the challenging issues for PR.

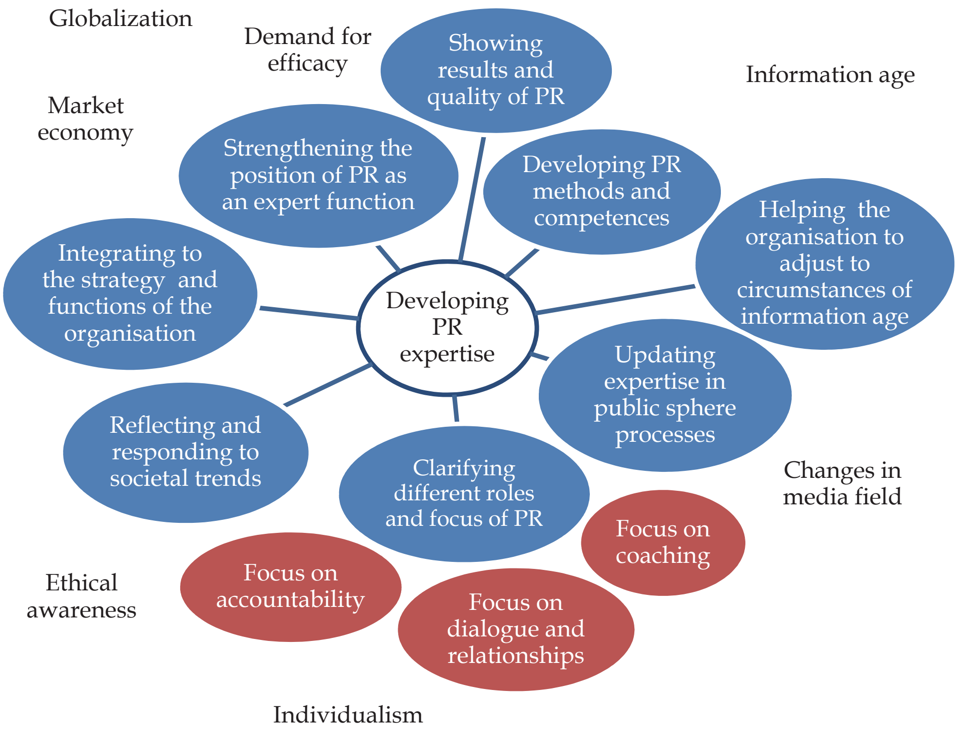

FIGURE 16 Challenges for PR and underlying meta-trends

The meta-trends of market economy and demand of efficacy, and, on the other hand, ethical awareness set possibly contradictory demands for organisations. The different expectations of the stakeholders and ever more complex processes of public sphere enhance the importance of understanding the interrelatedness of issues which may underline the significance of high quality professional PR practice. However, it is worth mentioning that this was not the only viewpoint among the interviewees. Some interviewees spoke about challenges and trends of PR on very practical level mentioning only operative aspects, and it was also explained by one interviewee that a strategic position is not desired by all PR professionals.

5.3 Quality issues and ethical standpoints

This section discusses how the interviewees conceptualise professionalism in PR, delving more closely to the related issues of professional ethics and quality in PR practice. When talking about professionalism or expertise some interviewees brought up the issues of quality and ethics by themselves but in case they did not, the researcher introduced the topics.[36] The questions were phrased slightly differently depending on how the interview proceeded.

Comments about professionalism overlap heavily with comments about expertise (see section 5.4). This is logical because the concepts are complex and they can sometimes be used interchangeably. It may have also been confusing that the researcher asks about these both concepts, and this may have influenced the thinking of the interviewees. Some did ask what is meant by this question. In that case the researcher usually used either another version of the term or gave the term in English[37], or formulated the question differently for example by asking what would be the difference between professional and unprofessional PR practice or practitioner.

Next section presents the different views the interviewees hold regarding professionalism. These general perceptions regarding professionalism offer a starting point for understanding the different areas that relate to the phenomenon. The following sections discuss these areas more deeply investigating ethics and quality questions from the perspectives of how PR should be practiced, who is PR accountable for, and whose ethical issues PR professionals are dealing with.

5.3.1 Views on professionalism

When answering the question of what professionalism in PR means, the interviewees mentioned concepts that relate to competences and developing of them, education, work experience, values and moral, professional identity, professional behaviour, results and quality of work, and passion towards the work. These issues were grouped as four different ways of perceiving professionalism:

1. Professionalism is about professional competence
2. Professionalism is about professional values
3. Professionalism is about quality of work
4. Professionalism is about professional identity and behaviour

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36 While planning the interviews the first strategy was to see whether the interviewees come up with the topic of ethics at all. However, when analysing the pilot interviews it was realised that knowing whether the interviewees come to think that ethics relate to the issue or not is less interesting than what they really think about ethics. Therefore, the topic of ethics was included in the interview questions.

37 In Finnish language there are several translations for the concept ”professionalism”: ammatillisuus, ammattilaisuus, ammattimaisuus or professionalismi. The researcher used first the word “ammatillisuus” and if the interviewee asked what is meant by that the researcher used either word “professionalismi” or the English version “professionalism”, or re-phrased the question differently.

In the comments that related on how the required competences were achieved (education, developing competences and work experience) the focus was considered to be the same as with the comments that mentioned specific competences: professionalism relates to professional skills and being competent enough for the job. The competences of PR expert are discussed in more detail in the section 5.4.

> You have to have these professional qualifications in order. That you know the communication theories and you have the practical skills that you can write and plan and so on. […] But also that you can as a person fit to the organisation and its rhythm most of all. […] And then you have to have compatible goals with the organisation. Like the values. I think a communicator can not work even temporarily work for an organisation whose values one don't share. […] it is better that you have the passion for the topic and the cause for which you are speaking. […] Communications is not just technical but it is involved in the influencing work. (F20, PR manager, non-profit)

The above and the following quotations mention the passion towards the work and how it is seen as strongly connected to the values. Thus the passion towards work was included in the values approach. This approach also included comments that relate to general moral or professional ethics. These issues were parallel with the answers regarding what kind of ethical issues the interviewees think PR professionals are facing. This topic is analysed more thoroughly in the following sections 5.3.2, 5.3.3 and 5.3.4.

> For me, as a pragmatic, professionalism relates to the specific relation to the work that you are doing. In my opinion […] communicator who does the job as an office work is in a wrong task. I think professionalism […] deals with some values. Or how seriously one takes it. You have to take the job more seriously than you take yourself. (M22, PR and CSR manager, non-profit)

> Well, maybe it could mean for example that you don't accept if somebody wants to send out advertorial […] or someone wants to highlight something which is not correct. For example. Or you have to have certain moral and standard in mind to say that this subject is not worth communicating. That we can't send this kind of news release because it ruins our reputation among reporters, that this is rubbish, there is no content and it should not be sent out. (F9, PR manager, non-profit)

The above excerpt relates to two of the approaches regarding PR professionalism: values approach and the view that professionalism is about quality of work. The interviewee explains that PR professional's duty is to not go along if somebody in the organisation suggests communicative act which is a) wrong according to professional standards, and b) harmful for the organisation. PR should, instead, take the position of keeping up "certain moral and standard", meaning that PR professional should consider and apply moral and quality principles in one's work and within the organisation. How the interviewees perceive quality in their work is discussed in the section 5.3.2.

The last of the approaches, professionalism is about professional identity and behaviour, relates to how the PR practitioner sees oneself and is seen as a representative of the profession, and how that reflects to the behaviour and attitude towards the work.

> The stronger professional identity you have so that it is recognised, also the community recognises that these are professionals, the stronger you can be in practicing that work, and to take that role or keep that role. To not to slide into a situation where people think and maybe you think yourself too that you are not a professional. Because that would mean that you are, how to say, some sort of accessory of the activity. (M26, PR manager, public sector)

Besides representing "purely" one of the four views the interviewees may hold a combination of any of these basic views to professionalism. The different aspects of professionalism were discussed more deeply during the interviews and the findings are reported in the following sections.

5.3.2 How to do the job?

As the previous section showed professionalism in PR was associated with competences, values, quality of work and professional identity and behaviour. This section goes deeper in the topics of quality and values from the point of view of what do the interviewees say about how PR should be practiced. The topics came up slightly differently in different interviews and it is possible that sometimes some aspects were left in a shadow and not all thoughts regarding these topics were expressed. Thus, the following analysis does not claim that everything possible was said and reported here, but, instead, that at least this was said and this is how it is interpreted here.

When talking about quality of PR the interviewees brought up concepts that relate to quality of the *messages* and *processes*, *providing desired outcomes*, work being *planned* and *connected to the goals of the organisation* and *to strategic thinking*. With the *quality of the messages* the interviewees referred to accuracy of the information, adjusting the content and the style to suit for the focused target group, following the house style, and comprehensibility of the messages. Over all it seems that the emphasis is on fitness of the message: it has to fit to the context, for the target and to the identity of the organisation.

> One thing is purely the quality of the text. The correctness. Not many typos should get through communication person's hands. Even if it is a little thing […] it will create the corporate image or whoever one represents. Certain kind of thoroughness and punctuality and validity of the information, so that the messages are accurate and exact. (F21, PR manager, non-profit)

> The communication policies and the strategy of the whole organisation are utilised when PR is practiced persistently, like genuinely all the messages that are sent out from the organisation support the basic strategy of the organisation. And then how the communication looks like. There it would also be good to have your own policy, some sort of visual instructions would be good to exist. (F2, PR expert, non-profit)

The category *quality of the PR processes* includes comments that referred to accessibility of information, appropriate timing of the communication, reaction speed, choosing the right means and channels, choosing the correct target groups, cost-effectiveness, clarity and fluency of the process, and learning from the process and developing best practices. While the quality of the message was about content and style, here the focus is in practicality of the different steps of a communication process.

> If we think how some issue which we were supposed to tell and whether it went well or poorly, we think about things like did it happen on right time, was it told understandably, did the messages go through, how did the process go, was there a lot of bungling or was it somewhat fluent, what kind of feedback to get from our stakeholders and, on the other hand, from our business partners who were involved in that. This kind of things we usually think, that did it go well or poorly. (F35, PR manager, B2B private sector)

The interviewees that brought up *desired outcomes* mentioned that proving results is an important factor for quality PR. They mentioned generally achieving goals, or specified what kind of measurement tools they are using: scorecards, internet statistics, measuring volume and quality of media publicity, collecting feedback etc. Internal communication satisfaction was one indicator of quality, and satisfaction was measured also among different stakeholder groups for example regarding the publications of the organisation. It was also mentioned that organisational culture reflects the quality of communications.

> […] as a functional community there should be the joy of working together, cooperating, and it could bring along the joy of working. It could be the policy or a goal of the internal communication in this house that this house would be genuinely one organisation [name of the organisation] instead of three lines. One unit and one administration and this and that. This is very fragmented regarding the functions. We have come to this building over ten years from 7 or 8 offices […] but during 10 years we haven't found kind of a team spirit. (F28, PR expert, public sector)

Some interviewees also pointed out that measuring concrete results is difficult and there is a need for developing better measurement tools for showing the results of PR.

> […] we still don't have the measurement tools. We have some foggy corporate image inquiries behind of which we hide, and think that now we have it for couple of years. The development of the company's stock value is of course some kind of indicator for success of the investor communications. (M4, PR manager, B2C private sector)

The issue of *planning* was also mentioned while talking about the quality of PR. Planning can be seen as a prerequisite for successful PR processes and proving their outcomes. The interviewees talked about communication plans and policies, and about being proactive.

> It requires that our communications and informing is up to date and reacts quickly – and not only react quickly but also seeks to pinpoint in advance the possible issues where the reputation problems or problems with publicity might arise. (M22, PR and CSR manager, non-profit)

It was also pointed out that good quality communications is based on the studied "needs of the target groups". On the one hand, it was highlighted that quality PR "supports the strategic intentions of the company". This point of view leads to the approach according to which the quality of communications necessitates that PR is *connected to the goals of the organisation*. This can be seen as closely related to understanding "the big picture" which is an issue that is dealt more thoroughly in connection to the competencies of PR professional in the section 5.4.1. In this context, however, some random comments seem to relate to the same issue and they were grouped together and labelled as *strategic thinking*. The comments referred to following what is going on in the society, being able to see how the parts of the entirety are interconnected, understanding proportions, and being able to find shared interests in network based cooperation.

Besides quality of work the interviewees talked about ethics of PR either bringing this issue up by themselves or being asked about it. When analysing how the interviewees talk about ethical issues that concern concretely how PR should be practiced five main themes were found. These were labelled as *professional norms, honesty, openness, respect,* and *responsibility*.

Professional norms relates to general or specific professional codes or work-life etiquette, and using one's professional skills with best effort. There were two approaches within this category: some interviewees mentioned general work-life norms and some talked about specific codes of conduct or ethics. Both approaches, however, referred to following norms in the work. Some pointed out that the norms should be well internalised.

> Surely you are facing it daily, professional ethics. That is very important thing. It relates to keeping certain confidential issues in order and taking care that things stay in proportion in the way they are supposed to be. But professional ethics is very wide concept. It starts from complying the working hours, and where does it end you can't really say. It is something that should be pretty well built-in in a grown-up human being. (M31, PR manager, public sector)

> The professional association, ProCom, has these ethical codes. I think they are pretty good […] corner stones for communications. (F17, PR manager, public sector)

Honesty was mentioned as a basic assumption for PR practice, however there were also different views regarding honesty. While one approach states that "you can never lie", another approach claims that there are situations "when you have to lie".

> Good communications is, first of all, it is of course honest. It is the prerequisite in both internal and external communications that we are honest. I don't have personal experience but what I have seen and heard, for instance the companies that have ended up is crisis, often the crisis have culminated when they have not been able to communicate honestly. […] (F5, PR manager, public sector)

> Then there are situations when you have to lie. […] If some communications practitioner argues that one has never had to lie, one is either lying at that moment or one hasn't have to deal with serious issues. (M22, PR and CSR manager, non-profit)

The example this interviewee gives about situation where lying is the only opportunity is told with confidence and cannot be quoted here in detail but it refers to having to claim that he has no knowledge about the issue he was asked about because admitting that he knows would have already revealed too much.

> Sometimes the answer that "I won't tell" is already clear message, or tells about what is really going on. So sometimes you just are in a situation where you have to lie. And, well, it is not so awfully dramatic if you can justify it to yourself that it is absolutely necessary. (M22, PR and CSR manager, non-profit)

This example also tells about personal relation to ethics: the interviewee mentions that you have to justify these situations to yourself. This issue is discussed further in the following sections.

The category *honesty* includes also comments that highlight the importance of not making anything look better than they are, not giving misleading information on purpose, and not having hidden agenda. On the other hand, some comments reveal that there is a grey area.

> That is […] how far you can go with spinning the message. You can never lie. You have to tell the truth but you don't have to tell everything. That would be in my opinion stupidity. When I came here, in 1986, the current PR manager told that rule number one: don't be stupid. And that's how it is. […] We are serving the company but we have to do it ethically, and we have very strong values and ethical codes and you can never break those. And if you think you are on the borderline it is better not to do that. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

For this interviewee "spinning the message" is alright, but the ethical question lies in where one draws the line: when does choosing the angle of your message become making anything look prettier than reality or giving misleading information. Another interviewee sees "spin doctoring" as something that should be avoided but points out that "you don't have to tell everything":

> And then a kind a spin doctoring, […] Like noticed now in this electioneering funding scandal that everything will be uncovered. So such practice should be avoided. Meaning, you have to always be able to explain and show the background and be transparent, and you can never lie, although you don't have to tell everything. Remember basic things like these. That is not self-evident for everybody. (F36, PR manager, B2B private sector)

Openness and transparency are issues that were brought up as an area of potential ethical dilemmas. Openness is seen on the one hand, as a desirable principle, but, on the other hand, as relative concept where the level of openness depends on the context. Differing views on the level of transparency within the organisation may cause problems.

> The basic elements of communicative ethics, they don't change. That you have to have the aspiration to truthfulness and also openness as far as it can be done. Openness is that kind of ethical basic thing that the more open you are the less you will have to deal with afterwards. (M31, PR manager, public sector)

> [ethical questions] may relate for instance to such things that […] how open you in different matters, that do you open the whole arsenal or do you tell just part of it. (F34, PR manager, B2B private sector)

Also treating different stakeholders equally and considering different point of views, respecting the independence of media, the importance of the various actors having freedom of expression and equal opportunity to tell their points of views, and overall respecting basic human values were associated with ethical issues PR professionals may come across. These comments were grouped together and labelled as *respect* since they all refer to respecting other human beings and their equal right to existence and opinions. This category also includes comments that mentioned having conversations with NGOs about ethical issues, and that dialogue is a prerequisite for ethical communication.

> I think that ethical communication is interactive communication and creating and maintaining conversation and reaching mutual understanding. And how could the conversation about values be, if we are renewing the strategy and there we turn the values over once again, or at least they are checked again that are they out-dated or do we continue with these […]. So if it is done so that a committee, the chief manager appoints a committee who then rolls those values over there and brings in baking-ready products for personnel to evaluate so that now you have the life-time opportunity, email us please. Then I don't think that is, if we think ethically about humanity and respecting the other worker, then this is not respecting. This is just the opposite. You could say it's contempt. […] Whereas the other choice would be, like I have seen happening, that they [values] are discussed in working groups and you have the opportunity to influence, get your voice heard and that way commit to the issue. To feel engaged to the issues. Well, here I baked the ethics of communications. It is respecting the human dignity also in communications. Respecting a human being, respect a colleague, respect the customer. (F28, PR expert, public sector)

One interviewee gave an example of unethical behaviour which relates to the category of respect. The company this interviewee represents was attacked by a small activist organisation that collected a petition signed by over 6000 people, and demanded the company should stop buying materials from suppliers who act unethically – something that the company denies doing. The communication manager of the company saw this as unethical behaviour especially because the activist organisation was not communicating with them about the matter. Thus, the action was unethical because the company was not allowed to defend itself.

The fourth category *responsibility* connects the ethical issues PR professionals have to face to the managerial position.

> […] I think a communications professional has to evaluate one's integrity all the time but I think it is not different than in anywhere else, if you think about any management tasks, communications is not an exception. (F27, PR manager, B2B private sector)

As the above quoted interviewee points out, integrity can be seen as something generally related to any managerial position. Managerial level positions have managerial level responsibility. The category *responsibility* combines comments that associate ethical issues with showing managerial level responsibility by keeping confidentiality and being trustworthy, giving strategic ethics related advices to top management and overall considering the wider perspectives in different matters.

> I think if you can't create in this house a trust that begins from that you are reliable, you can keep confidential information without using it wrongly or bending it or something like that, then you will not be in that post very long. […] Our top management expects in a way total integrity because, if I think about my own position, this is the kind of task

> where you just have to be worthy of trust. […] And the same goes with external stakeholders as well, they see very quickly if the story you tell is not true. (F27, PR manager, B2B private sector)

> To tell […] if you notice that there is something that should be done, that is not necessarily belong to the routines of communications, but you have to act ethically correct and tell that hey this thing probably should be done. (F29, PR manager, public sector)

> This is such a sensitive and delicate issue that it can be interpreted in any possible way no matter how it is communicated. […] These things come up here, so you have to think about what really is the case here. And then the ethics is built like based on the situation. (M31, PR manager, public sector)

When looking at the categories of description regarding quality and ethical issues of PR it can be concluded that both themes include aspects that concern PR and, on the other hand, issues that concern work-life more generally. Behaving according to general professional norms or given rules is a general work-life principle. Also, work being planned and connected to the strategy of the organisation, fluent processes, and providing desired outcomes can be seen as quality characteristics of any work. As already mentioned, the ethical issue of managerial level responsibility is part of any management task, and the same can be said about the strategic thinking which was one of the quality aspects of PR mentioned by the interviewees.

TABLE 15 Values and quality of PR – compressing the categories of description regarding ethics and quality of PR into combined categories of meaning

Categories of description:	**→**	**Categories of meaning**
	Type	
Quality of PR		*General principles of ethics & quality*
- Quality in messages	PR quality	- Professional work-life norms
- Quality in processes	General	- Planned work
- Planned	General	- Fluent processes
- Providing desired results	General	- Results that contribute for the goals of the organisation
- Being connected to the goals of the organisation	General & PR quality	
- Strategic thinking	General	*PR values*
		- Honesty - Openness
Ethics of PR		- Respect & dialogue orientation
- Professional norms	General	
- Honesty	PR value	
- Openness	PR value	*PR quality indicators*
- Respect	PR value	- Fitness
- Responsibility	General	- Connectedness

Table 15 shows the categories of description, which are interpreted as general work-life principles and those, which are considered PR specific values and quality indicators. Naturally, the values mentioned as PR specific are also valid for other fields, but regarding these the interviewees pointed out PR specific aspects and thus they are understood as fundamental ethical principles or values for good PR practice.

What is left over that would be typical precisely to PR? Essential but grey ethical principles for PR practice are honesty and openness. The underlying, universal value is respect towards other human beings, which for PR means trying to increase understanding of different point of views, and orientation towards genuine dialogue. The good quality of PR is based on these ethical principles and shows in fitness of the messages and multi-dimensional connectedness of PR operations. Good quality in messages – or communication overall – means considering what is to be told and to whom, and how it should be told. That is, communication fits to the context, fits for the receiver or partner in conversation, and fits with the organisation's identity. Multi-dimensional connectedness arises firstly from PR practice being connected to the mission and strategy of the organisation, to the functions of the organisation, and to the needs and challenges of the operational environment and wider societal surroundings. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, PR is increasing and supporting connectedness between different actors inside and outside of the organisation.

5.3.3 Who PR is accountable to?

Three different approaches regarding who PR is serving can be found from the data. These are, however, not very clear types, which is understandable because there was not a direct question about "who PR is or should be serving". Although widely discussed within academic circles this issue might not be relevant at all to the interviewed practitioners in the real life and this is why this "dilemma" was not fed to the interviewees by directly asking about it. Instead, it was decided to see whether this theme comes up naturally, and pay attention to what is said "between the lines". Therefore, the concluded three approaches are so far only tentative interpretations.

The three approaches are *advocate of the organisation*, *advocate of the mission*, and *communication facilitator*. The first one, *advocate of the organisation*, means that the PR practitioners are clearly serving the organisation and are committed to do their best for its success whilst the purpose or mission of the organisation could change.

> Then of course you have to work so that you act on the best interests of the organisation and the people who work here. Spur the management to openness as far as… like the openness is a word that is not unambiguously the only right solution. But in general it is the right solution. (F29, PR manager, public sector)

> Our role is to represent this community. We do not represent the general public but this community. And this is good to understand. The journalists represent the general public, for instance. (M19, PR manager, public sector)

> Of course we are working for the company but it has to be done ethically. We have very strong values and ethical principles and they can never be broken. And if you feel that you are on the borderline in some case you better not do it. (F37, communication manager, B2C private sector)

The second approach, *advocate of the mission*, differs from the first regarding the target of the commitment: they are ready to put all their efforts into promoting the mission they are serving even if this would mean harming the organisation they are working for.

> Sometimes there is a situation that you have to go against those who finance the organisation or participate the activities but it just has to be done. Being critical is very important. That you stay on the side of the mission. That you don't for instance keep silent about some things which may put some of the people in decision-making organs in bad light. […] This is a big question: to stand behind the cause, and that the system is not more important than people, or money is not more important than people, which seems to be the tendency in general these days. (F23, PR manager, non-profit)

The last approach, *communication facilitator*, does not come up very clearly but can be interpreted from some comments which seem to show neutrality regarding PR's position or regarding whose interests PR is serving: these practitioners do their best to facilitate the communication or relationships but they do not really take a stand for or against anybody or anything, they are simply committed to communication.

> […] we are a support function. This organisation has two main functions, education function and research and development function. And the research and development function aims at being influential on regional level. And then we have around ten of these support functions and we are one of them. That is how our role is formed. (F11, PR specialist, public sector)

> We used to have this top-down orientation that our task was to promote business goals so that we develop and secure the reputation and communicate in reliable and neutral way, being timely and credible with all the stakeholders. But now we are changing to become more like a promoter of the dialogue between organisation and the stakeholders. We are the ones who maintain and take care of that the discussion is going on. We are partly in the facilitator role, kicking it off [the discussion] so the people would discuss with each other. With this we are aiming at building trust and commitment, whether we talk about own personnel or shareholders, owners, customers, media etc. We aim at open dialogue through which we build relations that are based on trust. That is how we have defined our existence. (F35, PR manager, B2B private sector)

In the context of ethics these three approaches to whose interests PR is serving remain interesting tentative categorisations. However, they were developed further when constructing the outcome space of the analysis (see section 5.5).

5.3.4 Adjusting or affecting?

One interesting point of view when scrutinising how the PR professionals perceive the ethics of PR is to whose ethics they refer. For instance, when there is a situation that concerns ethical choices does it rise from the actions of the organisation or from PR practice? The comments that reveal whose ethics are in question when interviewees are talking about ethics were divided to four categories: *personal ethics*, *PR ethics*, *organisation's ethics*, and *ethics of the operational environment*. The ethical questions that directly refer to PR practice include issues that relate to level of honesty and openness, respecting different internal and external stakeholders and considering also the wider contexts. These were discussed in more detail in the previous section. They are also partly intertwined with the other categories.

The category *personal ethics* relates to how PR practitioners personal beliefs and values fit together with organisation's value choices or behaviour. Some interviewees consider this as a crucial question and claim that under no circumstances PR professional can work for an organisation which values one does not share. For others the issue is not that dramatic.

> The most serious fundamental question which you sometimes face is of course the fact that no matter what the communicator is often in a role of an instrument. Meaning, one is transmitting organisation's message to somebody else. And there of course the ethical question is that you have to sometimes shut yourself out. […] if the organisation is communicating something which you let yourself be an instrument for but it does not necessarily correspond to your own understandings. And that is I guess the most, or in my opinion that is in a way the heaviest question. (M22, PR and CSR manager, non-profit)

The category *organisation's ethics* refers to comments where the interviewee tells about the ethical issues PR professional is facing and the issues actually relate to the choices and behaviour of the organisation.

> […] They are this kind of value choices. […] We want to be a good corporate citizen and act ethically, definitely according to law but often more than that. And that is why it irritates me that every now and then these NGOs are… they attack always the best ones, not the weaker ones because the weak ones won't improve anyhow. And it doesn't advance their cause. So in a way I think it is unreasonable that when you try your best and they still bad mouth you. But you have to just adjust to that. But of course, life is all the time… also as private persons we make ethical choices, so same way companies make all the time ethical choices. There it is really important to understand what is the ethical codex of the company, because even if you could slip in some issues the company can't slip. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

The category *ethics of the operational environment* refers to such comments where the potential ethical problems would relate to the field where the organisation operates in, and not having to deal with ethical dilemmas is explained by operating in an "easy field". For instance selling, as such, was sometime associated as ethically questionable activity and the reason why PR professional don't have to face ethical problems is that "we are not trying to sell anything".

These approaches to ethics reveal the difference in thought regarding the situation of conflicting values. For some of the interviewees it seems to be clear that one goes along with the organisation's value system. For the others conflicting values would automatically mean abandoning the organisation.

> […] what kind of position the communication officer sometimes is forced to when having to tell unpleasant news. […] if you are put as a transmitter things machined by others even if it is something that you feel is awfully wrong and you wouldn't want to do this at all but you are just forced to. (F13, PR specialist, non-profit)

> I probably wouldn't work here if the communication would have been different than actions. (F32, PR manager, B2C private sector)

> […] if we talk about communications professionals it is somehow in their backbone that you have to be honest. It is a different thing then whether you can put it into practice. I don't believe that in all our companies including small and big ones the management would always 100 % think like this. Often you hear, or you know, that communications gives management certain advices or recommendations that this is how we should do but they are not listened but instead something different is done which then leads to bad outcomes. Because one always gets caught in the end. I believe that communications professionals know what is to be done. But one can't always necessarily actualise it as one would want to because somebody else thinks otherwise. (F35, PR manager, B2B private sector)

The last quotation describes how PR people may try to affect the ethical choices of the organisation but their suggestions are not necessarily listened to. This implies that besides adjusting to the value choices or leaving the organisation, there is the third way to deal with the value conflict: trying to influence the values and ethical decisions of the organisation. This might not be easy and not always successful, as the excerpt points out, but still it is another approach that appears to exist.

The issue of adjusting or affecting – or escaping the value conflict – relates to how well PR is integrated into the management of the organisation. The difference in thinking of the interviewees appears to follow the same logic as their approach to the position of PR: some interviewees connect ethical issues to the values and behaviour of the organisation and even see a possibility of influencing the organisation.

> If some big paper factory spills 10000 litres caustic soda into a river and then the communications of the company doesn't say anything about it or tries to make it prettier or somehow claim it to be something totally different, then in that case we can think about basic questions of communication ethics, that in what way, how much and to whom the issue should be communicated. (M31, PR manager, public sector)

> If you see that some business representative is about to do something communicatively insane you have to have guts to point out that this really should not be done. (F33, B2B private sector)

Some interviewees specifically mention that it is part of PR's ethics to interfere if something unethical is going on in the organisation. Overall, this approach connects PR and its values to the whole organisation and its context. When some interviewees mention that practicing PR is easy because the organisation they work for operates in an ethically unproblematic field they also implicitly associate PR with the management level issues: in an ethically problematic field, practicing PR would be more difficult because PR would have to deal with those problematic issues. This view which either tightly connects PR ethics with organisation's values and behaviour or applies PR ethics also to wider issues than purely implementation of PR processes is labelled here as *integrating ethics*.

Other interviewees discuss PR ethics clearly in the context of communication or relate the issue simply to general ethical norms and work-life principles. These approaches are labelled as *communication ethics and general work-life ethics*. These three approaches can be understood as a hierarchy where the *general work-life ethics* represent the basic level, *communication ethics* represent more advanced level, and *integrating ethics* is seen as the most complex and analytic form of ethical thinking in PR.

5.4 Perceptions on PR expertise

The interviewees were asked to explain how they perceive expertise in PR. The answers were partly overlapping with the answers to question about professionalism. In order to reach the meaning behind the interview talk the following analytical questions were asked during the analysis:

- what kind of competences the interviewees mention
- what kind of knowledge the interviewees say PR expert should have
- what kind of characteristics of PR expert the interviewees talk about

Accordingly, the comments were first roughly divided to following categories: *competences*, *knowledge, and character*. The categories *competences* and *knowledge* are presented in section 5.4.1. The category *character* is discussed in the section 5.4.2.

Besides the themes that the analytical questions pointed out, some interviewees brought up the issue of what the expertise is based on, or how the expertise is formed. Some interviewees highlighted learning through practical experience and some pointed out that university education teaches "analytical thinking" which is needed especially when working at managerial level. Many referred to a combination of practical and theoretical knowledge as a basis for PR expertise, and said that PR expertise is achieved through education and practical work-life experiences. Also the need for continuous learning was mentioned in this context. However, these were random comments and finally excluded from the analysis.

5.4.1 PR professional's body of know-how

When talking about the competences of the PR expert, the interviewees mentioned messaging skills, basic communication skills, media skills, relationship skills, language skills, planning and organising skills, accuracy, ability to react to situations, goal orientation, effectiveness, independence, strategic view, reflecting skills, interpreting skills, ability to apply knowledge, advising skills, and coaching skills.

TABLE 16 Elements of PR expertise – categories of meanings summarising what PR expertise consists of?

Component of PR expertise	Content of the category
Functional competence	Communication skills, messaging, channel skills, media skills, social skills, general skills (language, organising accuracy etc.)
Communication management competence	Consulting and coaching in communication matters, planning and evaluation skills, tactical messaging, leadership and relationship skills
Strategic management competence	Strategic view, strategic advising skills, situational and contextual applying of knowledge, reflecting and interpreting skills, constructing shared values
Expert knowledge	Communication theories, media and processes of public sphere, publishing, marketing, economics, management, psychology, general knowledge, substance knowledge (of the core business of the organisation), knowledge about the target groups

These were combined and grouped into three categories of meanings: *functional competence*, *communication management competence* and *strategic management competence*. A fourth category that was found closely relates to competence is *expert knowledge* (see Table 16).

Functional competence consist of the basic tool kit for any PR practitioner. Characteristics describe traits that are typically considered necessary or helpful for PR practitioner.

> It might require certain kind of personality, certain areas of interest, willingness to learn, and understanding of human nature. […] I think this is very important, that you understand the target groups and can somehow set yourself in their pants and think how this will look or feel like from their perspective. This is most important in my opinion. (F35, PR manager, B2B private sector)

> Besides having to handle the processes and tools and theories and so on, it is largely kind of a question of attitude. That you have to be able to be in contact with others… that will become even more important […] And like 20 years ago we wrote press releases and faxed them out, that kind of world does not exist anymore. Instead you have to be in contact to different places and somehow ears open all the time, and call and feel, network, cooperate… So this is very much about being social and energetic, and understanding different people and ability to contact with different people. (F5, PR manager, public sector)

Communication management competence is directed towards management of communication processes and relationships within the organisation and with the stakeholders. This category also includes managing the PR department.

> To know how media works, know how to operate in different channels,, to know how to work with internet, how you deal with printing office or advertising agencies, with graphic designers and such. The tools have to be managed quite widely, and you have to be able to support your own people with these. (M26, PR manager, public sector)

> I think it is about being able to support the organisation in different communication issues so that the communication goes through as well as it possible […] and as correct as possible, to those stakeholders, those people, so that the actions are realised and something that was pursued is achieved. (F29, PR manager, public sector)

Strategic management competence is directed towards linking the communication with the organisation's strategy and bridging the organisation with the surrounding world.

> PR has to be able to interpret and show to the management of the company how some of our actions and decisions will be received and how we can make those situations as smooth as possible so that our stakeholders would understand our angle in some decisions. (F27, PR manager, B2B private sector)

The essential difference between the competences of communication management and strategic management is in orientation and is better understood when reflected to the two main orientations found earlier when scrutinising the perceptions regarding importance of management position of PR. Strategic competences are needed when the orientation is to integrate communication to the strategy of the organisation and using communication in order to bridge organisation with its environment. Communication management competence is enough when the orientation is to lead the communication activities of the organisation.

Expert knowledge consists of various areas of theoretical knowledge about communication, media, processes of the public sphere, marketing, economics, management and psychology. It also includes more practical and contextual knowledge about special areas like publishing, insight of the target groups and the core area of the organisation, and general knowledge.

Expert knowledge relates to the content of expertise and it includes a number of areas that differ from each other horizontally. The other elements of PR expertise can be organised as a hierarchy where functional PR competence forms the basic level. Communication management competence requires more advanced know-how, and on the top level is the strategic management competence.

5.4.2 Were you born with it?

The interviewees mentioned aspects that relate to the character of PR professional when they were describing what PR expertise or professionalism consists of and sometimes also when they talked about aspects that affect to the position of PR. In some cases it is ambiguous whether something actually is a skill or an attribute. In those borderline cases the judgment was made based, when possible, on how the interviewee speaks about the issue, or does it seem like it would be very hard to learn unless you were born with that talent or trait.

> It requires certain kind of personality, certain areas of interest, willingness to learn and certain kind of knowledge of human nature. The most important thing in my opinion is, I don't know if social skills are the correct word, but the kind of "touch" that you are able to put yourself in somebody else's position and think that if we tell something how this other person will feel or see or understand it. And I've noticed that this is something not all people have. (F35, PR manager, B2B private sector)

The interviewees talked about "being social and energetic", "natural curiosity" and "being multifaceted" and "willing to learn new ideas".

They also explained that the nature of PR work requires certain kind of strength and courage. One has to have self-confidence and courage to make decisions and convince others about them.

> That you are able to convince at least the face-to-face listener that you have something to give, that is very important. […] Sometimes you get told off pretty roughly because everybody think as if they are qualified to judge the work of the communications officer. Yes, you have to have thick skin and flexibility as traits. (F29, PR manager, public sector)

> Professionalism, the professional competence, is just not enough if there is not courage to execute and take the issues to the processes and in practice. Too many times the situation ends so that you do have the competence and basic skills, ability to manage the channels, and even some ability to influence the target groups. But then the final responsibility and execution skill is somewhat limited. That is still a challenge. Communication specialists for instance remain too much kind of pottering around in the organisation and they are not taken seriously. And still things are viewed through the channels, and one doesn't know how to look at things horizontally and see the whole picture, for instance what is the relevant thing in companies regarding the business. (M4, PR manager, B2C private sector)

In the above quotation, the interviewee talks about courage and associates it with the ability to take responsible actions in relation to the "whole picture". Considering different point of views and understanding the interconnectedness of different issues were discussed in the previous chapter. Here the important factor is the courage. Having to consider many different aspects simultaneously also relates to tolerance for pressure which was mentioned as an important characteristic of a PR professional by some of the interviews.

> […] that you can take care of many things simultaneously. At least in this kind of association where you run into things all the time, that no day goes like you planned it. You get all kind of requests and such from outside all the time, so you have to be able to work under pressure. (F23, PR manager, non-profit)

The characteristics were first grouped into following categories: *courage*, *tolerance for pressure*, *open-mindedness*, *curiosity*, *flexibility*, *speed and alertness*, *passion for the job*, *being strong*, and *being convincing and self-confident*. When trying to combine the overlapping categories it was noticed that there are actually two larger issues that these traits relate to. Being strong and steady under different pressures and circumstances, having courage and convincingness to make judgment calls and state your point of view to others requires *robustness*: being reliable and solid as a rock which is not going to be blown away by any gust. On the other hand, the PR professional is supposed to be social and open for everything new, vibrantly seek and keep up with new ideas and trends, and react and turn quickly when needed. These points of view tell about *agility*.

> Kind of robustness, ability to make decisions, stand up for yourself. […] Communications may be cross-draughty place and everybody has opinions about it and everybody say they know how to do it and so on. So the communications person has to be robust in that sense that one has to have the view about what one is aiming at […] so that one can take it forward also. (F13, PR specialist, non-profit)

> I think it is mostly about being able to control you own persona because in communications situations you end up in so many kind of situations. You have to be able to keep your line and the view on communications in the middle of all these flurries and different views, to sail close to the wind and […] You have to cope with different views and different people. And not offend them. Keep your line firmly and stoutly and yet flexibly and so that you behave well and are able to take the feedback. […] To defend your stand point and be able to change the course when needed and improve based on the feedback. That is really important in this profession. (F30, PR manager, public sector)

The two main traits of PR professional are thus *robustness* and *agility*. For the first look they may seem like opposite or contradictory characteristics but as pointed out in the last one of the quotations one can, and perhaps should, have them both: be strong but yet sensitive, firm but yet flexible.

5.5 Critical differences in the ways of thinking

The previous sections have presented the findings on the level of describing and interpreting the perceptions of the interviewees regarding various issues that came up during the interviews. However, phenomenographic analysis needs to take one step further: it focuses on separating from all interesting aspects those which together form logical thinking patterns that are more than just variety of opinions or experiences.

When reflecting the preliminary findings against the data, interview by interview, the different ways of thinking started to take shape. First it seemed that the main difference would be in the level of strategic thinking. Some interviewees saw the management position of PR in the organisation highly important (see section 5.1.1), described rather demanding goals and challenges of PR (section 5.2.1) and they highlighted strategic level PR expertise (section 5..4.1) while others seemed to mainly refer to operative level tasks, goals and challenges. However, many of the comments were context-specific and the perceptions of the interviewees seemed to be inconsistent: sometimes the present situation in practice contradicted with the ideals of the interviewee, or the interviewee seemed to have a "mixed view" about the discussed issues. Therefore the level of strategic thinking was interpreted to be more situational aspect, or that this data does not provide comprehensive picture about phenomenon. It was thus concluded that the perceptions of the interviewees cannot be assessed in terms of how strategic some ways of thinking are compared to others.

More clues needed to be found in order to form an understanding regarding the differentiating factors in the ways thinking. An interesting path of analysis was found by focusing more on how the interviewees talk about different issues and what seems to be the driving force behind their actions. This path of analysis adds one more important aspect to the total findings. Moreover, it became clear that as the interviews dealt with both reality (the current work of each interviewee) and ideals (how the interviewees think about PR and professionalism), the findings can also be reflected on two levels: how the interviewees perceive professionalism and the related issues, and how they experience their work. Following sections bring together the aspects of PR professionalism that were found so far (section 5.5.1), continue the analysis from one more point of view (section 5.5.2), and clarify which are the critical differences in the interviewees thinking regarding their work (section 5.5.3).

5.5.1 Constructing the outcome space of PR professionalism

In phenomenographic analysis the aim is to find qualitatively different ways of experiencing the studied phenomenon. The end result – the outcome space – is more than just list of categories and sub-categories. It is a system that includes all the aspects that are relevant to the ways of experiencing the phenomenon, and shows how these aspects relate to each other. The outcome space of this analysis is illustrated in Figure 17.

Professionalism as a concept was difficult for many of the interviewees, and it was understood in variety of ways. It was understood as competence, values, guarantee of quality, and as relating to professional identity and behaviour. The different dimensions of professionalism were discussed during the interview and the findings were discussed more thoroughly in previous sections. The essential features of the concept are summarised here.

The interviewees discussed widely about the position of PR and the factors that affect that position. The most noteworthy difference in their thinking regarding this matter was how they perceive the importance of PR's position as a management function. Some think PR should have seat at the decision-making tables because PR needs to participate in the management of the organisation. Others think that having a close connection to management was sufficient because PR mainly needs to have access to information in order to be able to do its job. The former was labelled the Integration view while the latter was labelled the Independence view. A third approach was a neutral communication facilitator who thinks PR needs to be recognised by the management in order to get sufficient resources.

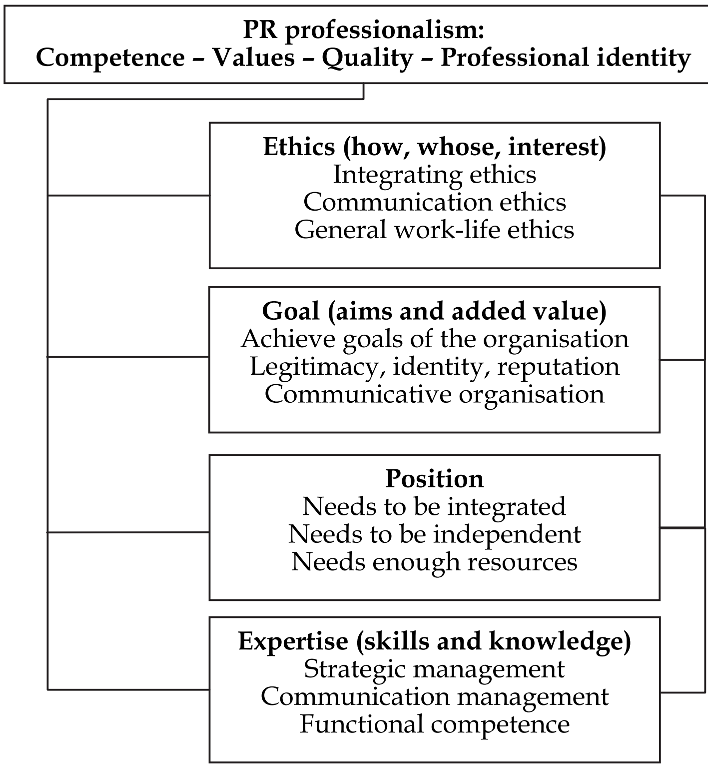

FIGURE 17 Outcome space of the conceptions regarding PR professionalism

The interviewees mentioned several goals and added value of PR, which were combined into six categories: (1) achieving the basic mission of the organisation, (2) well-functioning organisation, (3) identity, (4) reputation, (5) legitimacy and accountability, and (6) communicative organisation. These can be organised into a hierarchy where the bottom level represents communicative organisation which could be seen as a basic level goal for any organisation. Second level includes more advanced communication goals, such as identity, reputation, legitimacy and accountability. On the top level the goals relate directly to the organisation's goals.

Ethical and quality issues of PR provided various categorisations during the analysis. The comments varied regarding the content (how PR should be practised) and the perspective (whose ethics were in question). The conceptions regarding ethics can be organised into a hierarchical order so that the basic level includes general work-life ethics. Second, more specialised level, relates to communication ethics. The most complex level consists ethical issues that are integrated to the value choices and behaviour of the organisation where PR is practised.

In order to deal with all of the afore-mentioned issues – position, goals and ethics – PR professional needs to be sufficiently competent. According to the findings of this study PR expertise consists of functional competence, communication management competence and strategic management competence.

All of these four elements of PR professionalism are connected to each other and they can be described using hierarchies of increasing complexity.

5.5.2 Interpreting the understandings about the nature and mission of PR

When turning the attention from *what* the interviewees say about different issues to *how* they talk about these ideas it was noticed that, interestingly, many times when talking about different aspects and challenges of PR the interviewees used expressions that refer to some sort of struggle. They talked about "pushing managers to go to the front line", the field where the organisation operates being "object of a chase", "arming managers to face the media", "social media marching forth like a landslide" and so on. Following this clue the data were read through once more in order to see what these expressions might reveal. It was interpreted that the "struggle-discourse"[38] reveals an underlying control-orientation. Four categories were established: (1) facing the power, (2) facing the battle, (3) facing the game, and (4) facing the disorder.

Facing power includes comments that relate to power relations, using power, adapting to power, resistance, getting access, and being brave in spite of confronting bigger and more powerful. *Facing the battle* includes variety of war or fight related vocabulary, often containing defensive tone.

> […] when you have to deliver negative things that are machinated by others and you feel that it is awfully wrong. (F13, PR specialist, non-profit)

> Another added value is of course that at its best communication can build such image and reputation for the company that it holds up to the negative sides of heavy changes. And the company with bad reputation can easily slide into quite a spiral for having to make tough choices and then they get beaten even worse because of their tough choices. We of course aim to build us such a castle around this company so that our reputation holds up also when we will make those touch choices. (M16, B2B private sector)

Expressions that were grouped under *Facing the game* refer to competition, loudness, capture and hunting. The emphasis is on using skills, strength and tactics to win the game or hunt, or being chased by somebody. Loudness is included in this category because the comments here tell about getting the voice heard in spite of other voices or noises, or being left voiceless.

> You have to know what is the hook that catches the attention of the reporter. (F9, PR manager, non-profit)

The category *Facing the disorder* consists of comments which seem to assume that there should be order in the surrounding world, there should be control, and the relations and actions should have legitimate basis. However, the reality is often the opposite: the surrounding world is full of uncertainty, injustice, and uncontrollability. Some interviewees used more neutral expressions and only referred to the idea that there should be a degree of control when they talked about PR or the or-

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[38] This part of the analysis is perhaps not typical to "pure" phenomenographic research but it rather reminds discourse analysis. However, it provided an interesting clue and following it helped to detect the critical differences in the interviewees' ways of thinking and it is thus essential to report it here in order to remain transparent in describing the process of analysis.

ganisation reclaiming the promises, meaning, having to prove its right to exist. Standing alone this expression would not form a very strong case to support the concept of control-orientation so these interviewees are not representing purely the control-approach.

> When this huge mess strated PR had a big role in clarifying that this whole system of ours is not rotten. (M22, PR and CSR manager, non-profit)

The concept of control has several meanings. For instance, according to MOT Collins English dictionary as a verb it may mean (1) "to command, direct, or rule", (2) "to check, limit, curb, or regulate", (3) "to regulate or operate (a machine)", (4) "to verify (a scientific experiment) by conducting a parallel experiment in which the variable being investigated is held constant or is compared with a standard", (5) "to regulate (financial affairs), to examine and verify (financial accounts), and (6) to restrict or regulate the authorized supply of (certain substances, such as drugs). Giddens (2009, 283) defines control, in his structuration theory, as a "capability that some actors, groups or types of actors have of influencing the circumstances of action of others". This relates to power, which Giddens sees as "means of getting things done" and power struggles. There is a desire to influence –for or against – something, or to stop or stabilise something that is causing experience of imbalance and distress.

Control-orientation is not, indeed, the only approach PR professionals seem to have. The control-approach was contrasted against other expressions and comments in order to find what else there might be: are there other underlying orientations? As the direct opposite to the desire to control would be non-control, the data was then scrutinised from this perspective. Two candidates for other approaches were found: neutral facilitator approach and the interaction approach. However, after further examination it was concluded that these were quite close to each other and in addition there were other possible approaches that did not fit to the control-orientation but were not very strong independent types either. These were aspirations towards dialogue, interpreting, integrating, engaging and balancing. The common nominator for these and the neutral facilitator and interaction-orientation are that their key aim is to connect. Therefore, these approaches were combined into one approach that was named connecting-orientation. All coded expressions that referred to understanding, interpreting, integrating, mediating, balancing, bridging, connecting, interaction or dialogues were read again within their original contexts to find out if another underlying conception exists. Most of the comments referred to relationship management or making the message understandable but did not actually reveal any special attitude or agenda.

> Added value of communication comes from that due to our actions things are made understandable for people instead of just using engineer language, like this kind of technology companies often are trapped with. (F34, PR manager, B2B private sector)

> Communication is in many things a kind of a bridge builder function also. So that we aim, for instance if company has certain message that needs to be communicated to all stakeholders, it will be communications which ties it up so that one message will fit to

> personnel, investors, customers and NGOs. In a way we have to formulate it so that it is relevant to all stakeholders and choose the channels through which we reach the stakeholders. Kind of glue we probably are and bridge builders in between. (F27, PR manager, B2B private sector)

The first of the above excerpts demonstrates that making something understandable does not tell anything about the underlying orientation. Making something understandable might be done in order to connect as well as to control. The latter quotation shows that the expression of bridge builder can refer to reaching different stakeholders although in many other occasions it is used to describe creating shared meanings or finding mutual understanding. Expressions alone do not thus reveal the orientation behind them. When reading the data from the perspective of tentative basic orientations of controlling and connecting, it became apparent that they may exist simultaneously, and connecting may not be opposite to controlling after all. However, when the orientations appeared in connection to the goal or purpose of PR it was possible to make a difference between the ways of thinking.

Connecting-orientation was manifested for example in relation to goals of facilitating change, engaging, bridge-building, constructing meaning and intermediating.

> Then the task of communications is also to offer possibilities for conversation and participate in conversation… you can like build these platforms where dialogue can take place. (M3, PR manager, public sector)

> In this world there is a need for balancing. The authorities are thought to be if not unreliable but somehow the role of the authority is that in the eyes of the ordinary people they are supposed to be controlling, and when they do their job, and, even when they genuinely and honestly try to do their job, they are not trusted. So there needs to be some balancing and combining thing that helps to cope with this. (M6, PR manager, non-profit)

> Communications constructs the feeling of belonging together and a kind of spirit. It is miserable if people think that I'm only working here, that from 8 to four I go and so. Because at best working is being enthusiastic and passionate and that way new innovations are created. [...] We need to have a sort of cultural glue over all these countries where we operate. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

There appeared to be also a third, more detached approach which focused nor on controlling or connecting. In this approach PR is seen as a tool which does not take a stand on behalf of anything except itself, that is, interaction. This approach was labelled as "neutral facilitating". It aims at facilitating communication within the organisation and between the organisation and its stakeholders. In its basic form this facilitator-approach could be described with a metaphor of machine, as one of the interviewees explains: "such a big institution like this needs its own communications apparatus". However, not all comments that were considered to belong to this approach were so mechanistic. This approach is shown in comments which describe PR's role as developing and maintaining channels, helping to formulate the messages, reminding about the importance of delivering information etc.

> First of all we create for this organisation such channels with which communication can be carried out. To have good internal processes, for instance to produce press releases, and that we have good external website with which we serve citizens, serve media, serve authorities. That we have such materials with which we get our message delivered out. [...] And on the other hand, that we have internally channels in order, and [...] we keep up the idea that communications is important for this thing to function. [...] We have to act as mentors and coordinators and keep up this theme. (F5, PR manager, public sector)

The approaches are not mutually excluding but they may exist side by side, or they may occur situationally. For instance, one interviewee who speaks about reputation as a castle that protects the company, which suggests that there is the tendency to protect the organisation against a threat, is in other contexts talking a lot about connectedness and interaction. When the researcher asked if the NGOs cause troubles for the company, this interviewee highlighted the meaning of the open dialogue:

> They cause us a lot of work but I wouldn't call it trouble. Surely we have from time to time even tough conversations about what is right and what is not. But especially lately we have very strongly approached from that point of view that the dialogue we have with NGOs is important from the license to operate perspective, and that it is also something that may develop our own actions. (M16, PR manager, B2B private sector)

Thus, it can be concluded that the orientations may change from context to context[39] but the basic underlying tone can be detected from the combination of different comments of the interviewee regarding the purpose or mission of PR.

5.5.3 Critical differences in the conceptions of PR professionalism

The outcome space presented in the section 5.5.1 combines the essential interpretations of PR professionalism made during the analysis. It is, however, necessary to go one step further in order to point out the critical differences in the ways how the interviewees perceive their work. Three main conceptions can be found among the interviewees and they are composed here into PR roles: Bridge builder, Advocate and Facilitator. Furthermore, both Advocate and Facilitator include two subcategories: Advocate of the organisation and Advocate of the mission, and Strategic facilitator and Neutral facilitator. The critical aspects which differentiate the way representatives of these roles conceptualise their work are: (1) main goal of PR, (2) position of PR, (3) demand for recognition, (4) nature of communication, (5) general orientation, and (6) relation to ethics. The perception-based roles and the critical factors that differentiate them are presented in the Table 17 and explained below.

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[39] Marton and Pong (2005) note that there may be inter-contextual or intra-contextual variation in the ways how individual experiences a phenomenon.

TABLE 17 Critical differences in perceiving PR

Perception of…	Bridge builder	Advocate of an organisation	Advocate of a mission	Strategic facilitator	Neutral facilitator
Main goal of PR	Make sense, connect, engage	Manage image and reputation	Cause-related influencing	Support the mission of the organisation	Facilitate information flow
Position	Part of the strategic management	Part of the strategic management or reporting to the top management	Part of the strategic management or reporting to the top management	Formal position not relevant	Formal position not relevant
Demand for recognition	Needs to be close to the management in order to be influential	Needs to be close to the management in order to be informed	Needs to be close to the management in order to co-operate	Needs to be appreciated in order to get enough resources	Needs to be appreciated in order to get enough resources
Nature of communication	Dialogue, constructing meanings, constituting culture	Persuasion, two-way communication	Persuasion, two-way communication	Informing, transmitting messages	Informing, transmitting messages
General orientation	Connecting	Controlling	Controlling / connecting	Connecting / controlling	Neutral
Relation to ethics	Integrated ethics	Integrated ethics / Communication ethics / General work-life ethics	Integrated ethics	Communication ethics / General work-life ethics	Communication ethics / General work-life ethics

Bridge builder

The Bridge builder sees the purpose of PR in sense-making and engagement. This emerges as constructing identity, building cohesion, motivating, encouraging participation, establishing and maintaining relationships, discussing about corporate social responsibility, creating understanding and trust, and so forth. The general orientation that guides this PR professional is connecting the organisation with the surrounding community where organisation is seen as one member among others and they are all affected by one and another and they share common responsibility of how the community functions. PR is or should be part of strategic management in order to be able to integrate to the strategy of the organisation and take a stance on different matters. Communication is seen as constructing meanings, constituting culture, and genuine dialogue where the parties listen to each other and discuss, influence and are influenced by others. Ethical issues are integrated to management level and deal with organisation's value choices and behaviour as a good corporate citizen.

An example of a Bridge builder among the interviewees is a female PR manager who works in a B2C company in the private sector. Her list of the objectives of PR includes supporting organisation's strategy and vision, constructing identity, and creating commitment and engagement. She sees PR as part of the organisation's management. Throughout the interview the underlying approach was connecting: building bridges, being cultural glue, making people understand and so forth.

> We talk a lot about dialogue with media and dialogue with employees. […] even communications has, I think, got a meaning in quite many companies that it is some official communication from management of the company to markets or via media, or to employees. That it is like broadcasting. But now when we think how this world of media is changing then this will be more like dialogue with smaller target groups. And we are expected not only to push our news into the world but we take part in the conversation it raises in blogs or elsewhere. And we are active so that it will create a genuine dialogue. So I feel that in that sense communications is changing because of this change in the tools. Like before it used to be more difficult to reach these smaller groups. But now that there are blogs and tweets and other things like that you have ways to reach smaller groups which sets quite many new challenges for communications. Like we have to understand the ways of action and interests and which are the drivers of the smaller groups and so on. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

> Then professionalism means also that although you have your own agenda you will also understand the agenda of the other one and you try to find a common area. Like, media aren't necessarily interested in what we want to tell and we might not be interested in doing what they want but we have to find a common ground. So it is kind of diplomacy also. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

> We don't believe in closing doors and windows. We learn from them a lot. And we learn how they see things and we can teach them things. We can tell them stuff. Like it's not that their knowledge would be 100% either. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

> You have to live finger on the pulse all the time also internally, and if there are anything like criticism or such then you have to understand where it comes from. Not like attacking that you are wrong or saying that yes you are correct, but analysing it […] (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

According to this interviewee, PR has shifted from broadcasting to dialogue. It is not enough to just push the message out but the organisation has to take part in the conversation. The interviewee continues by telling about the goals of PR which are more than making the product known.

> That is not enough in contemporary world because people want to feel good when they buy the products of some company and that way we aim to tell about what kind of company we are. What kind of corporate responsibility activities we have regarding the environment, and all these other kind of responsibility areas and so. So we aim to tell very widely what this company is. We don't just do some product informing. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

Same interviewee continues telling about the added value of internal communication.

> So that is to build sense of belonging together and a spirit. Like it would be sad if people would only think that I just work here, I just go from 8 to 4 and so. Because at best working means being enthusiastic and passionate and that way new innovations are

> created. And since we are this kind of technology, like innovation company so we need to have that enthusiasm. And we need kind of cultural glue over all these countries where we operate, because local cultures are very different so we have to have kind of a common language and common culture that unites us over this locality. And there in my opinion communication is primary of course. Like I said, widely understood. It isn't just task of my [PR] organisation to build this glue. But that is the thing that in my opinion, communication and the organisational culture, holds this company together. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

And while PR is seen to have directly and indirectly a great role in holding the company together, creating a sense of belonging and so forth, it is not detached from the basic mission of the organisation.

> Sometimes in some communication events I'm a bit confused when they talk as if communication would be disconnected from all reality. Surely we have to consider the realities of business and that is from where all action begins. For a company everything is support function of sales. Sales are sales and that is where the money comes from and everything else is support function. And good communication, good corporate citizenship, that just supports the basic activity of the company. (F37, PR manager, B2C private sector)

Although the general approach is in connecting there is still in some situations a desire to control. The interest of the company is to accomplish its mission and for that it is helpful to have a good reputation. There is, in effect, a need to separate when we talk about the goal of the organisation and when about the goal of PR. PR's goal is to connect and create understanding which will generate a good reputation. Good reputation is thus one of the outcomes of PR, and for an organisation it is an asset for reaching its goals. To connect and create understanding is not contradicting with that.

Advocate of an organisation

The Advocate of an organisation tends to think that PR is a way to support and protect the organisation and its goals by strategic messaging and reputation management. PR is typically seen as a separate and independent function which needs to be close to the top management in order to have the essential information to be able to do its job. PR uses persuasive and expressive tactics to reach the goals which are to have united image and identity, smoothly functioning organisation, and acceptance of the stakeholders. PR supports, helps and equips management in the battles where often the opponent is media or personnel. The underlying orientation is to have control in order to feel secure and fulfil one's mission. The Advocate of an organisation may have any of the three approaches to ethics. Communication seems to be typically understood as two-way interaction, and a powerful way of persuasion which is used to shape the image of the organisation and build desired realities (Merten 2004). Overall communication is used as a strategic way to reach the goals of the organisation.

For instance, one of the interviewees was talking about reducing inequality in the organisation but at the same time PR aimed at strengthening the position of the management of the company. Thus PR seems to have in this case a double role as both increasing and decreasing inequality.

The example interviewee tells that she reports to the CEO of the concern but she does not have a seat in the board of management. However, this is not an obstacle for the PR function "when you remember to ask around for what is going on" – most important is therefore to get enough information to be able to fulfil the tasks of PR. PR's task seems to be in general to protect the company:

> Communication is pretty well kept in minds of our managers. That may be because of these challenging times, that when media approaches us they are not coming to cherish us […] So that may also catalyses this, that they seek for help from communications function. (F33, PR manager, B2B private sector)

The interviewee says the main goal of PR is "purely to support business". She mentions that finance media is the first priority because when making difficult decisions like cutting down work force it is "important that this angle is taken care of". When explaining more about the priorities and communication processes in the company this interviewee positions PR as supporting business functions in communication.

> I think communication has to be rather structured so that there is an upper level communication strategy which defines what is communicated, when is communicated and who communicates. For instance we have this [on concern leve] but then we don't have that in business functions. Instead, we have this custom that when there is a significant project there will always be a communication plan and that is the responsibility of the owner of that project, not PR's. But it is of course good for the owner of the project to take communication professional to do that in very early stage. […] It often includes a question-answer-set which we make in PR unit. And of course this set is prepared with interviewing different substance people so that it is controlled then. And we define who talks with media, who talks internally, what are the objectives , what are the messages we want to get through and which actions PR is going to do in order to reach those objectives. And we have this spokespersons-hierarchy: a chart that shows who in this organisation answers to which kind of topics. (F33, PR manager, B2B private sector)

When asked how she perceives interactivity in the communication of the company she works for she emphasises that communication is all about interactivity. However, the example she gives reveals that the interactivity does not necessarily mean open dialogue between the parties in a particular situation but preparing the management to manage the communicatively difficult confrontation.

> Communication is always interaction. Meaning that you have to listen and talk at the right time, and process what you heard so that way you can influence even our most stiff business men. Personally I try to practice that here as much as possible because there is still little bit of archaic owner-spirit in forest industry, and not so little actually. And when we had employee co-operation negotiations and we had to do shutdowns so I had to push even very strongly our managers to go to the frontline, that they have to show their faces there even though this is unpleasant thing which would be nicer to take care from distance and send a factory manager there. They have to go there. But of course that is not enough. We have to equip them so that they will cope there. Here we come to the fact that we have a good communication plan and we practice those situations, we go through the nasty questions and so on. So this kind of spurring. And there the dialogue is important because you can't just feed them the lines so that say like this, but you have to see that okay, with this guy goes this and that is your style and try like

> that. And in this it is really helpful if you have gone through the media training where genuinely we see their, they get the feedback and find the developing areas in their ways of acting and performing. And then we start developing, and we can consider those when we plan communication situations. Communication is pure interaction. (F33, PR manager, B2B private sector)

This tells about the motives of the advocate of the organisation: PR aims at defending the organisation by helping the management to deal with communication challenges and thus securing the well-functioning organisation.

This interviewee associates professionalism with being business like and not taking anything personally even if there are differences in opinions. Furthermore, she stresses that the PR professional has to be strong enough to interfere if somebody is about to do "communicatively mindless thing". Also she mentions that one needs to be sensitive in evaluating different situations and not behaving against one's own professional ethics. When asked what professional ethics means she tells it means not giving misleading information. Elsewhere in the interview she says that "honesty is the basic assumption" and she also explains that the level of openness is not absolute:

> […] it perhaps comes from our corporate culture that we don't necessarily want to decorate things but talk directly about issues. With that level of openness that is possible. (F33, PR manager, B2B private sector)

In general it seems that the approach to ethics is rather pragmatic: honesty is the basic principle which is applied in line with contextual realities which may limit for instance the possibilities for openness.

Overall the advocate of the organisation is – as this example interviewee – committed to support the organisation from a managerial perspective and the aim is to achieve united and well-functioning organisation by management of reputation and relationships.

Advocate of a mission

Advocate of a mission is in many ways similar to the advocate of the organisation but differs in some aspects. Whereas the advocate of an organisation clearly acts for the best interest of the organisation, the advocate of a mission is committed to serve the best interests of the mission or ideology represented by the organisation for which the PR professional is working. In case the organisation or parts of it act against the ultimate mission, the PR professional would be loyal to the mission. Advocate of the mission would rather compromise the interests or reputation of the organisation than betray the mission whose voice one is committed to be. Communication is seen as a powerful two-way mean of persuasion. The underlying orientation is controlling. Similar to the advocate of the organisation, PR's desired position is to be part of the strategic management or at least reporting to the top management. However, the reasoning is focused on the common mission and co-operation: PR's mission equals the organisation's mission and thus a strong position is a necessity. Ethical issues are integrated to the behaviour and value choices of the organisation.

Most of the interviewees who work within the non-profit sector more or less represent this approach. The main difference compared to the Advocate of the organisation is that instead of the organisation the Advocate of the mission is uncompromisingly loyal to the higher mission for which it speaks. The main goal of PR is tied to promoting a particular mission which usually is based on values, beliefs or ideology. Since values are essential part of the mission they also guide the actions of PR professional.

A good example of this role is a PR manager of a non-profit organisation.

> From the very beginning it [goal of PR] has been to affect the attitudes, to change the track of thoughts both in the minds of decision-makers […] and in promoting the own abilities of people. That is all communication to a large extent. (F23, PR manager, non-profit)

The organisation's mission is value-based and per se communicative. PR is not assisting but part of fulfilling the mission. And if there would be a conflict of interest PR would stand for the mission, not for profit or people who hold authoritative position in the organisation.

> Our association states that we are on the side of a human being. In Finland the situation is good in that sense that we don't get allowances from the government like these so called charity associations in many countries. But in spite of that sometimes you have a feeling that you have rise against those who are funding this association or are involved in the activities, and you just have to do it. It is very important to be critical so that you stay clearly on the side of the mission. That you don't keep silent of some issues just because they would put some people who for example sit in our board in unpleasant light. […] That is a big thing, to stand for the issue, and that the system is not more important than human beings, or money is not more important than human beings — which are exactly the tendencies in our current lives. […] Our values are solidarity, responsibility and justice. […] Also in Finland inequality is rising all the time. Social, economic and cultural, all that. So you have to think in certain way ethically and be always aware of what you are doing. (F23, PR manager, non-profit)

Ethics are intertwined in the mission and in that sense it is difficult to separate what would ethics of PR and what ethics of the mission. Overall, with Advocates of the mission the most important differentiating factor compared to the other ways of thinking is the strong, sometimes even drastic, commitment to the mission. It is easy to justify the managerial position of PR because PR's input in fulfilling the mission of the organisation is so apparent. When PR is promoting a "good cause" – like in this case health – instead of supporting self-interest of a company it could be easily interpreted that the general approach is to connect but the main focus seems to be often in having grip on work-life, getting the message through etc.

> We have to fight all the time, whether it is about people's time or our magazines, books or if our message will be published [in media]. (F23, PR manager, non-profit)

However, it has to be noted that the general orientation in the case of the Advocate of the mission is not univocal or clear.

Strategic facilitator

The biggest difference between Strategic facilitator and the earlier three roles is in the less goal-oriented general approach. Strategic facilitator aims at supporting the mission of the organisation by facilitating communication which is understood either as persuasion or delivering information. While the Bridge builder's approach to communication includes genuine dialogue which means openness for changing one's opinions, and Advocates mainly exclude that option, Facilitators don't really take a stance on that. Facilitators also seem to perceive all two-way communication as dialogue. Formal position is not that important for Strategic facilitator as long as PR gets enough resources to be able to facilitate the communication processes in the best possible way. The Strategic facilitator may, depending on the situation, be focused on connecting the organisation with relevant others or protecting organisation from threats, but in general the orientation is neutral. Ethics represent either communication ethics or general work-life ethics.

The example of the Strategic facilitator among the interviewees is a PR manager in public sector in education field. He explains that in his organisation PR has a good position: its importance is recognised by the management and PR has independence to use its expertise for the best of the organisation. PR serves the interests of the organisation by facilitating change, taking care of media relations, strengthening identity and so forth. The interviewee mentions the goal of supporting the identity of the organisation several times and gives examples of what kind of efforts this means in practice.

> We keep the basic infrastructure in order so that we have all forms and such, which we have like hundred different in this house, and we have the system with which manage that we order half a million different envelopes and stuff. […] The whole palette is at the same time our communication tool so that we besides our logo we include in them different messages that support our image. […] Somebody might ask why do you order that paper, but the idea is that we have harnessed also that as part of this basic and core communication. It is expressed in this way that who we are, and we spread it through our different products. (M26, PR manager, public sector)

Based on this comment the approach to communication is rather expressive. However, in other comments the strategic nature of this facilitator role becomes more apparent.

> You have to be able to have such conversations with the management which helps them to operate in these different situations or understand the communication processes and problematic. […] One very essential thing is that […] communication is always involved when there is some kind of change happening. […] If we think about expertise the better you are the better you can in these situation act in favour of the change. […] In change situation your actions may construct the trust or it may destroy it. (M26, PR manager, public sector)

The interviewee explains that acting “better” refers to the ways how the goal is reached: by causing “mental damage” or through a “good and constructive process”.

> Somebody may claim that your messages are implausible […] but that is not what matters, because a reporter may say that this is not credible and I say that from he’s perspective that is correct because its he’s job to doubt that. But what is essential is that you yourself have the relation to this thing in order. […] This is why it is easy to work here, that there is a real, big idea, and I’m part of constructing it. (M26, PR manager, public sector)

Relation to ethics seems here to be that one has to be in balance with what one is doing. Working for a “big idea” is in this interviewee’s opinion easier than if one would be part of selling “commercial products”. This could indicate also being the Advocate of a mission. Indeed, Strategic facilitator is close to the two Advocate roles as well as the Bridge builder but the general tone when describing the tasks and the goals is not as goal-oriented and more focused on facilitating communication processes and channels.

Neutral facilitator

Neutral facilitator takes even less stance on anything than Strategic facilitator. Basically, instead of connectedness to community, interests of the organisation or specific mission the Neutral facilitator represents communication. The goal is to provide functioning channels and effective communication processes for the organisation. A formal position is not deemed relevant as long as resources are adequate. Other actors in the surrounding society are seen as other senders and receivers with whom organisation is transmitting information. Any two-way communication is considered as dialogue. The general approach is neither connecting nor controlling but neutral facilitating, that is, making it possible for the organisation to communicate the way it desires to communicate. Since Neutral facilitator only enables communication there are no internalised values guiding the work, if ethics play any role for Neutral facilitator they are external rules relating either to communication or general work-life principles.

The interviewee who seems to represent mainly the Neutral facilitator is a PR expert in business to business company in information technology field. She tells that the position of PR in the particular local company she works for as well as on international concern is good in that sense that there is a member of the board of management who is responsible for sales, marketing and communication so PR is represented in the decision-making levels. However, when it comes to allocation of resources the situation is not that good.

> […] concerning money or budget […] we have our own moments in the budget, and marketing is considered in every budget but communication perhaps not that much. (F18, PR specialist, B2B private sector)

The comment indicates that PR should have stronger position regarding getting resources.

When the interviewee talks about tasks objectives of PR she mentions aspects that refer to reputation and identity but the focus is in information, messages and channels.

> […] how do we get those 3000 people who include managers, sales managers, office secretaries, propeller-heads and coders to form some kind of common understanding of why we are here. There you just have to use… I guess it is the perseverance, and certain kind of… different messages in different channels for different target groups, and there it is constituted then. (F18, PR specialist, B2B private sector)

The interviewee rejects the idea of PR bringing added value for the organisation because she feels that communication is a value. She associates professionalism with "being able to use the right communication tools" and "knows the rules of the field and knows the journalist's code of conduct" and PR expertise with having the "experience and vision" and being able to understand the listener. Ethical issues she relates mainly to the questions of confidentiality and the approach seems to be that there are external rules which PR professional has to obey.

In general, this interviewee is concerned about getting the message through, media relations, publicity and information flow. She mentions that the goal of PR is to maintain the reputation of the organisation and to put the strategies of the organisation into practice. The general focus is on implementation and facilitation, supporting the organisation but not taking a strong stance on anything. When asked about the role of interaction in the organisation she currently represents, she answers "isn't communication always interaction". When the researcher then brings up one-way and two-way communication the interviewee mentions the importance of getting feedback "because then you can develop the message sharper".

Summarising the roles and the critical factors

Six critical factors that differentiate the qualitatively different ways PR professionals conceptualise their work reveal five different roles for PR practitioners. The main goal of PR can be characterised as the most significant differentiating factor. Bridge builders make sense and build engagement. Advocates of the organisation promote and protect the organisation's image and reputation whereas Advocates of the mission focus on cause-related influencing. Strategic facilitators support the mission of the organisation by facilitating communication while Neutral facilitators are simply interested in facilitating the interaction and information flow.

The importance of the position of PR in the organisation may differ between the roles but especially the reasoning why PR needs or does not need to be close to management differs. Bridge builders want to take an influential role. Advocates of the organisation need to have access to strategic information. Advocates of the mission are usually cooperating closely with the management. For the facilitator roles, having enough resources is what matters more than a formal position.

The general orientation of these PR roles was interpreted from how the interviewees tend to talk about different issues: whether they seemed to want to control or had they more open-minded attitude. The clearest types were connecting-oriented Bridge builders and control-oriented Advocates of the organisation. In other roles the orientation varied or was neutral.

Understanding of the nature of communication was interpreted on the basis of how the interviewees describe interaction or dialogue while talking about different topics. Bridge builders tended to talk about "genuine dialogue" which mostly seemed to mean two-way communication which is based on listening and sharing the views where both sides may aim at influence and be influenced. Overall communication seems to mean constructing meanings – these interviewees were often talking about constructing identity, creating trust, building organisational culture and so forth. The Advocates were also talking about meanings but they were tightly connected to the meanings that they had adopted and clearly aimed at influencing the others so their approach was labelled persuasion. Neutral facilitators talked mainly about enabling interaction or information flow and thus it was interpreted that they mainly perceive communication as informing and transmitting messages. Strategic facilitators seemed to also have a message-oriented approach to communication.

How the interviewees perceive ethics seems like somewhat weak indicator of the roles and it is fair to question whether this factor really makes critical difference in the conceptions of the interviewees. Bridge builders and Advocates of the mission seem to integrate ethics to the management level and the behaviour and value choices of the organisation while Advocates of the organisation may hold any of the three approaches to ethics. Both Facilitator roles may follow communication ethics or general work-life ethics.

5.6 Conclusions and confusions

The analysis of the interviews provided insight to PR professionalism in three levels: (1) categories of meaning interpreting how the interviewees perceive certain themes relevant to the studied phenomenon, (2) observations about differences in the way of understanding the concept "professionalism", and (3) as the actual result of the phenomenographic analysis the outcome space which demonstrates the critical differences in the ways how the interviewees perceive their work. Phenomenographic analysis progresses through different steps from pool of data to the final outcome space (see section 2.4.3). The first steps of phenomenographic analysis – describing and interpreting categories of meaning – are sometimes considered less valuable and the emphasis is on the final outcome space. In this research also the findings of the first steps of the analysis (which remind thematic analysis) were considered important and reported rather thoroughly in sections 5.1–5.4.

Some interviewees understood the concept professionalism as relating to competence, some to the quality of work performance, and some to values. Also different combinations of these approaches were found. For this research more important than how the term is understood were, however, the ways how the phenomenon itself – PR as a field of specialised expertise and ways of performing it – were experienced and understood. From this perspective the categorisations produced interesting information of how the interviewees perceive the position of PR and aspects affecting that, how they perceive what PR expertise consists of and aims at, and what their understanding is about ethics in PR.

The interviewees' comments about what PR expertise consists of were categorised as functional competence, communication management competence, strategic management competence and expert knowledge. In addition some beneficial traits of personality were mentioned. The goals of PR expertise were (1) achieving the basic mission of the organisation, (2) well-functioning organisation, (3) identity, (4) reputation, (5) legitimacy and accountability, and (6) communicative organisation.

How the interviewees perceived the position of PR differed most significantly in how they reason why PR needs or does not necessarily need position in the top-management team. Two main approaches were named integrating view and independence view. According to the integrating view PR should be part of dominant coalition in order to be able to influence strategic issues in the organisation. The independence view sees PR as autonomous function which mainly needs information in order to fulfil its goals and thus the place in the dominant coalition would be beneficial but is not a necessity.

Interviewees explained what affects the position of PR by professional factors (such as competence of PR professionals and proving the results of PR), organisational factors (such as the management's view, the organisational structure or culture) or environmental factors meaning the importance of PR in the field where the organisation operates. Since these interviews were conducted in Finland and the issue of PR's position was discussed in the context of the organisation where the interviewees were working, it is natural that the wider societal perspective did not come up as explanation for PR's position. Yet, one could think that the societal surroundings may also influence the position of PR. Then again, this could be seen as a factor "behind the scene": affecting through the other factors, mainly management's view and the organisational culture. Anyhow, investigating the position of PR and factors affecting to it would be highly interesting.

Perceptions regarding ethics and good PR practice were categorised into general principles of ethics and quality, PR values, and PR quality indicators. General principles of ethics and quality apply basically to any occupation. These include professional work-life norms, planned work, fluent processes and results that contribute for the goals of the organisation. Values that are characteristic to PR are honesty, openness, and respect and dialogue orientation. Indicators of quality in PR were fitness and connectedness which refer to how well chosen method fits to its purpose (regarding style, effectiveness, consistency etc.) and how well it is connected to the strategy of the organisation, the specific context, and values of PR.

The differences in the ways of thinking crystallised in the final outcome space, which separated the five different approaches to PR: the Bridge builder, the Advocate of an organisation, the Advocate of a mission, the Strategic facilitator and the Neutral facilitator. Six factors impacted on the ways of thinking: (1) the main goal of PR, (2) the position of PR, (3) the demand for recognition, (4) the nature of communication, (5) the general orientation and, (6) the relation to ethics. It was also considered that the relation to others in the surrounding community might be a factor that separates the ways of thinking: Bridge builders approach would suggest that they see others as coexisting members of the community while Advocates as well as Strategic facilitators have a more organisation-centred approach where others are seen as stakeholders, faith-holders and hate-holders (Luoma-aho 2015). Neutral facilitators may perceive others merely as senders and receivers. However, the analysis did not provide enough support for this line of interpretation.

The approaches presented above and more thoroughly in the section 5.5.2 are not absolute in that sense that interviewees may represent more than one thinking pattern or may change their view in different situations. However, many of the interviewees seem to represent, based on the comments in that interview situation and in the context of those particular interview questions, mainly one of the approaches.

It is also necessary to point out that the conceptions or phrasings of the PR professional and the real-life PR practice do not always go hand in hand. A seemingly narrow, media-centred view on PR expertise does not necessarily mean that the PR function acts according to that narrow meaning. For instance, one interviewee explained how the PR function educated journalists, politicians and colleagues in other organisations on the matters regarding the substance of their organisation, proving thus that the PR function operates in a very influential educator role but yet the interviewee explains PR expertise merely as well functioning media relations and competence with information technology. Therefore, these interpretations should be seen as tentative rather than determinant and more conclusions should be done only with prudence, and rather in connection to further investigation.

6 PHASE IV: COMING TOGETHER – THE HOLISTIC MODEL OF PR PROFESSIONALISM

FIGURE 18 Focus of Chapter 6

This research has examined the phenomenon of PR professionalism from various points of views. The conceptual framework of this study suggested that professionalism should be viewed from three perspectives: organisational, occupational and individual. The first subordinate study, the interpretive study of concepts, represented the occupational perspective shedding light on the related issues through academic literature. The second subordinate study, the interview-study of 37 Finnish PR professionals, approached the topic from individuals' perspective but encompassed simultaneously all three perspectives: the interviewees naturally speak from an individual perspective but they also hold a double role as representatives of both the organisation they work for and the PR profession. The interviews also dealt with both the work in their current organisation (practice in current context) and the PR profession in general (the theory according to the views of interviewees). Phenomenographic analysis was used to try to capture the individual perspective, by focusing the attention on how different interviewees seem to perceive the studied phenomenon and scrutinising what kind of conceptions guide individual PR professionals in their work.

Both subordinate studies reflected essential themes derived from the conceptual framework. They focused the attention on what PR expertise stands for (what it aims at), what it leans on (what kind of competences and values expertise it is based on), and where it sits (its position in relation to decision-making tables). This chapter draws from the conclusions of the subordinate studies and constructs a holistic model of PR professionalism using the Aristotelian way of synthesising to "save the phenomenon" (Kakkuri-Knuuttila & Heinlahti 2006, 111). According to this method the researcher initially collects different conceptualisations regarding the problem in question. The differences in these conceptualisations are then identified and evaluated. The strengths of the previous understandings are combined under the newly developed conceptualisation and the weaknesses are left out. Finally, the new concepts and their embodied principles are carefully reasoned to prove that the contradictions are solved and the phenomenon is thus saved (Kakkuri-Knuuttila & Heinlahti 2006). The first two steps of this method were achieved when constructing the conceptual framework and conducting the two subordinate studies. This chapter focuses on formulating a synthesis of the conclusions of the subordinate studies and constructing thereby a model that "saves" PR professionalism.

The theoretical framework of this research moved from the traditional professionalism approaches (functionalist trait approach and neo-Weberian conflict approach) to a new way of looking at the phenomenon. Instead of focusing on the traits of profession or motives of professionalisation, the more up-to-date approach is to understand professionalism as a whole which consists of three forms of professionalism: occupational, organisational and individual professionalism. Derived from this understanding, the key themes that the two subordinate studies dealt with were what PR aims at (occupational and organisational professionalism), what is a good professional PR or good PR professional like (individual and occupational professionalism), and what is PR's position in an organisation (organisational and occupational professionalism).

The main conclusions from the interpretative study of concepts are that PR's special area of expertise aims at enabling the operations of the organisation and bridging PR with different actors in its internal and external environments by management of communication, relationships and public sphere. This includes processes on implementation as well as strategic level. Three values –respect, responsibility and reflexivity – are the guiding norms for PR practice and at the same time the ultimate goals of PR.

The findings of the interview study are mostly in line with the conclusions of the interpretative study of concepts. What the interview study adds is insight about goals of PR, different views regarding autonomy and the importance of the managerial position of PR, and different approaches to ethics. Moreover, the most important conclusions of the interview study are the critical aspects of qualitatively different ways of perceiving professional PR which constitute five approaches to PR: the Bridge builder, the Advocate of an organisation, the Advocate of a mission, the Strategic facilitator and the Neutral facilitator (see section 5.5).

The following chapters will demonstrate how the dimensions of professionalism look like in the light of the two subordinate studies of this research. After that the research will proceed from describing and interpreting the findings to theorising: by connecting the interpretations of this study to wider theoretical perspectives a holistic model of professional PR will be constructed.

6.1 Dimensions of PR professionalism

As explained in the first phase of this study (see Chapter 3) occupational, organisational and individual approaches can be seen as three intertwined dimensions of professionalism. The occupational dimension relates to the content of the expertise and values of the profession. What the particular profession is aiming at, what is its special area of expertise, and which are its core values? The organisational dimension of professionalism relates to professionals in the organisation: what is their position and how are they supervised (Noordegraaf 2011). Individual professionalism focuses the attention to an individual practitioner's professional identity and the norms and standards one holds important. Autonomy is an important aspect of professions in occupational professionalism but also from an individual's perspective: freedom and responsibility of independent evaluation and deciding of how to use the expertise is typical to professionals. Yet professionals should not be making their decisions based solely on their own interests: integrity of a profession requires "a balanced combination of individual autonomy with integration into shared purposes" (Sullivan 2005, 284). The individual professional is the one who in practice uses the given position and applies the expertise in a way that is suitable but this should be in balance with the goals of the occupation and the strategies of the organisation one works for. Individual professionalism is thus intertwined with both occupational and organisational professionalism.

In order to implement expertise and gain an influential position in the organisation the expertise has to be recognised. This requires that there is a need for the offered expertise, and trust that the competence of the expert can fulfil that need. This recognition of expertise relates to authority and autonomy. Autonomy means the right to define the content of the work, and (at least to some extent) the right to control the quality of the work and in some cases the right to decide who can access the professional field. How profession is seen by the client dictates the position of the profession and how much attention and resources are allocated to it.

In the context of PR the issue of PR's position in the organisation has been widely discussed. Is PR a management function? What is the contribution PR offers the organisation based on which it claims an autonomous and influential position? These issues are dealt with in various practitioner role studies and thus it is natural to name this organisational professionalism dimension as *the Role of professional PR*.

When discussing PR's managerial role there often seems to be a loyalty conflict lurking behind the corner – the question that is connected to the role of PR is whose interests PR is or should be serving? It seems that the role of PR cannot be discussed without addressing the question what is the goal of PR. As pointed out above, the area of expertise and values of the profession are in the heart of occupational professionalism: what the profession is trying to achieve, how it defines itself, and what it appreciates. This aspect of professionalism is labelled here as *the Goal of professional PR*.

To be a professional, one needs to learn the intellectual capital related to the profession, learn the skills needed in practicing that profession, and adopt that profession's values and attitudes (Sullivan 2005). Thus being a professional is tightly connected to internalising the purpose of the profession: becoming a professional means learning what the profession stands for and how to practice it well. This stresses the interrelatedness of the individual and occupational dimensions of professionalism.

The individualisation trend of the contemporary world puts ever more emphasis on how the professional perceives the work, and its goals and norms (Krejsler 2005). In PR's case the access to the field is not licensed, PR practitioners work in various organisations in very different conditions, they have diverse educational backgrounds, they may or may not belong to professional associations, and they face many kinds of expectations. Individual professionals may end up being very independent, and individual professionalism has thus strong impact on the profession as whole.

A profession can define itself and its principles but without a person who internalises the goals of a profession professionalism remains like a uniform waiting to be dressed on. Professionalism becomes alive only through an individual practitioner's efforts and is thus dependent on how well the uniform fits the professional, that is, how an individual perceives one's profession, its purposes and principles. Therefore the dimension of individual professionalism is named as the *Soul of professional PR*.[40]

6.1.1 The Role of professional PR

The practitioner role research sometimes emphasises the tasks of PR, sometimes the hierarchical position of PR in the organisation and sometimes the discussion turns to the question of whose interests PR is serving. The interviewees bring up several aspects that affect the position of PR: (1) the effects of PR, (2) the level of PR expertise, (3) the character of the PR expert, (4) the resources, (5) the organisational structure, (6) the organisational culture, (7) management's view about PR, and (8) PR's importance in the field where the organisation operates.

The widely applied manager-technician role dichotomy of PR was constructed by Broom and Dozier who originally divided the roles of PR into technician, expert prescriber, process facilitator, and communication facilitator, but later reduced them into communication manager and technician (Dozier 1992). When describing the tasks or objectives of PR the interviewees talk about interpreting different viewpoints, advising management, coaching members of the organisation in communication issues that refer both to technical and strategic matters, as well as

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40 After presenting the dimensions of PR professionalism for the first time in the Euprera Annual conference in Leeds (Asunta 2011) the author searched the internet with these key words and found out that the combination of the rhyming words role, goal and soul has been used also by a business consultant Mitch Axelrod (2011) in his concept of ”soul, role and goal frustration”. The way this research uses these words as names of the dimensions of PR professionalism differs from Axelrod's concept.

developing and maintaining the communication infrastructure and so forth. Some of the tasks belong to strategic management level, some to communication management level and some are more operative level tasks (see section 5.4.1). It can be concluded that based on this data squeezing the roles into technician-managerial dichotomy would not do justice to the field.

Verčič et al. (2001) found four typical roles when investigating dimensions of European public relations: managerial, operational, reflective and educational roles. Ławniczak (2004) suggested a fifth role, transitional PR, to highlight a special role PR had in Eastern Europe promoting the transition from communism to western socio-economic system. Tampere (2004), on the other hand, suggested integrative role as fifth role of European PR. Integrative role is a role of an interpreter, dealing with the problems that are rising when different national cultures, religious views and worldviews are coming across.

The interviewees mention tasks and goals, which support the four European PR dimensions and the integrative role introduced by Tampere. The transitional role does not appear within this data which is quite logical since that role is already by its definition strongly tied to certain socio-political conditions. However, if that role is disconnected from those conditions the essence of it seems to be helping to go through a significant change, transform old thinking patterns into new ways of thinking and construct new identity. These themes seem to be very relevant to many of the interviewees.

The interviewees had different approaches to the hierarchical position of PR. In general they all considered PR important and most were in favour of having a place in the top management team. However, the approaches were different in that sense that part of the interviewees considered that it is enough that PR has a close relation to upper management in order to get information, provide input and thus be able to take care of their job. This way of thinking was labelled as “independence view” due to the basic assumption that PR is doing its independent tasks derived from the strategy of the organisation, and possibly contributing input for it rather than setting the strategic direction of the organisation. The others seemed to be interested to have a say in the decision making of the organisation. This view was labelled as integrating view due to the basic assumption that PR should be part of strategic management of the organisation. As pointed out in many interviews, in the current turbulent world organisations have to face a variety of expectations of multiple stakeholders, and need PR expertise to help steer organisations in these challenging times. This view is supported by many researchers: such as Luoma-aho, Olkkonen and Lähteenmäki (2013) who argue that in order to deal with the challenges of expectation management, which they suggest to be the most important task of PR (see Olkkonen & Luoma-aho 2014), PR needs decision power and a place among top management.

Critical and postmodern PR researchers tend to question the management role of PR, and suggest that more research should be conducted on PR’s relation to power. Instead of being the voice of the top management of the organisation for instance Berger (2005) suggests that PR should rather take the role of an organisational activist. In general, the interviewees did not problematize the relation to management. However, one did point out that the roots of PR in industry are in the employees' needs to get information, which led to improving the internal communication by establishing a position for an information officer.

Grunig (1992) concluded in the Excellence-study that PR managers should be involved in the decision making of the organisation but their role should be the role of communicator. Later Grunig has, however, emphasised PR's connections to economics and management. However, the findings of this research describe and interpret the perceptions of the PR professionals as influencing factors whereas Grunig mainly explains the position through tasks of PR.

All in all it appears that the position of PR within the organisation is dependent, on the one hand, on how the management understands the nature and outcomes of PR expertise and, on the other hand, on how the PR professionals themselves perceive their work and its goals. PR may function on the implementation level and still be very expressive in that role. It may find its place as a valuable and appreciated supporting expertise function advising and dealing with various communication and relationship management issues derived from the strategy of the organisation. And it may be a management function which integrates its expertise in communication and relationship management with strategic policies of the organisation. There is a seemingly small but crucial difference in thinking between the last two approaches. To find an answer to the question of what PR's position should be, one must also ask what PR aims at.

6.1.2 The Goal of professional PR

What are then the goals of professional PR? The interviewees brought up several tasks, goals and outcomes of PR when answering to the question of what they consider most important goals of PR in their current organisations: supporting the infrastructure, supporting the functioning of the organisation, supporting of the goals of the organisation, connecting people, connecting stakeholders, connecting viewpoints, connecting knowledge with practice, connecting PR to the strategy, bringing communication point of view to the strategic decisions, defending the organisation, making sense, promoting the license to operate, messaging, collecting feedback, promoting genuine dialogue, enabling learning and so forth. The goals of PR are connected to the situation of the organisation where PR is practiced. The goals of PR identified in the interview study were (1) achieving the basic mission of the organisation, (2) well-functioning organisation, (3) identity, (4) reputation, (5) legitimacy and accountability, and (6) communicative organisation (see section 5.2).

The main conclusion of the first subordinate study of this research, the interpretative study of concepts, suggests that PR produces different kinds of communication and relationship management processes, activities and products, which enable the functioning of the organisation and bridges the organisation with other actors in its surroundings. Ultimately the goal is intertwined with the core values of PR which guide the PR practice and, since communication is the lifeline of the organisation, PR promotes an organisation's connectedness following the principles of respect, responsibility and reflexivity.

Elaborating from the conclusions of the two subordinate studies PR can be seen as answering to an organisation's communication needs which relate firstly to functionality, secondly to identity and reputation issues, and thirdly to higher values of sharing and genuine engagement. These needs could be seen as a hierarchy echoing Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs which divides person's motivation into five levels: Physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs. Maslow's hierarchy has been applied and also criticised widely in different fields. In the PR field it has been utilised in targeting the persuasive message according to the needs of the audiences (Treadwell & Treadwell 2005; O'Hair, Friedrich & Dixon 2011), in the context of internal communication and motivating members of the organisation (different textbooks, e.g. Eisenberg, Goodall Jr. & Trethewey 2014), and for instance in a study of agenda melding in virtual brand communities (Ragas & Roberts 2009). Alderfer (1969) elaborated Maslow's hierarchy into the ERG theory according to which human beings have three levels of needs: Existence needs, Relatedness needs and Growth needs. This version of the motivational factors of people fits well together with the idea of the different communication needs of the organisation. An organisation needs a communication inftrastructure to be able to function (Existence needs). There are needs for meaningful relationships and internal and external understanding of "who we are in this world" (Relatedness needs). There are also communication needs that indicate desire to genuine dialogue and sharing which could be interpreted as motivation for self-development and creative self-actualisation (growth needs of Alderfer of self-actualisation of Maslow).

Connecting the values and ultimate goals of PR reminds the widely debated issue of symmetry as the worldview of PR or ethical way of practicing PR. However, the problem of symmetry is that it is a too strong and demanding concept. It sets ideals which seem to be impossible to fulfil, and excludes other points of views as under-developed and unethical forms of PR. In the spirit of Aristotelian "saving the concept" of symmetry could be seen as a principle which can be applied as a virtue (see Fawkes 2010), something to reach for and as an area where one can improve the behaviour, but not as the determining condition of professional or ethical PR.

In the same vein the core values of PR defined in this study are goals and guiding principles according to which many kind of PR can be practiced and under which variety of objectives easily fit. It is up to the PR professional to adopt and apply those guiding principles in one's work.

6.1.3 The Soul of professional PR

As individual PR practitioners are the ones who bring theory in practice and make the body of knowledge alive, the dimension of individual professionalism becomes essential. Human beings have individually and collectively many identities and they root from various separate and interlinked experiences which one is never completely aware of but which have profound effect on how one perceives the world (Kurtz & Snowden 2003). Bourdieu talks about habitus which means those thinking and behaviour patterns which individuals use more or less automatically while making sense of the every-day life (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1995). For Bourdieu culture means resources or artefacts, which people use while constructing and representing their worldviews and ways of living (Alasuutari 2011). Thus habitus relates to PR practitioners' personal and professional identity, and culture in its different forms (partly) shapes the habitus. Professional culture and its representations, such as codes of ethics and codes of conduct, may have stronger or weaker role in constructing one's professional identity (see Hodges 2006).

When acting as PR professional in a specific organisational setting one faces the current challenges and conditions with one's multiple identities. From an organisation's point of view PR professional is expected to adapt to the organisation and from occupation's point of view one is expected to do justice for the PR profession. As pointed out in the literature and in the interviews, eventually it is the individual PR practitioner who either acts professionally or does not: profession sets standards and principles but it cannot operate on behalf of the individual. If the professional identity is strong, it will guide the practitioner in making judgment calls and value choices. However, if other identities are stronger one may adopt different logics – or behave irrationally – in a complex situation.

When looking for the critical differences in the interviewees' ways of thought regarding their work and its goals and challenges, it was concluded that there are five different approaches to PR which could be characterised as roles: the Bridge builders, the Advocates of an organisation, the Advocates of a mission, the Strategic facilitators, and the Neutral facilitators (see section 5.5). The critical aspects that differentiate these roles from each other relate to the goal, the position and its reasoning, approach to communication, general orientation and relation to ethics.

When combining these findings with the conclusions of the interpretative study of concepts, the roles can be placed as a hierarchy where Bridge builders would represent the highest level strategic managerial expertise, the Neutral facilitators would remain on the implementation level, and the Strategic facilitators and both Advocate roles being somewhere in the middle. It must be noted, however, that when it comes to the perceptions of the interviewees there is no right or wrong approach – simply different approaches. Interviewees may also represent more than one of these roles depending on the issue or situation. Nevertheless, these archetypes which were found among the interviewees can be seen as complementing the picture constructed in the literature. Although in real life it is possible that a PR practitioner has the high level strategic manager position even if one's conception of PR could be described as the Neutral facilitator, it must be concluded that it seems that the Bridge builders have adopted the values of PR most comprehensively.

The Achilles heel of PR in the debates of professionalism and ethics have traditionally been the questions of whose interests PR represents and can PR use persuasion as its method (see section 4.3.3). In general the interviewees are univocally saying that influencing is part of their work, if not the core task of it, and they are representing the organisation which they work for. A slightly different point of view is revealed when focusing more closely at the different thinking patterns of the interviewees. There are Bridge builders who aim at connecting and making sense rather than one-sided influencing. And there are Advocates who clearly define their client organisation or the mission it represent and aim at influencing but yet may act according to the values or ethical principles of PR. In the light of these interviews, the academics' trauma with persuasion or advocacy role does not exist this way in practice.

Although ethics seem to mean external norms or rules for some of the interviewees while others seem to have internalised them as part of their professional identity, both ways can result in the same outcomes. However, as explained earlier in this chapter, in a complex situation one may adopt different ways of thinking if the professional identity is not strong. When disconnected from the values of respect, responsibility and reflexivity any communication and relationship management tactics may be used for questionable goals or in unethical ways.

6.2 Possible pitfalls

After following the descriptions and observations of the conceptual framework and the subordinate studies, here the path of this research turns into less known ground. It follows now little hints and weak signals, and stops to speculate for a moment.

The subordinate studies indicate that there are different issues that may influence how well PR professionalism can be actualised in the organisation. The factors that affect PR professionalism are the position of PR in the organisation (role), the purpose of PR (goal), and PR expert's personal understanding of PR professionalism (soul). In an ideal case these aspects and variations within them fit together, but in practice it seems that sometimes there are contradictions which may prevent successful utilisation of PR expertise.

When the analysis progressed to the phase where each interview was scrutinised separately it was noticed that sometimes the pieces of the puzzle did not seem to fit together. For example, one interviewee has the position and seems to have the competence and understanding of values of PR but yet the goals of PR are not at a very strategic level. Another interviewee seems to have strong understanding of values and strong competence, and the goals are set high but PR is not given a strategic position in the organisation. In some cases the interviewees mention high expectations for what PR is supposed to accomplish but yet what PR actually does seems to remain on rather technical level. There seem to be goal confusions, value conflicts, and resource and legitimacy gaps that prevent PR from ascending to its full potential.[41]

Altogether for 17 of the interviewees their position in the organisation and the reported goals of PR and the perception on expertise and professionalism were in balance – 13 of those were on strategic level and 4 represented a support or technical function and approach. Thus, in more than half of the interviews there was some kind of contradiction:

- 5 interviewees had the strategic view and the goals that seemed to be on strategic level but they did not have the strategic level position in the organisation,
- 8 had strategic position and goals but had a somewhat narrow view on expertise and professionalism,
- 3 described strategic position and goals but seemed to have a rather narrow view on expertise and professionalism and the tasks of PR they mentioned did not support the strategic goals well,
- 2 had strategic position and view on expertise and professionalism, but yet the goals and tasks seemed to be on more technician level,
- 1 had mixed view, strategic goals but technician tasks and the position of PR could be better, and
- 1 had narrow view on expertise and professionalism and the position of PR in the organisation could be better but yet the goals were on strategic level.

The view was considered as "strategic" if expertise was understood as including more advanced and analytical thinking than just channel or message-oriented competence. For instance, one interviewee mentioned that PR experts know the mechanisms and procedures and are able to "discuss with management so that it will help the management to act in these different situations or understand the communication processes and problematic". Describing the PR expert as a tactful change agent was also considered to show a strategic view:

> In the change situation your action may construct the trust or it may destroy it. […] It is also about how you arrived at your destination. And arriving at your destination is about what kind of mental damage was caused along the way. Was this a good and constructive process or was this harrowing. (M26, PR manager, public sector)

> Then the whole context, to see like a visionary, to have as a goal, direction towards which you are going, such interaction that you can manage things interactively. Management by interaction and listening, leading to the things by doing together. I'd say seeing things holistically, being a visionary and interacting. (F28, PR specialist, public sector)

The view was interpreted "narrow" if the interviewee saw PR expertise mainly as functional competences like management of communication means and tools or ability to formulate messages, or saw the goals of PR only as delivering information. "Mixed view" means that the interviewee expressed both narrow and strategic orientation in one's comments about expertise and professionalism.

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41 These speculations and the first draft of the model were published in the paper presented in the annual Euprera conference 2011 in Leeds (Asunta 2011).

6.2.1 Role vs. Goal

Some interviews indicate that there may be a contradiction between the position of PR professional in the organisation and the level of the goals of PR in that organisation. The position of PR in the organisation may reflect the top management's expectations and understanding regarding PR. The intuitive first association is that if there is a contradiction between the role and the goal of PR it is caused by the lack of recognition and power of PR expertise. However, it could also be that the goals are set low although the position of PR is on strategic level.

TABLE 18 How the role of PR matches with the level of goals of PR?

	Strategic goals	Technical goals
Strategic role	Match	Strategic view gap
Assisting role	Status gap	Match

Table 18 shows how the combination of weak role but high level strategic goals results in a lack of power while the combination of the strong role and technical level goals indicates a lack of strategic view. In the first case the management does not give PR enough credit and because of this lack of legitimate strategic position PR has difficulties to meet its goals in practice. This situation could be called "Status gap". In the latter situation PR has a strong status in the organisation but for some reason has not set the goals or quality standards very high. This situation could be called "Strategic vision gap".

6.2.2 Role vs. Soul

As explained earlier, the dimension of the Soul of PR refers to the professionalism of the individual PR practitioner. That is, how well one has adopted the professional identity and how competent one is. When reflecting the Role and the Soul dimensions against each other (Table 18), problems may occur if the level of professionalism is low while the given position in the organisation is at the strategic level and power is invested in the PR professional. Another imbalance in the Role and Soul relation occurs when the level of the PR practitioner's professionalism is high but the given position is weak, which most likely results in frustration.

If, either or both an individual PR professional's competence and values are not strong enough considering their position, there is a time for serious soul searching. The competence and value gap combined with a strong position put power in hands that may use it for the wrong purposes. This may lead to unprofessional actions and possibly outcomes which are harmful to both the organisation (and possibly its stakeholders) and the PR profession itself.

TABLE 19 How the position and competence match? (Asunta 2009)

Position of PR in the organisation	Level of competence of PR practitioner		
	Functional competence	Communication management competence	Strategic management competence
Integrated strategic management function: strategic decision making, issues management, CSR, reputation/identity management	Obvious competence deficit, badly managed organisation	On the limits of the competence, overestimated expectations	Professional PR manager, responsibilities and expertise in balance
Broad support function: planning and implementing internal and external communication policies, auditing and developing communication	Overloaded, overestimated expectations	Competent PR expert in appropriate tasks	Under-utilised competence, frustration
Expressive and assisting role: supportive, delegated and instructed, operational communication tasks, no independent decision making	Skilful PR technician in suitable tasks	Status and responsibility deficit	Over-qualified, frustration

A situation where PR professional does not have the position deserved based on the level of one's professionalism is similar to the situation where the role does not match with the goals of PR described in the previous chapter. Also this situation could be called "Status gap". Respectively the situation where PR practitioner's competence or professional values are not quite on the level of what could be expected based on the given position in the organisation, could be called "Professionalism gap".

6.2.3 Soul vs. Goal

A professionalism gap may also show when contrasting the Soul dimension with the Goal dimension if the goals are set higher than the level of the practitioner's professionalism would reach. In this case either the skills or understanding of the values of PR are not on the level where they should be regarding how strategic and demanding the goals of PR in that particular context are. However, it could also be that the PR practitioner is highly competent and has adopted the values of PR but still the goals are not set at a strategic level.

TABLE 20 How the level of professionalism fits together with the level of the goals of PR?

	Strategic goals	Technical goals
High level of professionalism	Match	Strategic view gap
Low level of professionalism	Professionalism gap	Match

Table 20 presents how the level of the PR practitioner's professionalism and the level of the goals of PR fit together. The situation where the goals are set low while the level of PR practitioner's professionalism is high seems hypothetical and unlikely but there could for instance be for some reason a lack of ambition which would cause this situation. Like the situation described in section 6.2.1 where the goals are set low although the role would indicate higher goals, this case could also be called "Strategic view gap". Table 20 logically suggests that a low level of professionalism would match with the technical level goals but it would be fair to say also that technical level goals should be fulfilled professionally or they should be operated under supervision of more professional PR expert.

6.2.4 Loose goal, weak role and shaky soul

To conclude, the main pitfalls which may hinder PR from utilising its full potential can be found by contrasting different dimensions of PR professionalism. There are three main gaps which may cause different kind of problems. First, the strategic view gap causes that the goals will not meet the strategic ambition or the quality standards of PR. Figure 19 illustrates this situation.

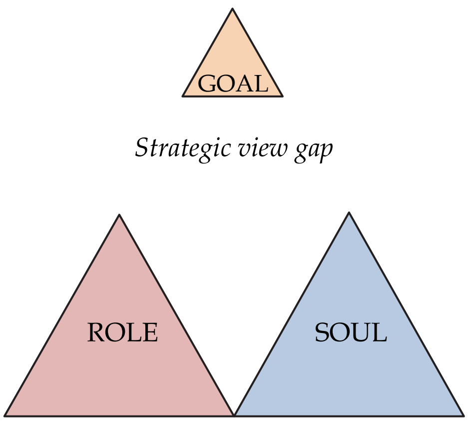


FIGURE 19 Loose goal: strategic view gap

Second, the status gap causes a weak role. If PR expertise is unrecognised and insufficiently respected, not much power or resources will be invested in the PR function. Figure 20 illustrates the weak role.

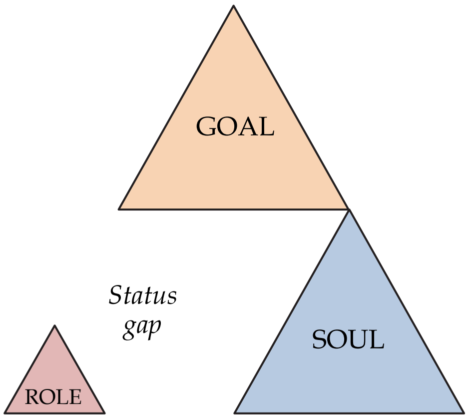


FIGURE 20 Weak role: status gap

Third, in a situation where the PR practitioner has not adopted values of professional PR strongly enough or lacks competence, the soul of the professional PR remains shaky. This is caused by the professionalism gap (Figure 21).

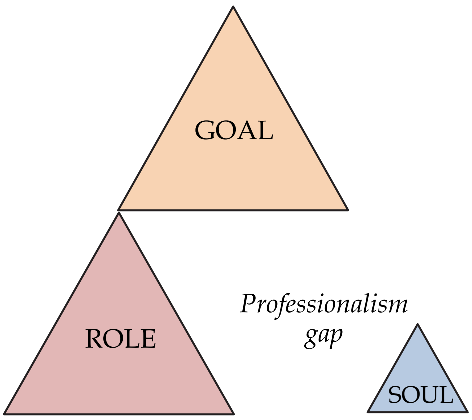


FIGURE 21 Shaky soul: professionalism gap

The above gaps are based partly on the indications from the interview data and partly on speculation. Further investigation would be needed to confirm these tentative problem areas and their consequences.

6.3 Ascending to the full potential

The key to reaching the full potential of PR professionalism is in the balance between the different dimensions of professionalism. Failing to do this, brings special challenges to professional PR practice and PR's role in the organisation. PR as a profession is related to other professions, to its own roots and to its developing body of knowledge. Like organisations neither professions are living in a vacuum. The same goes for the individual PR practitioner: the habitus is shaped by personal life-history, worldview, personality, and fears and dreams. The dimensions of professionalism are culturally shaped and actualise differently in different contexts. Yet the core remains the same and that is the essence of holistic model of professionalism: relatedness and agility which enable and empower the expertise to be used purposefully and ethically in each context.

Some of the interviewees seemed to give inconsistent answers, which led the researcher to search for the possible problem areas which might hinder PR professionalism from reaching its full potential. This path of investigation can be seen as fruitful since it brought up some possible pitfalls that may be good to avoid or solve if they actualise. However, it could also be that sometimes different ways of thinking in different contexts are necessary and tell rather of the agility of the professional than incompatible perceptions. Ashra (2008, 157–159) studied the daily working lives of communication professionals and concluded that they experience a sense of dislocation regarding their position and the value of their work: their perception of how much their work is valued and their sense of possessing power differed contextually. These contextually differing conceptions are not necessarily a sign of weakness but sometimes just the opposite. It could indicate the ability to adjust to various situations and adopt different roles, or it might suggest that change is in the air.

Figure 22 illustrates the multiple factors that affect the position and focus of PR. The triangle in front describes aspects that relate to the organisation's needs regarding communication (CN). These are derived and re-formulated from the goals of PR and elements of PR expertise found in the interview study. Here they are constructed as a hierarchy of organisation's communicative needs which resembles to an extent the classic Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs and the ERG theory of Alderfer (1969).

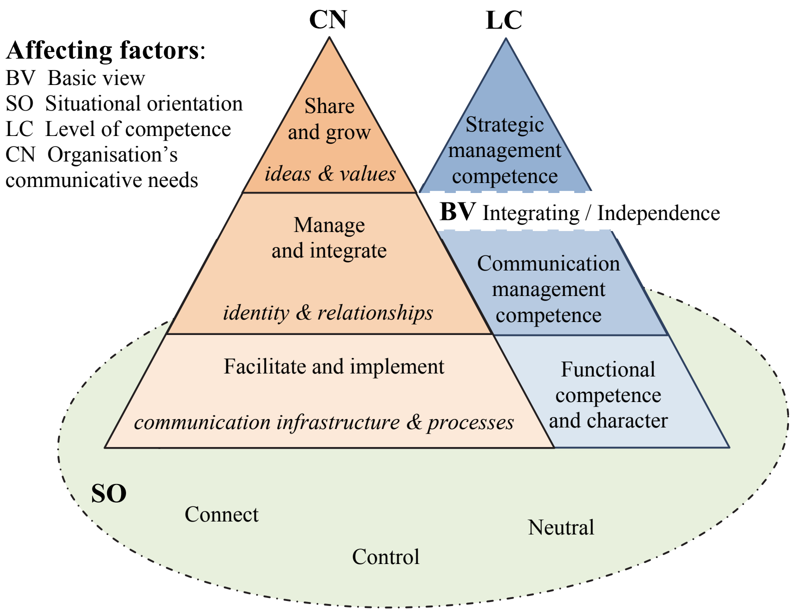


FIGURE 22 Factors affecting strategic position and focus of PR

The bottom level of the hierarchy consists of the basic communication needs for existing: adequate infrastructure and communication processes that enable the necessary information flow and communication which make the organisation function. These could be understood corresponding with Maslow's physiological and safety needs, or Alderfer's existence needs. On this level PR aims at facilitating and implementing.

On the middle level, the organisation's communicative needs focus on constructing identity, and establishing and maintaining relationships within the organisation and with the different actors of the surrounding world. PR takes management and integrating roles and aims at connecting, on the one hand, the members of the organisation with each other and the shared identity, and on the other hand, the organisation with the stakeholders. This level highlights the meaning of shared understanding of who we are (united organisational identity and culture) and the importance of being seen and known the way the organisation is (image and reputation). This level could thus be seen to correspond with Maslow's levels of social needs (love and belonging) and self-esteem, and with Alderfer's level of relatedness needs.

On the top level, the communicative needs relate to sharing and growing. Having the two grounding layers in order the organisation is able to make sense of the world, respond to the unpredictable events and yet go on communicating ideas and values. PR initiates and supports openness and sharing, which leads to growth in the sense of learning. This level could be seen as parallel to Maslow's needs of self-actualisation or Alderfer's growth needs.

In Figure 22, below the hierarchy of communicative needs a circle illustrates the situational orientations (SO) that vary from controlling to facilitating and connecting. These orientations were found in the analysis of the interviews when focusing on how the interviewees talk about different aspects of their work (see section 5.5.1). The orientations are not mutually exclusive choices. There are situations when controlling is an appropriate approach, whereas in other contexts open-minded interaction, genuine dialogue, is beneficial. Choosing the wrong approach may cause harm in some situations and also weaken PR's position in the long run. If PR professionals' general approach is heavily control-oriented one might be incapable of understanding the top level's strategic communication needs.

Controlling situations and proactive planning may not always work – in a chaotic space the cause and effect relations are not visible and so predicting consequences of actions is impossible (Kurtz & Snowden 2003). Also, as Taleb and Blyth (2011) argue in a business management context, trying to predict every possible danger and secure the stability in all situations may lead to becoming even more fragile and unable to respond when the unexpected happens. Accordingly, the overly emphasised control-orientation of the PR expert may result very differently than intended. Borrowing the concept of "antifragile" from Taleb (2012) Luomaaho (2013, 7) suggests that organisations should develop "antifragile communication", which is "based on intangibles such as organisational reputation, identity and values". She contends that communication that results in trust and realistic expectations makes organisations robust. However, if robustness makes organisations rigid it may impede their ability to respond to changes. Mac (2013, 130) concludes, based on her review on complexity theories, that

> complexity is characterized by moving, flow, feedback, and ongoing emergent evolution. Through feedback and adjusting to the complex context, balance is constantly disturbed and upset. As a consequence, the imperative of complexity is to make sense of the complex context and move in accordance to new conditions. In a sense, to balance is to move and depends on interaction between the components of the system.

The other triangle in the figure presents the PR expert's level of competence (LC) in a form of a hierarchy. In Figure 23, competence accumulates side by side in balance with an organisation's communicative needs. Basic level requires functional competence: channel knowledge, basic communication and organising skills and so forth. Character is mentioned here because the personality of a PR practitioner was highlighted many times during the interviews, and since the beneficial characteristics are considered as traits of personality there is little if any chance to acquire them if one does not possess those from the very beginning at least in an incipient sprout.

The middle level requires competence for managing communication processes and relationships, which may already be enough to reach the strategic position in the organisation. However, the highest, genuinely strategic level requires expertise and a strategic view, which enables connections of PR knowledge to the organisation's mission and challenges. A top level PR expert has such management competence which empowers to consult the management and take stance on strategic questions, legitimacy issues and value choices. In Figure 22 the integrating and independence views are represented in (the competence hierarchy) between the middle level and the top level, to illustrate how this basic view (BV) may turn out to be the crucial impediment that prevents PR from gaining strategic position or genuinely being up to the challenges of strategic management. It might be the perception of the PR professional that makes one remain in the top-down directed mode where PR is at best seen as an asset for solving communication problems or at worst as its own functional silo which only implements communication policies.

Independence seems intuitively a positive thing and it is also seen as a characteristic of professionalism in that sense that it is associated with the ability and the right to independent judgment in the situation of conflicting interests (Freidson 2001). This is surely the case also with PR. However, the Independence vs. integrating approach is understood here as a basic approach which guides the thinking of the PR practitioner and leads in the worst case to isolation. However, taken to the extreme the integrated approach may also be problematic: it may melt into other functions and lose the core of PR expertise.

Freidson (2001, 122) connects ideal-typical professionalism to "transcendent value which infuses its specialisation with a larger and putatively higher goal". He describes the difference between engineer and architect by stating that whereas an engineer's work is mainly technical, an architect harnesses the technical knowledge and skills to a higher purpose of aesthetic design (p. 172–173). In PR's case the higher purpose which is served while at the same time taking care of the basic communication infrastructure and identity and relationship management, can be found from the top level of communication needs of the organisation: PR helps the organisation to share and grow. This is expressed in the conclusions of the interpretative study of concepts by stating that PR's ultimate goals are to promote respect, responsibility and reflexivity. It all comes to the question of seeing the organisation as part of the surrounding society where different actors are connected to each other and accountable for their actions. The communication point of view which is highlighted in many interviews of this study is thus precisely helping the organisation to see itself through the lens of relatedness and shared responsibility.

> PR professional always represents the outsider, citizen, customer of stakeholder in the organisation. Specifically to tell how this looks for the outsider. What are their needs and demands and images. This is what you have to try to bring up, that "hey, from inside this surely looks exactly like this, but let's think how this looks for instance to this or that group's representative". (F29, PR manager, public sector)

> You have to understand the connections between the organisation and the surrounding world, so that you understand how things stand. And you are able to reflect that world and, on the other hand, to bring the message from the organisation to the operational environment and, on the other hand, bring messages from the operational environment to the organisation. (F5, PR manager, public sector)

> Many times the decision making is such that you have to consider many things. Communication is seldom the only thing to think, and it comes to how I or my subordinate

> colleagues can bring up the communication point of view into the decision making. I requires that it is said and communicated clearly that what this means when we evaluate the situation communicatively. (F27, PR manager, B2B private sector)

Over all it seems that the ability to understand different contexts and adjust to a variety of circumstances is one of the strengths of PR as a strategic level function and a key competence of individual PR experts. Social actors – for instance organisations, and PR experts as part of them – are reproducing or transforming the structures (institutionalised rules and resources, or sets of transformation relations), which form the basis for the existence of the social actors, and for the power-relations between them (Giddens 2009; see also Jensen 2013). However, the turbulence of the contemporary world makes it difficult to recognise and transform the structures affecting us and simultaneously keep up with the change processes of the surrounding environment. As Bauman (2008) explains, we live in a liquid modernity where the social forms (structures and institutionalised routines) are dissolving and falling apart quicker than it takes to construct them. What is considered legitimate today may be challenged tomorrow. The uncertainty and complexity can be reduced by "institutionalization processes" where shared understandings about the social structures and ways of operating are constructed, reassessed and reconfigured (Jensen 2013, 64). If PR experts are expected to reduce complexity and consolidate or modify the structures that are enabling or hampering the mission they are engaged for, they need to have expertise for that. An essential element of their expertise is the ability to see the wider contexts and connections of things, take the "helicopter view", and find the spots where communication or relationship management has a crucial role. Also the data of this research shows that this is one of the most important competences of the PR professional.

The role, the goal and the soul of professional PR form an integral whole which is more than the sum of its parts. Each of the dimensions could be described as pyramids where the bottom level forms the most basic features, the second level consists of more advanced elements, and the top level completes the pyramid with the most developed substance of the dimension. Figure 23 illustrates the levels of each dimension. The middle of the whole pyramid explains how the dimensions develop from basic *performing* to *internalising* and finally to *using full potential.* The bottom level is about performing practical skills and operative tasks in order to secure functioning communication infrastructure. On the second level professionalism develops to *internalising* knowledge and ability to apply it, and adopting a communication management role. In the profession's goal dimension this level is about helping the organisation internalise its identity and relations to others. Finally, on the top level professionalism advances to *using the full potential* of value-based strategic management competence, and acts in strategic management role. In this level PR's goal in its full potential is to enable genuine connectedness which leads to sharing and growing ideas and values.

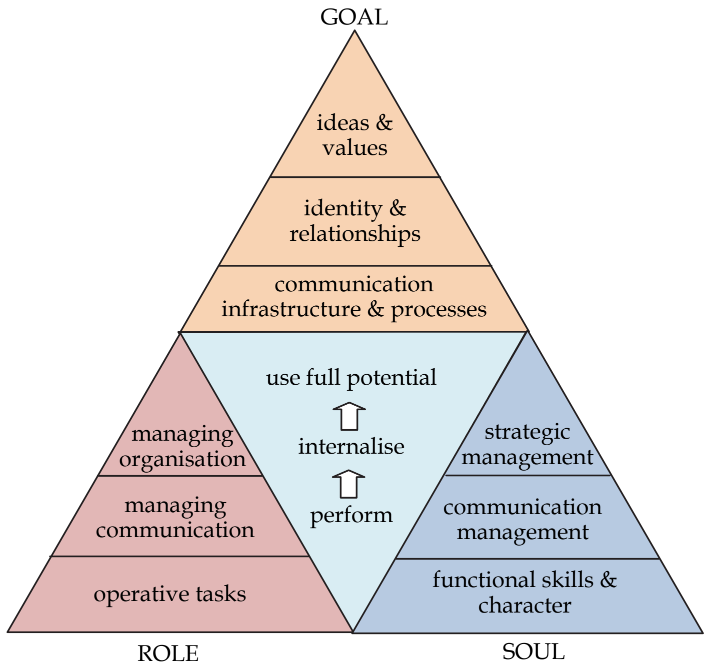


FIGURE 23 Hierarchically developing dimensions of PR professionalism

Limitations to illustrating a dynamic phenomenon in a two-dimensional format become apparent here, as well as limited nature of modelling as such. Although models are inevitably simplifications, they are worth it when they help understand the complex phenomenon they represent. At best the dimensions of PR professionalism fit together and are agile enough to adjust to different contexts while still staying loyal to their essential features. The role of PR in the organisation moves from implementing communication tasks to communication management and at best reaches also the level of strategic management function. The goal of PR begins from taking care of functioning of the organisation by securing the communication infrastructure, and advances to supporting the mission of the organisation by enabling strong identity and good relations to the environment, and finally culminates to helping the organisation to learn and grow by enabling genuine dialogue and engagement. The soul of professionalism rests in an individual PR professional's ability to rise from performing tasks through internalising knowledge into adopting and applying the professional values.

These dynamic dimensions and their interrelatedness form the totality of this model which is articulated in the following propositions:

1 PR professionalism is a holistic entity that consists of three intertwined dimensions: the role, the goal and the soul. The whole is more than a sum of its parts and it is not complete if any of the dimensions is missing.

2 The role of PR in the organisation is to be a strategic bridging agent who connects PR goals to the organisation's strategy, connects organisation's strategy to

the field of forces, and connects members of the organisation with each other and to the organisation and its strategy, by second order management. The key to this role is not necessarily the managerial position but PR professional's ability to understand and enact that role. Strategic bridging begins from making the management see the sense in strategic bridging.

3 The goal of PR is ethical as such: to enhance a communicative organisation which recognises its engagement to the surrounding community. This includes fulfilling the basic communicative needs of the organisation, constructing a coherent identity and sustainable relationships, and engaging in respectful, responsible and reflexive interaction with other actors within the social surroundings.

4 The soul of PR is embedded in the professional identity and competence of individual PR practitioner. The habitus of the PR professional affects how one will internalise the values and objectives of PR and how well one will be able to apply them in the current societal and organisational surroundings.

5 The role, the goal, and the soul of professional PR all develop from performing basic level skills and tasks or fulfilling basic needs, to internalising more advanced objectives, and finally to using the full potential of inter-connectedness, mature problem-solving and value-judgments.

By stressing the connectedness, engagement and contextual orientation, the holistic model of PR professionalism rises above the modernist paradigm. The holistic model views communication management (and communication overall) as more than a tool for a rational setting and reaching objectives. Bencherki, Chaput, Cooren and Vasquez (2014) contend that organisations and strategies "essentially consist of interconnected processes of communication". Their analysis leans on "communicative constitution of organisation" (CCO) and strategy-as-practice (SaP) approaches, and their key statement is that strategies are not only a result of rational planning but they also emerge from communication. The "fleeting moments of strategy" are the phases of discussion when issues of concern or interest are recognised, articulated and lifted to the agenda. In the current world of rapid changes, this approach may help organisations to be more responsive and adaptive but yet able to maintain a state of equilibrium. Fredriksson (2009) uses Beck's conceptualisation of reflexive modernity which Beck sees as radicalisation of modernity instead of a totally new era. In the conditions of reflexive modernity PR is rising above expressive means and becoming a necessary agent in helping to deal with uncertainty and complexity in society. In the era of reflexive modernity the responsibility for one's actions becomes highlighted.

> The integration of opinions, values, and ideas creates a situation where different rationalities meet, which contributes to increasing complexity and a considerably larger number of possible scenarios about the future.
>
> (Fredriksson 2009, 29.)

While modernity nurtured PR when it was taking its first steps, reflexive modernity raised it to maturity by operating in various surroundings with many kinds of tools, tactics and strategies (Fredriksson 2009).

> It is in a radicalization of the modernity that the practice of public relations becomes a managerial tool in line with others, and it is here that the symbolic constructions become of equal significance to instrumental means.
>
> (Fredriksson 2009, 28.)

What is important in each situation and what thus should be PR's goal depends on a particular context and the level of how the strategic role of PR has, and cannot be judged only by looking at the concrete tasks. For instance, it is highly strategic to begin by establishing basic communication channels in a start-up organisation.

The repeatedly rising debate about PR's allegedly contradictory role as an advocate of the client's interests and wider public interests is solved when PR promotes connectedness, sense-making and shared values. PR professionals work for an organisation, which is in on-going reflexively and reproducing interaction with the complex macro level society. Through this connection organisation's actions affect the processes and power relations in the societal context. When being aware of this connection and adopting Beck's idea of reflexivity, the organisation's interests and societal approach of PR may be described with Giddensian terms as mutually including "duality" (Giddens 2009, 25).[42]

PR's multidisciplinary nature and the diversity that reflects in PR's various definitions are sometimes seen as a threat to the professionalisation of the field. However, it can also be seen as an advantage when proving the value of expertise and adopting the professional identity of an expert: PR can bend to many situations and there is space for different personalities and different competence profiles in the field. Nowadays expertise is generally associated with a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach rather than with narrow-field specialising (Konttinen 1997; Launis 1997; Launis & Engeström 1999). In today's world, expertise calls for an extensive approach and PR's diversity offers good chances for that. It seems that overall instead of the old "closed" boundary-oriented professionalism the current world requires open-contextual and interactive professionalism which leans on the ability to fit in to a specific situation and simultaneously stay loyal to the professional values. The holistic model of PR professionalism is thus a good example of a fresh approach to professionalism which may also benefit other professions.

42 Duality refers to interdependent parts of the phenomenon: they would not exist without each other. Dualism, on the other hand, refers to two independently existing sets of phenomena (Giddens 2009, 25).

7 DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION

While discussing different aspects of PR and its current challenges, and constructing the holistic model of PR professionalism, this research has deepened the understanding of both PR and professionalism. It has combined different approaches to PR, as well as organisational, occupational and individual approaches to professionalism, explaining these approaches as interdependent rather than mutually exclusive and opposite perspectives.

The first subordinate study (see Chapter 4) consisted of the interpretative study of concepts, and aimed to find out how the elements of PR professionalism are constructed in academic PR literature (RQ 4). In addition, the subordinate study asked what empowers PR to act in a strategic expert role (RQ 5), and what are the core values of professional PR (RQ 6)? The subordinate study outlined that PR professionalism consists of expertise in management of identity, management of public sphere, and management of relationships. What empowers PR to take a strategic management position is the combination of competence and internalised values. Professional PR uses strategic enabling and bridging which actualise in implementation of communication processes. The core values – respect, responsibility and reflexivity – guide PR professionals and form also the ultimate goals of PR: while connecting to the mission of the organisation PR aims at bridging organisation with its environment, appreciating other actors and being accountable for its doings.

The second subordinate study (see Chapter 5), focused on interpreting the perceptions of 37 Finnish PR professionals. The main aim was to find out what the critical aspects are that separate interviewees' qualitatively different ways of perceiving the professional PR (RQ 10)? Relating to the debates often presented in academic circles, the subordinate study asked how the interviewees perceive PR's role as an expert function (RQ 7) and the meaning of PR for the organisation (RQ 8)? In addition, the subordinate study examined how the interviewees perceive the difference between professional and unprofessional PR practice (RQ 9)?

The main conclusion regarding how the position of PR was perceived relates to how the interviewees reason the importance of having a seat at the decision-making tables. Some interviewees emphasised that PR needs to be close to the management in order to get information to be able to take care of its tasks. This approach was named the independence view. Other interviewees held an integrating view and felt that it is essential to be part of strategic management to be able to connect PR to the mission of the organisation. Those who had a more neutral view were not interested in the position other than getting enough resources.

The meaning of PR for the organisation was discussed in the context of what PR produces for the organisation (added value) and, more specifically, what are PR's goals (see section 5.2.1). According to the findings of this subordinate study the goals of PR are: (1) achieving the basic mission of the organisation, (2) well-functioning organisation, (3) identity, (4) reputation, (5) legitimacy and accountability, and (6) communicative organisation.

Regarding what separates professional and unprofessional PR (RQ 8) some of the interviewees emphasised professional competence, some professional values, some stressed the quality of work and others associated the issue mainly with professional identity and behaviour. The related issues of ethics and quality of work were reported in greater detail in section 5.3.

When constructing the final outcome space of the phenomenographic analysis five different approaches to professional PR were found: Bridge builder, Advocate of the organisation, Advocate of the mission, Strategic facilitator, and Neutral facilitator. The critical differences in thinking related to the main goal of PR, its position and how the demand for recognition is reasoned, nature of communication, general orientation, and relation to ethics.

Overall, this dissertation aimed at finding out how professionalism can help PR to find its full potential as an expert function (RQ 1)? To which end, the questions were asked, what are the key enablers of PR professionalism (RQ 2) and what are the impediments for PR professionalism (RQ3)? Answers to these questions were constructed along the research paths by picking the most important clues from familiar and fresh points of views and bringing them together in the fourth phase of the study (see Chapter 6).

Based on the findings and interpretations of the two subordinate studies a holistic model of PR professionalism was constructed. The model consists of three dimensions of PR professionalism – the role, the goal and the soul – which bring together organisational, occupational and individual approaches to professionalism. The dimensions are intertwined and inseparable: only together do they enable and empower PR to ascend to its full potential. In its full potential, PR is a powerful asset for an organisation, yet without being blinded by the power. The model presents PR professionalism as a multifaceted whole, which facilitates communicative organisation and bridges it with its environments, guides the profession to goal-oriented and high quality practice, and supports the individual practitioner's competence and professional identity.

Professional PR is committed to its core values of respect, responsibility and reflexivity. PR professionals are not one-size-fits-all standardised but they may have different basic approaches to their work and they may adopt different orientations in different situations. However, the goal and core values of PR anchor PR practitioners and their work to professionalism.

The findings suggest that being able to interpret different contexts and adjust to varying situations is one of the essential elements of PR expertise and crucial for proving its importance as a strategic level function. Managing this kind of contextual expertise in quickly changing circumstances requires a strong professional identity – otherwise the PR expert is at the risk of losing the professional focus and autonomy. The speed of events and changes in the societal power relations are challenging also PR experts: one has to be able to simultaneously look close and far, and make quick turns of directions, yet nursing commitment and sustainability.

The model shows the ideal situation but it also points out the possible contradictions which were found while interpreting the empirical data and the literature. In ideal cases the variations within each dimension fit together. For instance, the PR manager possessing strategic level management competence has a strategic position in the organisation and performs high quality goal-oriented PR. However, in practice there may be contradictions which could cause misunderstandings, mistrust, frustration, and role conflicts which prevent PR expertise from using its full potential. The model helps to detect the gaps and find ways to improve the situation. In that sense the model is normative: although it indicates possible real life contradictions it guides PR practitioners to reach for the ideal situation.

7.1 Evaluation of the outcomes

The fruitfulness of the results of this research depends on whether the results provide a new pragmatic or intellectual value for the PR field or the scientific community. When evaluating the outcomes of this research from the point of view of scientific community the subordinate studies and the holistic model of PR professionalism add new insights to the academic debates.

For decades PR scholars have circled around the issues of what PR is and who it is supposed to be serving. They have tried to tackle the identity-crisis and beat the legitimacy struggles of PR in numerous research articles and other writings. From this perspective it is easy to take a cynical viewpoint and note that this research is just another drop in a bucket. However, a more hopeful voice claims that this research could indeed make sense in relation to these issues.

When it comes to the value of this research for the academic community, it can also be said that combining the dimension of individual professionalism to the previous hybrid professionalism (which includes dimensions of organisational and occupational professionalism) adds a fresh perspective to profession studies. Thus this research also contributes to this branch of science.

From the pragmatic point of view this research provides some useful insights for PR educators and PR associations. PR professionalism comes alive through the soul dimension, that is, through the individual PR professional. How this actualises depends on the competence level and internalised professional identity of the practitioner. It is thus highly important that PR practitioners are socialized to the professional community. This may be influenced through education and professional associations.

The findings also offer some viewpoints to consider while planning the curriculum for PR education. It is essential that PR professionals possess knowledge and mental capacity for critical thinking and taking an advisory role in complex issues including ethics and value choices. Furthermore, the notion of communicative organisation points out the importance of PR professional's role as a coach who helps organisational members on all levels to improve their communication competence.

The results of this research may also help PR to connect better to the strategy of the organisation. By pointing out the differences in PR professionals' thoughts regarding the position of PR, the research may help some PR professionals to widen their perspective from an independence view to the integrating view (see section 5.1.1). Secondly, realising that an organisation's communicative needs differ according to the situation may help to see the strategic value of different PR processes and operations, and link them better to the higher level goals of the organisation. Recognising the constitutive nature of communication (Miller 2014; van Laere 2013) highlights the importance of PR, directs the efforts to focus on the situational communication needs of the organisation, and empowers the organisation to genuine engagement and creative interaction in its actions.

Overall the transferability or generalisability of the findings of qualitative research relies on how the sample is justified, and if the conclusions are sufficiently abstracted and lead to accumulation of knowledge (see section 2.7.2). In this research, the knowledge is gathered and constructed using multiple methods and thus it is fair to say that the new knowledge provided here is more than knowledge about an isolated case. Contrasting empirical findings with the literature-based interpretations connects them with wider perspective. Although based on Finnish data, the findings may be considered relevant for other contexts as well. The model also combines the inferences of the subordinate studies and thus takes the already abstracted findings to the next level. The connection between the empirical findings and the simplification of reality presented in the model is explained in the argument, which – despite the limitations of translation and protecting the anonymity of the respondents – tried to maximise the authenticity of the data.

The scope of the research is perhaps the biggest weakness of this dissertation. The issues relevant to this topic are numerous and multifaceted. After every turn on this journey, new interesting paths opened up, each worth investigating. Regarding each new view, it had to be considered whether that direction was important and if so how far to go in order to not lose track of the intended goal. Some important aspects may have been left with too little attention. Yet, in the end it is the usability of the results that matters most. This research brought together many different perceptions and managed to construct a parsimonious representation of reality, which has a clear focus and a number of possibilities for applying it.

7.2 Suggestions for further research

This research raises many ideas for further investigations. First of all, it must be acknowledged that the holistic model of PR professionalism developed in this research is tentative and requires thus further rigorous investigation to test the credibility and applicability of the propositions. However, the model is promising, and it might provide deeper understanding about the aspects of professionalism possibly also to other professions, and could thus generate more interdisciplinary research projects.

The conclusions of this research are made based on analysing literature and empirical data, which was collected in Finland among PR managers of various organisations in a variety of business sectors. The data was the foundation for a richly textured picture on how the interviewed PR professionals experience their work and how they conceptualise PR professionalism and related issues. There would, however, be ways to analyse the current data even further, for instance by using discourse analysis to detect how professionalism is constructed by different discourses, or the power relations implicitly mentioned in the interview talk could be further investigated.

To examine further some of the findings of this research for instance Q-methodology could be used. To take an example a "Q-sort" could be conducted about how PR professionals understand the core values of PR. In this method the research participants grade how they perceive a set of statements, and these are analysed with factor analysis in order to find the differing thinking patterns (McKeown & Thomas 1988).

Another interesting perspective would be to examine whether the top managers of the organisation and the PR professional understand the goals of PR similarly. Comparing the points of view of top management and PR professionals would provide knowledge of the factors that affect PR's position in the organisation: is there a gap between how top management understands PR's contribution to the organisation and how PR professionals see it?

To widen the perspective even further it would be interesting to continue the research in other countries, to look into different views and approaches of PR professionals in various national societal surroundings. A survey could be conducted to test whether the thought patterns found in this research exist elsewhere. A survey could also be used for testing if the gaps that seem to exist based on the interviews exist more widely.

In addition, the model constructed in this research could be developed into a diagnostic tool, which could help PR professionals and the top management of their organisations to detect the strengths and possible impediments that affect

PR's performance in a particular context. The diagnostic tool could be further developed and tested in different societal surroundings.

There are many possibilities to continue with the themes of this dissertation and further clarify perspectives on PR professionalism and facilitate reflection on PR competence needed in today's world.

7.3 Evaluation of the research process

The research approached the studied phenomenon from different angles, following the idea of "crystallisation" (Richardson & St. Pierre 2008). The phenomenon of PR professionalism is wide and different aspects of it have been studied from several points of views over the years. This made it challenging to choose what is included or excluded from this research. Also the fact that researcher has involved different concepts when examining these issues, as well as the empirical data being in Finnish, made it sometimes difficult to keep the focus clear. This research tackled these challenges by explaining the conceptual ambiguity and the choices of the terms used where needed and by providing the final outcome as a coherent whole which answers to the problem setting.

The process of analysing the interview data turned out to be more complex than expected. The research made the classic mistake of a novice phenomenographic researcher by starting from a (perhaps too detailed) categorisation of themes that appeared in the interview data instead of concentrating on the differences between the ways of thinking of the interviewees (see Paakkari 2012). When realising that the categories of meaning that had been produced was reminiscent of an ordinary thematic content analysis, it had to be decided whether to abandon those and re-work the analysis, or to keep what had been accomplished and continue the analysis with a more in-depth phenomenographic approach. It was decided to do the latter since the findings of the analysis already conducted were considered fruitful and worth sharing. Thus the analysis continued by reading the data through several more times, now concentrating on finding the critical factors that characterise the ways of thinking of the individual respondents. Finally, the results can be described as phenomenoraphic, but the path through which they were reached cannot be described as "orthodox" phenomenographic analysis.

As a whole, the research was a versatile process, which did not progress chronologically through certain predefined steps. The model was constructed along the way, picking up ideas piece-by-piece during all phases of the research. It was finalised in the end and at that point it was also necessary to return to the analysis of the subordinate studies to confirm that the interpretations were based on correct observations and to refine the choice of some concepts. This way the accuracy of the descriptions and consistency of inferences (Miller 2002) were assured.

One might question if the model provides answers that go beyond the research questions. The research questions were designed to complement each other and to provide an in-depth and crystallised picture of the studied phenomenon within the chosen framework. While taking a holistic approach and scrutinising PR through the three-dimensional lens of professionalism, this research has explained thoroughly the potential of PR expertise and the enablers and impediments of it. The model thus gives a comprehensive picture of how professional PR contributes to the functioning of organisations. PR is involved on many levels in an organisation's functions. Putting together two complex issues, PR and professionalism, naturally produces multifaceted insights.

The researcher who started this journey of exploration was an enthusiastic conqueror who thought she is a critical thinker who wants to, if not change the world, at least shake the dominant paradigms and show how life really is. The researcher who arrived at the destination turned out to be a mediator who tries to see the value of each outlook and find the common ground for different viewpoints. Apparently the phenomenographic analysis process, which appreciates all conceptions as equal to each other and concentrates on finding the differences and similarities in the ways of thinking affected the way of thinking of the researcher. Criticism of naive functionalism dissolved into constructive synthesising, which a critical thinker might accuse of falling back to harmony-seeking functionalism. This is, however, not the case. It is not enough that the pieces fit together and form a consistent, stable picture. The whole picture also needs to be adjustable and agile. Instead of simply accommodating to emerging conditions it has to dynamically connect the pieces to each other and to the context so that creativity and innovation are possible. This is the most important discovery that this journey has provided and it applies both to the researcher as a producer of new thinking, and to professionalism as the enabler of strategic PR expertise.

YHTEENVETO

Professionaalisen PR:n rooli, päämäärä ja sielu
Yhteisöviestinnän professionalismin kokonaisvaltaista mallia kehittämässä

1 Johdanto

Organisaatiot toimivat tänä päivänä yhä monimutkaisemmassa ympäristössä ja kohtaavat yhä monitahoisempia haasteita. Viestintä vaikuttaa organisaation toimintaan monella tasolla, mutta viestinnän ammattilaisten strategista roolia ei aina tunnisteta tai tunnusteta. Käsitykset viestinnän ammattilaisuudesta vaihtelevat laidasta laitaan niin tavallisen kansan kuin alan ammattilaisten ja akateemikkojenkin keskuudessa. Toisessa ääripäässä viestinnän ammattilaisia pidetään yhteisen hyvän ja demokratian edistäjinä, kun taas toisessa ääripäässä heidät nähdään totuuden hämärtäjinä ja propagandisteina. Alaan liitettyjen mielikuvien moninaisuutta voidaan selittää viestinnän ammattilaisten monipuolisilla työnkuvilla ja kirjavilla taustoilla sekä ammattikunnan historialla, joka monissa maissa (kuten Suomessa) kytkeytyy osin sotapropagandaan (Melgin & Nurmilaakso 2012). Kuten Fitzpatrick ja Gauthier toteavat, aivan kuten aseita, strategista viestintää voidaan käyttää laillisiin ja eettisiin tarkoituksiin yhtälailla kuin laittomiin ja epäeettisiin tarkoituksiin (2001, 194–195).

Tämä tutkimus pyrkii selventämään viestinnän ammattilaisuuden luonnetta ja sen asemaa tarkastelemalla ilmiötä professionalismin näkökulmasta. Professionalismi ja asiantuntijuus liittyvät pätevyyteen ja luotettavuuteen. Mikä tekee viestinnän asiantuntijuudesta luotettavaa, ja mikä erottaa professionaalisen PR-asiantuntijuuden epäprofessionaalisista julkisuuspeleistä tai arkisesta viestintäosaamisesta? Mitä on professionalismi PR-alalla: millaisista tiedoista, taidoista ja arvoista se muodostuu, ja mitä annettavaa sillä on organisaatioille tai yhteiskunnalle?

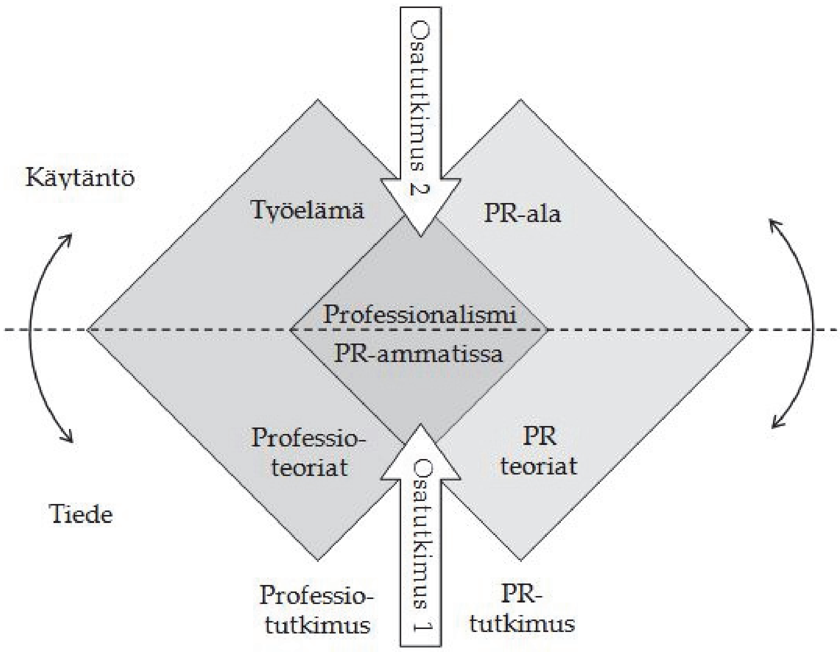
Tässä tutkimuksessa käytetään englanninkielistä termiä ”public relations” ja sen lyhennettä PR[1]. Monissa maissa termi PR on käännetty omalle kielelle tai käytössä on muu alaa kuvaava viestintään tai suhteiden hallintaan liittyvä käsite. Suomessa PR käännettiin alun perin suhdetoiminnaksi, mutta tästä on pitkälti luovuttu (Siukosaari 2012) ja käyttöön ovat yleistyneet organisaatioviestintä, viestinnän johtaminen, strateginen viestintä, yhteisöviestintä tai yksinkertaisesti vain viestintä. Vaikka termien määrittelyissä on eroja, käytetään niitä usein käytännössä samassa merkityksessä kuin käsitettä PR tässä tutkimuksessa: kattokäsitteenä kaikelle organisaation viestinnälle erilaisten sisäisten ja ulkoisten sidosryhmien kanssa.

[1] Tässä yhteenvedossa termejä PR ja yhteisöviestintä käytetään synonyymeina, samoin termejä PR-ammattilainen ja viestinnän ammattilainen.

2 Tutkimusretken tieteellinen maaperä ja reitit kohti päämäärää

Tämä tutkimus sijoittuu tulkinnalliseen paradigmaan (Miller 2002) ja konstruktionistista epistemologiaa soveltavaan fenomenografiseen tutkimustraditioon, jonka mukaan ei ole olemassa yhtä todellisuutta, vaan todellisuudet rakentuvat tulkintojen kautta (Green 2005). Ihmisten kokemusmaailma muotoutuu subjektin ja ympäristön välisessä suhteessa (Marton & Booth 1997). Fenomenografinen tutkimus tarkastelee laadullisia eroja ihmisten tavoissa käsitteellistää kokemaansa.

Kiinnostuksen kohteena tässä tutkimuksessa on professionalismi viestinnän ammattilaisen työssä. Lähtöolettamuksena on, että professionalismi ei ole yksi, absoluuttisesti määriteltävissä oleva ilmiö vaan se on sosiaalisesti rakennettu konstruktio. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan yhtäältä sitä, miten PR-professionalismia konstruoidaan akateemisessa kirjallisuudessa, ja toisaalta sitä, miten PR-ammattilaiset näkevät ilmiön. Perustavana tausta-ajatuksena on, että tiede ja käytäntö eivät ole toisistaan irrallisia vaan keskinäisessä vuorovaikutuksessa toisiaan ruokkivia maailmoja. Siksi tutkimuskohdetta halutaan lähestyä sekä akateemisten tekstien että empiirisen haastattelututkimuksen kautta. Kuvio 24 havainnollistaa tämän tutkimuksen teoreettista viitekehystä ja taustalla vaikuttavaa maailmankatsomusta.



KUVIO 24 Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys

Tutkimus koostuu neljästä vaiheesta. Ensimmäisessä vaiheessa (I) luodaan katsaus professiotutkimukseen ja muodostetaan tutkimuksen käsitteellinen viitekehys, jonka varaan muut vaiheet rakentuvat. Seuraavissa vaiheissa (II ja III) aihetta tarkastellaan kahden osatutkimuksen kautta. Ensimmäinen osatutkimus on tulkitseva käsitetutkimus (Takala & Lämsä 2001), jossa perehdytään siihen, miten professionalismi ymmärretään akateemisessa PR-kirjallisuudessa. Toinen osatutkimus on fenomenografinen haastattelututkimus, jossa tutkitaan PR-ammattilaisten näkemyksiä työstään ja siitä, mitä he pitävät professionaalisena ammatinharjoittamisena. Tutkimusta varten haastateltiin 37 suomalaista viestinnän ammattilaista, jotka työskentelivät erilaisissa yksityisen, julkisen ja voittoa tavoittelemattoman sektorin organisaatioissa. Viimeisessä vaiheessa (IV) kootaan näiden osatutkimusten tulokset yhteen ja rakennetaan kokonaisvaltainen professionaalisen PR:n malli, joka yhdistää ammatillisen, organisatorisen ja yksilöllisen näkökulman professionalismiin.

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on lisätä ymmärrystä siitä, mitä on professionalismi PR-alalla ja mitkä tekijät edistävät tai vaikeuttavat sen toteutumista. Päätutkimuskysymykset ovat seuraavat:

1 Miten professionalismi voi auttaa PR:ää saavuttamaan täyden potentiaalinsa asiantuntijatehtävänä?
2 Mitkä ovat avaintekijät, jotka mahdollistavat professionalismin PR-ammatissa?
3 Millaiset tekijät estävät professionalismia PR-ammatissa?

Professionalismin elementtejä tarkastellaan lähemmin kahdessa osatutkimuksessa, joille on laadittu omat tarkemmat tutkimuskysymyksensä.

Tulkitseva käsitetutkimus

4 Miten PR-professionalismin elementit konstruoidaan alan akateemisessa kirjallisuudessa?
5 Mikä valtuuttaa PR:n toimimaan strategisessa asiantuntijaroolissa?
6 Mitkä ovat professionaalisen PR:n keskeiset arvot?

Haastattelututkimus

7 Millaisena haastateltavat (PR-ammattilaiset Suomessa) näkevät PR:n roolin asiantuntijatoimintona?
8 Millaisena haastateltavat näkevät viestinnän merkityksen organisaatiolle?
9 Millaisena haastateltavat näkevät professionaalisen ja epäprofessionaalisen PR:n eron?
10 Mitkä ovat ne kriittiset tekijät, jotka erottavat toisistaan haastateltavien laadullisesti erilaiset näkemykset professionaalisesta PR:stä?

Tämä tutkimus on luonteeltaan kvalitatiivinen. Sen luotettavuutta pyritään lisäämään mahdollisimman refleksiivisellä ja läpinäkyvällä raportoinnilla (Lincoln & Guba 2000). Tulkintoihin johtanut päättelyketju pyritään kuvaamaan tarkasti, ja sitä havainnollistetaan autenttisilla tekstikatkelmilla. Läpileikkaavana eettisenä periaatteena tutkimuksessa on erilaisten näkökulmien kunnioittaminen. Lisäksi haastattelututkimuksessa haastateltavien anonymiteettia suojellaan abstrahoimalla käytetyt tekstikatkelmat siten, ettei yksittäistä vastaajaa voi tunnistaa.

3 Vaihe I: Kartta keskeisiin käsitteisiin

Tutkimuksen ensimmäisessä vaiheessa tehtiin kirjallisuuskatsaus, jossa kartoitettiin professiotutkimuksen vaiheita ja professionalismiin liittyviä käsitteitä. Tämän pohjalta rakennettiin koko tutkimuksen käsitteellinen viitekehys ja luotiin taustoittava katsaus professionalismitutkimukseen PR-alalla.

Professiotutkimuksessa voidaan nähdä kaksi keskeistä koulukuntaa, jotka vaikuttivat professiokeskusteluun 1900-luvulla. Vuosisadan alkupuolella vallalla oli funktionalistinen koulukunta, jonka mukaan professiot käyttävät erityistä tietopääomaansa asiakkaan palvelemiseen ja yhteiskunnan parhaaksi. Suuntaus hiipui 1970-luvun kriittisen koulukunnan voimakkaan arvostelun seurauksena. Kriittinen koulukunta, muun muassa uusweberiläiset, väittivät professioiden pyrkivän ainoastaan oman statuksen kohottamiseen ja monopoliaseman saavuttamiseen. (Ks. esim. Freidson 2001; Konttinen 1989; Abbott 1988.) Tämän jälkeen professiokeskustelussa ei ole noussut selkeää uutta paradigmaa, vaan tutkimus on viime vuosikymmeninä ollut hajanaista ja monissa tapauksissa vanhan toistoa.

Kronologisen kehityksen kuvaamista hedelmällisemmäksi osoittautui professiotutkimuksen lähestymistapojen erottelu niiden fokuksen mukaan. Tästä näkökulmasta professiotutkimuksessa voidaan nähdä kolme tyypillistä tutkimuslinjaa: profession piirteisiin keskittyvä, sen suhdetta yhteiskuntaan tarkasteleva ja ammatilliseen toimintaan (performance) kohdistuva tutkimus.

Piirteisiin keskittyvä näkökulma on pyrkinyt määrittelemään professiota listaamalla sen ominaisuuksia ja tarkastelemalla, täyttävätkö ammattikunnat profession kriteerit. Larson (1979) ja Eraut (1996) päätyvät kolmen ulottuvuuden määritelmään kumpikin hieman eri sanavalinnoin. Profession kriteereinä voidaan heidän mukaansa pitää tiedollista, normatiivista ja arvioivaa ulottuvuutta. Professioiksi voidaan lukea sellaiset ammatit, joissa sovelletaan pitkälle erikoistunutta teoreettista tietopohjaa ja noudatetaan tiettyjä normeja ja eettistä palveluorientaatiota. Arvioiva ulottuvuus liittyy profession itsemääräämisoikeuteen, ja siten tämä ulottuvuus itse asiassa kytkeytyy myös profession asemaan yhteiskunnassa. Professioiden yhteiskunnallista asemaa tarkastelevan tutkimuslinjan keskeiset paradigmat ovat edellä mainitut funktionalistinen ja kriittinen koulukunta. Ammatilliseen toimintaan keskittyvä professiotutkimus on kiinnostunut ammattikäytännöistä, ammattilaisuuden toteuttamisesta ja ammatti-identiteetin muodostumisesta.

Tässä tutkimuksessa professionalismin käsitettä ei sidota ammattikunnan asemaan työmarkkinoilla eikä professioita määritteleviin kriteereihin. Riippumatta siitä, täyttyvätkö tietyt profession määritelmään liittyvät kriteerit jonkin ammattikunnan kohdalla, ammattikunta voi korostaa ja tukea professionalismia ammatinharjoittamisessa. Toisaalta myös työnantajaorganisaatiot voivat käyttää professionalismia ohjauksen ja kontrollin muotona tavoitellessaan parempia työsuorituksia. Näitä lähestymistapoja on kutsuttu professiotutkimuksessa ammatilliseksi (occupational) ja organisatoriseksi (organisational) professionalismiksi. (Evetts 2009; 2003b.) Tyypillisesti näiden suuntauksien on nähty aiheuttavan lojaliteettiristiriitaa, mutta 2000-luvulla on alettu puhua näiden yhdistelmästä, "hybridi-professionalismista" (Noordegraaf 2007), jota pidetään vastakkainasettelua vahvempana ja ajanmukaisempana lähestymistapana.

Ammatillisen ja organisatorisen näkökulman rinnalle voidaan nostaa yksilöllinen näkökulma professionalismiin. Yksilökeskeisyyttä korostavassa yhteiskunnassa ammatinharjoittajat saattavat olla sitoutuneempia omaan uraansa, arvoihinsa ja hyvinvointiinsa kuin ammattikuntaan tai tiettyyn työnantajaan (Krejsler 2005). Mahdollisessa arvoristiriitatilanteessa henkilökohtaiset arvot voivat olla vahvempia kuin ammattikunnan tai työnantajaorganisaation arvot. Ammatillisella tai organisatorisella professionalismilla – tai hybridi-professionalismilla – ei ole paljoakaan merkitystä, jos yksilöllinen professionalismi dominoi käytännön tasolla. Tämä tutkimus tarkasteleekin professionalismia kolmiulotteisesti, lähestyen ilmiötä organisaation, ammattikunnan ja yksilön näkökulmista (Kuvio 25).

KUVIO 25 Professionalismin kolme ulottuvuutta

PR-alan professionalisaatiota ja ammatin professionaalisia piirteitä on tutkittu monesta eri näkökulmasta, mutta tutkimusten erilaiset ja epäyhtenäiset lähtökohdat jättävät tilaa lisätutkimuksille. Eräs aiheeseen liittyvä ja paljon tutkittu, mutta yhä kiistanalainen tutkimuskohde on PR:n rooli organisaatiossa. Tämä kytkeytyy profession yhteiskunnallista asemaa tarkastelevaan tutkimusperinteeseen. Profession piirteitä käsittelevää tutkimusta sivuavat PR:n tietopohjaan ja erityiseen asiantuntijuuden alueeseen perehtyvät tutkimukset. Moninaisista viestintään ja suhteiden rakentamiseen liittyvistä määritelmistä voidaan nostaa keskeisenä huomiona johtamistehtävän korostaminen: PR liittyy tavoitteelliseen sidosryhmäviestintään, jossa tarvitaan syvällistä strategista osaamista ja monitasoista reflektiivistä näkemystä. Kaiken kaikkiaan professionalismitutkimus PR-alalla kiteytyy lopulta siihen, mitä on hyvä PR-asiantuntijuus organisaation, ammattikunnan ja yksittäisen ammatinharjoittajan näkökulmista.

Organisatorinen näkökulma yhdistää professionalismin organisaatioon ja sen ympäristöön: organisaatiokulttuuri ja organisaation toimintaympäristö vaikuttavat siihen, miten PR:ää voidaan harjoittaa. Ammattikuntanäkökulma yhdistää professionaaliset pyrkimykset ja normit siihen ammatilliseen yhteisöön, jonka piirissä ammatin tietopohjaa ja käytäntöjä määritellään ja kehitetään. Yksilönäkökulma korostaa ammatinharjoittajan kompetenssia ja ammatti-identiteettiä, mutta kytkeytyy myös toimintaympäristöön, sillä yksittäinen ammatinharjoittaja on "aikansa vanki" – hänen toimintaansa ja ajatteluunsa vaikuttavat kulttuuriset ja yhteiskunnalliset normit ja valtarakenteet.

4 Vaihe II: PR-professionalismi alan akateemikkojen silmin

Ensimmäinen osatutkimus, tulkitseva käsitetutkimus, tarkasteli PR-alan keskeisten oppikirjojen ja tutkimusartikkeleiden pohjalta professionalismiin liittyviä ulottuvuuksia: mitä PR-asiantuntijuus on (tiedollinen ulottuvuus), millainen asema sillä on organisaatioissa (arvioiva ulottuvuus) ja mitkä ovat hyvän PR:n periaatteet ja laatukriteerit (normatiivinen ulottuvuus).

Asiantuntijuuden aluetta pyrittiin hahmottamaan tarkastelemalla erilaisia PR:n määritelmiä sekä PR-ammattilaisten toimenkuvia ja avainosaamisalueita. Näiden pohjalta muodostettiin tulkinta, jonka mukaan PR-professionalismi koostuu asiantuntijuudesta identiteetin, julkisuuden ja suhteiden hallinnassa.

Viestinnän ammattilaisten asemaa organisaatiossa on tutkittu paljon. Roolitutkimuksessa on ollut vallalla Dozierin ym. (1992) luoma jako teknikko- ja johtamisrooliin. Tämän rinnalle nousivat 2000-luvun alussa ns. Delphi-tutkimuksessa löydetyt eurooppalaisen PR:n roolit: johtamisrooli, operationaalinen rooli, reflektoiva rooli ja valmennusrooli (Verčič et al. 2001). Alkujaan roolitutkimukset keskittyivät viestinnän ammattilaisten tehtäviin, mutta sittemmin tärkeäksi kysymykseksi on noussut myös PR:n asema organisatorisessa hierarkiassa. Tämä on konkretisoitunut keskusteluksi siitä, nähdäänkö PR organisaatiossa johtamisfunktiona ja onko PR-ammattilaisella pääsy organisaation päätöksentekoelimiin. Keskeinen havainto roolitutkimusten pohjalta on, että johtamisroolia pidetään tärkeänä, joskin myös kriittisiä näkemyksiä on esitetty (ks. esim. Holtzhausen & Voto 2002). On muun muassa esitetty, että johtamisroolissa PR ei voi aidosti huomioida yleisöjen intressejä vaan se mukautuu osaksi valtarakennetta ja sen toiminta keskittyy yksinomaan organisaation etujen ajamiseen.

Kysymys hyvän PR:n periaatteista juontaa juurensa eettiseen palveluorientaatioon professioita luonnehtivana ominaisuutena. Saavuttaakseen tietyn arvovallan ja itsemääräämisoikeuden, profession on oltava luottamuksen arvoinen eli noudatettava eettisiä periaatteita ja taattava työn laatu. PR:n kohdalla alan eettisyys on herättänyt keskustelua kautta aikojen. Syytökset manipulaation ja propagandan käytöstä ovat äärimmillään johtaneet yliherkkyyteen yksisuuntaista viestintää ja vaikuttamista (persuasion) kohtaan.

Grunig ym. ovat esittäneet alaa ohjaavaksi professionaaliseksi malliksi kaksisuuntaista symmetristä viestintää, joka pyrkii tasapainottamaan organisaation ja sen yleisöjen intressejä (Grunig 2000; Grunig & Grunig 1996). Symmetrian käsitettä ja PR:n roolia yhteisen hyvän edistäjänä on kritisoitu laajalti. Niitä on pidetty utopistisina ja modernistiseen ajatteluun jämähtäneinä (ks. esim. Roper 2005; Leitch and Neilson 2001; Holtzhausen 2000; Pieczka 1996). Alan kirjallisuudessa näyttäisikin vallitsevan vastakkainasettelu, joka resonoi professiotutkimuksessa funktionalistisen ja kriittisen koulukunnan välillä ilmenevän ristiriidan kanssa.

Sovittamattomalta vaikuttavasta ristiriidasta huolimatta eri näkökulmien edustajat näyttävät esittävän, että PR:n tehtävä on mahdollistaa organisaation toiminta ja auttaa sitä kommunikoimaan sidosryhmiensä kanssa tavalla, joka edistää kunnioitusta, vastuullisuutta ja refleksiivisyyttä.[2] Kunnioitusta, vastuullisuutta ja refleksiivisyyttä voidaankin pitää sekä PR:n eettisinä periaatteina että PR:n perimmäisinä päämäärinä. Siten PR:n päämäärää voidaan itsessään pitää eettisenä, vaikka ei otettaisikaan kantaa kysymykseen siitä, kenen intressejä PR ajaa. Näiden periaatteiden toteuttaminen on hyvin hankalaa, jos PR:llä ei ole organisaatiossa sananvaltaa. Tästä näkökulmasta katsottuna asema johtamisfunktiona on keskeinen osa PR-professionalismia. Asema johtamisfunktiona edellyttää strategisen tason asiantuntijuutta asiayhteyksien hahmottamisessa ja viestinnällisten ratkaisujen luomisessa. Asema strategisena asiantuntijana valtuutetaan kompetenssilla ja sisäistetyillä arvoilla.

5 Vaihe III: PR-ammattilaisten näkökulma

Fenomenografinen analyysi etenee ensin kuvailusta merkityskategorioiden rakentamiseen. Tämän jälkeen se pyrkii tunnistamaan erilaisia ajattelutapoja ja suhteuttamaan näitä toisiinsa. Tätä ajattelutapoihin liittyvien eroavaisuuksien hierarkiaa kutsutaan tulosavaruudeksi (outcome space). Tämä haastattelututkimus tarkasteli PR-professionalismia kolmella tasolla: (1) muodostamalla merkityskategorioita siitä, miten haastateltavat kuvailevat työtään professionalismin ulottuvuuksien näkökulmasta, (2) erottelemalla erilaisia tapoja ymmärtää käsite professionalismi ja (3) hahmottamalla kriittisiä eroavaisuuksia haastateltavien ajattelutavoissa ja suhteuttamalla niitä toisiinsa.

Jotkut haastateltavista yhdistivät käsitteen professionalismi pätevyyteen, jotkut työsuorituksen laatuun ja jotkut arvoihin. PR-asiantuntijuudesta puhuessaan haastateltavat mainitsivat funktionaaliseen kompetenssiin, viestinnän johtamiskompetenssiin, strategiseen johtamiskompetenssiin ja asiantuntijatietoon liittyviä osaamisen alueita.

Haastateltavien vastausten pohjalta koottiin seuraavat PR:n päämäärät: (1) organisaation perusmission saavuttaminen, (2) hyvin toimiva organisaatio,

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2 Refleksiivisyydellä viitataan tässä siihen, että organisaatio tiedostaa toimintansa vaikutukset ympäristössään ja pyrkii aktiivisesti korjaamaan omaa toimintaansa (Beck 1994).

(3) identiteetti, (4) maine, (5) legitimiteetti ja vastuullisuus sekä (6) kommunikatiivinen organisaatio.

Näkemykset PR:n asemasta erosivat oleellisimmin siinä, miten haastateltavat perustelivat johtoryhmäpaikan merkitystä PR:lle. Kaksi keskeisintä katsantokantaa nimettiin integrointi- ja itsenäisyysnäkemyksiksi. Edellisen mukaan PR tarvitsee paikan johtoryhmässä voidakseen osallistua päätöksentekoon. Jälkimmäisen mukaan sen sijaan esteetön tiedonkulku johtoportaalta PR-yksikköön riittää, että PR voi hoitaa tehtävänsä.

Etiikkaan ja hyvään PR-praktiikkaan liittyvät näkemykset jakautuivat työelämän yleisiin eettisiin periaatteisiin ja laatutekijöihin sekä PR-spesifeihin arvoihin ja laatutekijöihin. Yleisiin periaatteisiin kuuluivat työelämän ammatilliset normit, suunnitelmallinen työ, sujuvat prosessit ja organisaation päämääriä hyödyttävät työn tulokset. PR-spesifejä arvoja olivat rehellisyys, avoimuus, kunnioitus ja dialogisuuntautuneisuus. PR:n laatutekijöitä ovat sopivuus (fitness) ja yhteys (connectedness). Sopivuus viittaa siihen, miten tarkoituksenmukaisia valitut keinot ovat tietyssä viestintätilanteessa. Yhteys puolestaan kuvaa sitä, miten hyvin viestintä on yhteydessä organisaation strategiaan, tiettyyn kontekstiin sekä PR:n arvoihin.

Näiden teemoittelua muistuttavien kategorisointien jälkeen aineisto käytiin läpi uudelleen etsien tyypillisiä ajattelutapoja yksilötasolla. Haastattelupuhetta tarkasteltiin sekä sisältö- että rakennenäkökulmista (Marton & Pong 2005). Osa vastaajista käytti esimerkiksi ilmaisuja, jotka viittasivat sanomien välittämiseen, osa mielsi viestinnän vaikuttamiseksi ja osa merkityksien rakentamiseksi. Erityisesti PR:n tehtäviin ja päämääriin liittyen osa vastaajista käytti hyvinkin sotaisia ilmaisuja, kuten "johtajien aseistaminen median kohtaamiseen" ja "etulinjaan lähettäminen", jotka viittasivat haluun kontrolloida tilanteita. Toiset puolestaan käyttivät ilmaisuja, jotka viittasivat sillan rakentamiseen ja yhteyden luomiseen. Ilmaisuja tarkasteltiin sekä kontekstista irrallaan että asiayhteyteen peilaten, jotta löydettäisiin ajattelutapojen erot ja varmistettaisiin tulkinnan osuvuus. Ilmaisujen pohjalta kategorisoitiin näkemys viestinnästä ja yleisorientaatio, joka viittaa tässä yhteyshakuisuuteen, kontrollihakuisuuteen tai neutraaliin suhtautumiseen.

TAULUKKO 21 Kriittiset eroavaisuudet näkemyksissä viestinnän ammattilaisuudesta

Näkemys	Sillan-rakentaja	Organisaation puolustaja	Mission puolustaja	Strateginen fasilitaattori	Neutraali fasilitaattori
PR:n päätavoitteet	Merkityksien luominen, yhdistäminen	Imagon ja maineen hallinta	Aihelähtöinen vaikuttaminen	Tukee organisaation missiota	Fasilitoi information kulkua
Asema	Osa strategista johtoa	Osa strategista johtoa tai raportoi ylimmälle johdolle	Osa strategista johtoa tai raportoi ylimmälle johdolle	Muodollinen asema ei tarpeellinen	Muodollinen asema ei tarpeellinen
Perustelu tunnustetun aseman tarpeelle	Oltava lähellä johtoa, että voisi vaikuttaa	Oltava lähellä johtoa, että saisi tietoa	Oltava lähellä johtoa, että voisi tehdä yhteistyötä	Tarvitsee tunnustusta saadakseen riittävät resurssit	Tarvitsee tunnustusta saadakseen riittävät resurssit
Viestinnän luonne	Dialogi, merkitysten rakentaminen, kulttuurin luominen	Vaikuttaminen, kaksisuuntainen viestintä	Vaikuttaminen, kaksisuuntainen viestintä	Informointi, viestien välittäminen	Informointi, viestien välittäminen
Yleinen orientaatio	Yhdistävä	Kontrolloiva	Kontrolloiva/ yhdistävä	Kontrolloiva/ yhdistävä	Neutraali
Suhde etiikkaan	Integroitu etiikka	Integroitu etiikka / Viestinnän etiikka / Työelämän etiikka	Integroitu etiikka	Viestinnän etiikka / Työelämän etiikka	Viestinnän etiikka / Työelämän etiikka

Taulukossa 21 esitetään edellä kuvatun analyysiprosessin kautta kristallisoitunut lopullinen tulosavaruus, jossa erotettiin viisi eri lähestymistapaa PR-ammattilaisuuteen: sillanrakentaja, organisaation puolustaja, mission puolustaja, strateginen fasilitaattori ja neutraali fasilitaattori. Eroavaisuuksia ajattelutavoissa ilmeni kuuden tekijän suhteen: (1) PR:n keskeisin päämäärä, (2) PR:n asema, (3) tarve tunnustukselle, (4) viestinnän luonne, (5) yleinen orientaatio ja (6) suhde etiikkaan. Käsitystä viestinnän luonteesta ei suoraan kysytty haastateltavilta, mutta tämä kävi ilmi heidän viestintää käsittelevissä kommenteissaan.

6 Vaihe IV: Maailmojen kohtaaminen – kokonaisvaltainen PR-professionalismin malli

Tulkitsevan käsitetutkimuksen ja haastattelututkimuksen tuloksien pohjalta rakennettiin synteesinä PR-professionalismin kokonaisvaltainen malli. Mallin pohjana on käsitteellisen viitekehyksen kolmiulotteinen lähestymistapa, jossa professionalismia tarkastellaan ammatillisen, organisatorisen sekä yksilöllisen professionalismin näkökulmista.

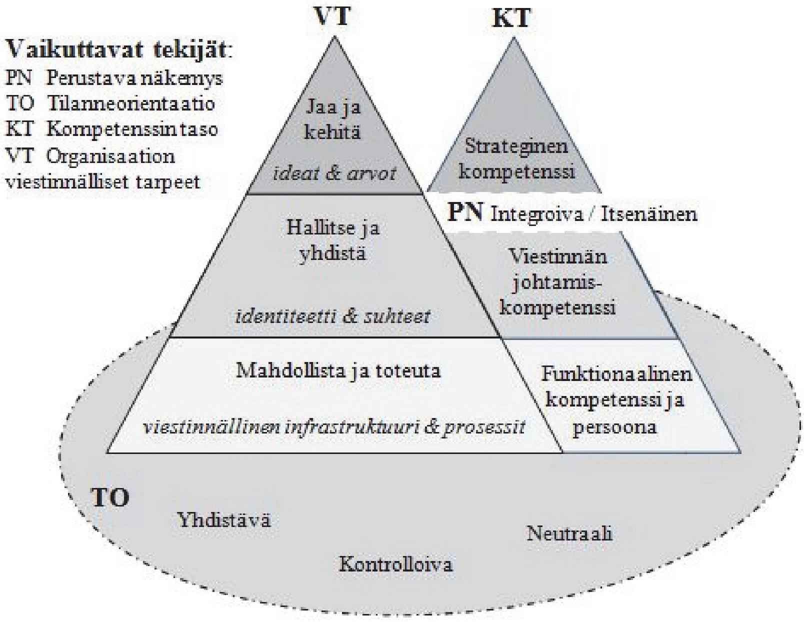
Organisatorisen professionalismin näkökulmasta keskeisiä kysymyksiä ovat PR:n asema organisaatiossa: onko PR johtamisfunktio ja miten professionaalinen

PR linkittyy organisaation strategiaan? Tämä ulottuvuus nimettiin professionaalisen PR:n rooliksi (role of professional PR).

Roolikeskusteluun näyttää usein kytkeytyvän perinteinen lojaliteettiristiriita: kenen etua PR:n pitäisi ajaa? Vaikuttaa siltä, että PR:n roolista ei voi keskustella ottamatta esiin kysymystä PR:n päämääristä. Ammatillisesta professionalisminäkökulmasta PR-professionalismin keskiössä ovat asiantuntijuuden alue ja profession arvot: mistä PR:ssä on perimmältään kyse, mihin se pyrkii ja mitä se arvostaa? Tämä näkökulma nimettiin professionaalisen PR:n päämääräksi (goal of professional PR).

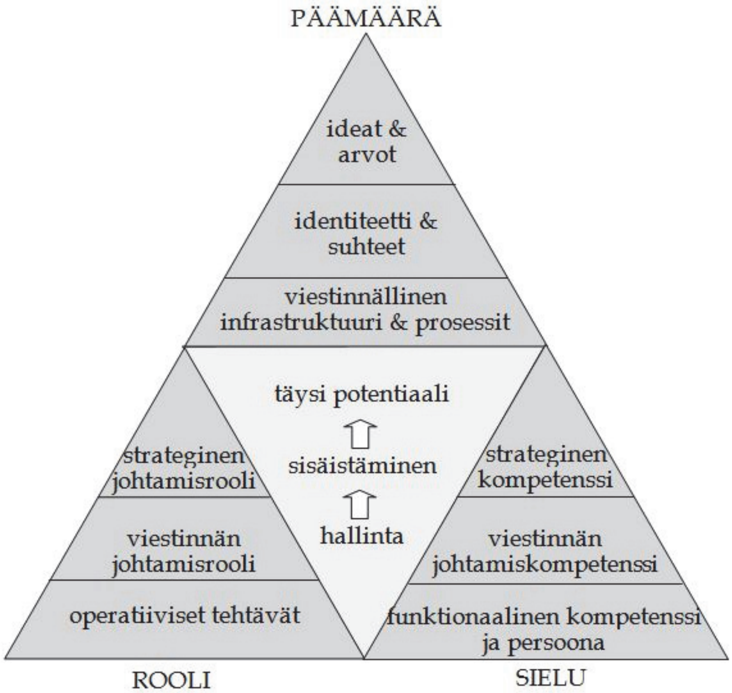
Ollakseen ammattilainen yksilön on opittava profession tietopohjaan liittyvät asiasisällöt ja käytännön taidot sekä omaksuttava profession arvot ja ajatusmallit (Sullivan 2005). Yksilönäkökulmasta professionalismi kytkeytyy siis tiiviisti kyseisen profession päämäärien, periaatteiden ja toimintatapojen sisäistämiseen. Tässä korostuu ammatillisen ja yksilöllisen professionalismin välinen riippuvuussuhde. Koska PR:n tapauksessa kuka tahansa voi ryhtyä alan ammatinharjoittajaksi ja organisaation toimintaympäristö saattaa olla hyvinkin haastava, on yksilöllisellä professionalismilla varsin suuri merkitys – myös koko alan maineelle. Professiot voivat määritellä itsensä ja periaatteensa, mutta ilman ammatinharjoittajaa, joka on sisäistänyt ammatin tavoitteet, professionalismi on kuin univormu, joka odottaa käyttäjäänsä. Professionalismi tulee eläväksi yksilön toteuttamana. Tämä professionalismin ulottuvuus on PR-professionalismin kokonaisvaltaisessa mallissa nimetty professionaalisen PR:n sieluksi (soul of professional PR).

Että PR voisi saavuttaa täyden potentiaalinsa organisaatiota tukevana asiantuntijafunktiona, on viestinnän ammattilaisella oltava riittävä tietotaito sekä kyky soveltaa osaamistaan kulloiseenkin tilanteeseen. Kuvio 26 kuvaa viestinnän roolia ja viestinnän ammattilaisen kompetenssin osa-alueita hierarkian muodossa. Kompetenssihierarkiassa on kuvattu myös perusnäkemys siitä, osallistuuko PR organisaation johtamiseen vai keskittyykö se toteuttamaan itsenäisesti organisaation strategiasta johdettuja tehtäviä. Tämä perusnäkemys saattaa monissa tapauksissa selittää sitä, miksi viestintä ei saavuta strategista asemaa organisaatiossa eikä pysty hyödyntämään täyttä potentiaaliaan. Kuviossa on huomioitu myös se, että ajattelu- ja toimintatavat eivät ole absoluuttisia ja joka tilanteessa samanlaisina ilmeneviä, vaan ne saattavat vaihtua tilannekohtaisesti.



KUVIO 26 Viestinnän strategiseen asemaan ja fokukseen vaikuttavat tekijät

Eri tilanteissa tarvitaan erilaista osaamista ja tähdätään erilaisiin päämääriin. On turha panostaa dialogin kehittämiseen, jos tiedonkulun peruskanavat eivät toimi. Tämän tutkimuksen havaintojen pohjalta on hahmoteltu organisaation viestinnällinen tarvehierarkia, joka mukailee Maslowin (Maslow 1954) tarvehierarkiaa. Perustasolla organisoidaan viestinnän infrastruktuuri, joka on edellytys kaikelle organisaation viestinnälle ja toiminnalle ylipäätään. Kun perusasiat ovat kunnossa, voidaan keskittyä rakentamaan identiteettiä ja kehittämän suhteita sidosryhmien kanssa. Vasta kun viestinnän avulla rakennettu identiteetti on sisäistetty, on mahdollista antautua aitoon arvokeskusteluun tai uutta luovaan innovointiin. Viestinnän strategiset päämäärät voidaan siis nähdä tämän tarvehierarkian kautta: viestintäkanavista huolehtiminen voi tietyssä tilanteessa olla yhtä strategista kuin eettinen dialogi kansalaisjärjestön kanssa. Kuvio 27 yhdistää professionaalisen PR:n osa-alueet toisiinsa. Kaikki nämä voidaan nähdä hierarkioina, jotka kehittyvät hallinnasta sisäistämiseen ja sisäistämisestä täyden potentiaalin hyödyntämiseen.



KUVIO 27 Hierarkisesti kehittyvät PR-professionalismin ulottuvuudet

PR-professionalismin kokonaisvaltainen malli kiteytyy seuraaviin propositioihin:

1 PR-professionalismi on kokonaisvaltainen entiteetti, joka koostuu kolmesta toisiinsa limittyvästä ulottuvuudesta: roolista, päämäärästä ja sielusta. Kokonaisuus on enemmän kuin osiensa summa, eikä se ole täydellinen, jos jokin ulottuvuuksista ei toteudu.
2 PR:n rooli organisaatiossa on olla strateginen yhdistäjä, joka kytkee PR:n päämäärät organisaation strategiaan ja organisaation strategian toimintaympäristöön ja joka yhdistää välillisen johtamisen avulla organisaation jäsenet toisiinsa, organisaatioon ja sen strategiaan. Avain tähän ei ole välttämättä johtajan asema vaan PR-ammattilaisen kyky ymmärtää tätä tehtävää ja toimia siinä. Strateginen yhdistäminen alkaa siitä, että auttaa johtoa ymmärtämään strategisen yhdistämisen merkityksen.
3 PR:n päämäärä on itsessään eettinen: edistää kommunikatiivista organisaatiota, joka tunnistaa yhteytensä ympäröivään yhteisöön. Tähän kuuluvat organisaation viestinnällisten perustarpeiden täyttäminen, koherentin identiteetin ja kestävien suhteiden rakentaminen sekä kunnioitukseen, vastuullisuuteen ja refleksiivisyyteen perustuva vuorovaikutus ympäröivän yhteisön muiden toimijoiden kanssa.
4 PR:n sielu lepää yksittäisen PR-ammattilaisen ammatti-identiteetissä ja ammattitaidossa. PR-ammattilaisen habitus vaikuttaa siihen, miten hän

sisäistää PR:n arvot ja päämäärät ja kuinka hyvin hän osaa soveltaa niitä kulloisissakin yhteiskunnallisissa ja organisatorisissa olosuhteissa.

5 Professionaalisen PR:n rooli, päämäärät ja sielu kehittyvät perustason tehtävien suorittamisesta ja organisaation viestinnällisten perustarpeiden täyttämisestä vaativampien tehtävien sisäistämiseen ja lopulta täyden potentiaalin käyttämiseen yhteyksien luojana, edistyneenä ongelmanratkaisijana ja arvovalintojen tekijänä.

Mahdollisia sudenkuoppia, jotka voivat hidastaa ja hankaloittaa professionalismin toteutumista, ovat PR:n päämäärien jääminen irrallisiksi organisaation strategiaan tai PR:n arvopohjaan nähden, rooliristiriidat sekä PR-ammattilaisen puutteellinen ammattitaito tai heikosti kehittynyt ammatti-identiteetti.

7 Pohdinta ja arviointi

Tätä tutkimusta voidaan pitää onnistuneena, sillä laajuudessaan haastavasta tutkimusasetelmasta huolimatta kaikissa tutkimuksen vaiheissa pystyttiin vastaamaan asetettuihin tutkimuskysymyksiin. Kvalitatiivisen tutkimuksen arvo mitataan muodostettujen tulkintojen uskottavuudella ja käytettävyydellä. Tulokset linkittyvät aiempiin tutkimuksiin, ja päättelyketjut on raportoitu autenttisia tekstikatkelmia hyödyntäen. Tulokset ja päätelmät lisäävät ymmärrystä PR-professionalismista hyödyttäen sekä alan tutkijoita että PR-ammattilaisia. Tutkimuksessa luodun mallin avulla voidaan auttaa PR-ammattilaisia hahmottamaan mahdollisia rooliristiriitoja ja suuntaamaan voimavaroja oikein organisaation viestinnällisten tarpeiden täyttämisessä. Alan kouluttajat voivat hyödyntää mallia opetussisältöjen suunnittelussa.

Eräänä tärkeänä näkökulmana tutkimuksessa nousee esiin ammattiin sosiaalistamisen merkitys: yksilö on lopulta se, jonka on sisäistettävä professionaaliset arvot ja sovellettava niitä erilaisissa toimintaympäristöissä moninaisten haasteiden keskellä. Tältä pohjalta olisi mielenkiintoista tutkia jatkossa PR-ammattilaisten arvoihin liittyviä ajattelutapoja.

Kehitetty malli ja siihen liittyvät propositiot ovat kuitenkin alustavia ja edellyttävät jatkotutkimuksia. Tämän tutkimuksen empiirinen osuus toteutettiin haastattelemalla suomalaisia PR-ammattilaisia. Tutkimuksen jatkaminen muissa maissa toisi mallille lisää painoarvoa.

Tutkija, joka lähti tälle löytöretkelle, uskoi olevansa kriittinen ajattelija, joka ravistelisi totuttuja ajattelutapoja ja osoittaisi, miten asiat todellisuudessa ovat. Tutkija, joka saapui päämäärään, osoittautui olevansa erilaisia näkökulmia arvostava ja yhdistävä sovittelija. Naiivin funktionalistisen ajatusmaailman kritiikki vaihtui rakentavaksi yhteisymmärryksen tavoitteluksi. Ei kuitenkaan riitä, että palaset saadaan sopimaan yhteen. Kokonaisuuden on oltava muovautuva ja liikkuva. Vallitseviin oloihin mukautumisen sijasta osien on liityttävä toisiinsa ja ympäristöönsä dynaamisesti luovuuden ja innovatiivisuuden mahdollistavaksi kokonaisuudeksi. Tämä on tutkimuksen keskeisin havainto, ja se pätee sekä tutkijaan uudenlaisen ajattelun luojana että professionalismiin strategisen PR:n mahdollistajana.

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APPENDIX 1

List of codes used in the interview study

General

- Interview (general remarks about the interview)

Basic categories: PR as practice

(Tasks, objectives, added value, quality, ethics)

Tasks

- AREA (mentioning different areas of PR, external communication, internal communication, investor relations, media relations, marketing communication, advertising, CSR, recruiting, sponsoring)
- STRAT (strategic level tasks, benchmarking, increasing understanding, brand management, advising in catastrophe situation, build organisational culture, building bridges, coaching, consulting, coordinating communication, creating and evaluating scenarios, monitoring attitude climate, image management, reputation management, influencing politicians, influencing general opinion, planning, profiling, promote sharing best practices, representing public's views)
- SUP (campaigns, processing information, creating and maintaining channels, event communication, technical consulting regarding channels, fundraising, formulating statements, informing management, making news, being link between media and experts, providing information to media, taking care of stakeholder relations, being a watchdog)
- TECH (clarifying messages, construct messages, informing about issues like CSR unit's dialogue with NGOs, gifts and PR-materials, graphic design, interpreting managements messages for media, media monitoring, practical arrangements, publications, signs and guiding, web communication)

Objectives

- BUS (promoting mission or ideology, supporting business, making profit, supporting strategy and vision of the organisation)
- DIA (dialogue, changing from top-down messages to dialogue)
- ID (identity, profiling, building orgnaisational identity and culture, building cohesion and unity, recognisability)
- INF, LOB (influence by lobbying, influencing decision-makers)
- INF, MARK (influence customers by marketing, selling services)
- INF, PUB (influencing general opinion)
- INF, STAKEH (influencing stakeholders, technical support role in enfluencing stakeholders)
- LTO (license to operate, acceptance, trust, building credibility of the organisaiton, communicating CSR)
- MES (messaging, get core messages through, informing)
- ORG, COM (communicative organisation, developing channels, set quality standards for orgnaisation, organising communication processes, making organisation understand the importance of PR, be communicatively leading organisation in the field,)
- ORG, MAN (facilitating change, encouraging engagement, managing the organisation, minimising risks, reflecting, renewing the organisation, supporting management)
- ORG, SAT (satisfaction of the members, workplace welfare)

- REP (good reputation, desirable image, publicity, being known)

Added value

- ADDED VALUE financial value, functioning organisation, internal cohesion and understanding, license to operate, (considering) multiple point of views, no added, but communication is value as such, reputation benefits, supporting strategy of organisation

Dialogue

- DEVEL (desire towards real interaction, creating strategy for dialogue)
- DISC (creating discussion, relationship communication with stakeholders, meeting people in events, virtual meetings with CEO and employees in other units, discussion with NGO, with personnel, desire to participate in issue arenas)
- FEEDB (understands dialogue as getting feedback)
- ONEW (mainly one-way communication with, talking about dialogue but control oriented, getting your message through)

Quality

- MES (messages are accurate, well formulated and targeted, understandable and consistent)
- PLAN (planned and proactive communication, communication policies, connectedness to organisation's strategy, long-term planning)
- PROS (clear and smooth communication processes, suitable channels and correct target groups, best practices, accessibility of information, cost effectiveness, speed of reaction, timing of communication)
- RES (achievable goals, influence, amount of participants and readers etc. is measured frequently, lack of measurement tools, stock value indicates effectiveness, organisational culture, reputation, satisfaction of customers etc., feedback)
- VIEW (must be able to see the big picture, putting things in perspective, ability to express strong and clear viewpoints in decision making, empty jargon without clear view is bad)

Ethics

- FIELD (comments about reputation or ethical standards of the field: stories of unethical practice abroad, small NGOs may act unethically, public and non-profit sector are behaving ethically but private sector may not, PR people have these days integrity but in past there were more unethical behavior, not much discussion about ethics among PR professionals, general questions about loyalty and how to do your job, marketing is unethical, consults who do not know the profession may try unethical tricks
- HOW, HON (honesty, integrity, giving realistic picture, not making things look better, how much you can spin the message, hidden agenda is wrong, lying always wrong, sometimes you have to lie)
- HOW, OPEN (openness, transparency)
- HOW, PROF NORMS (not using questionable procedures)
- HOW, PROF NORMS, BEH (general work-life ethics, referring to generally acting professionally)
- HOW, PROF NORMS, CODES (professional standards, ethical codes, good marketing manners)
- HOW, RESPECT, CULT (intercultural differences may cause ethical questions)
- HOW, RESPECT, DIAL (dialogue with NGOs about ethics, ethical communication requires disalogue, dialogue is respect)
- HOW, RESPECT, EQU (equality, fair and equal towards different stakeholders

or media, considering different point of views, ethical communication)
- HOW, RESPECT, EXP (freedom of expression, how to react to wrong information, allowing others to tell their opinion)
- HOW, RESPECT, HUM (how to be humane towards others, not to objectify others, respecting individual's right to privacy,
- HOW, RESPONSIB, CONFID (confidentiality, trustworthiness)
- HOW, RESPONSIB, CSR (ethical issues deal with wider issues of corporate social responsibility)
- HOW, RESPONSIB, ROLE (giving ethical advices, interfering when needed, not going along with unethical requests of management)
- HOW, STRAT (considering ethical dilemmas situationally)
- INT, MISSION (whose interests are served, mission of the organisation)
- INT, ORG (whose interests are served, organisation's interests)
- WHOSE, FIELD (comments which relate to the ethical dilemmas of the field where organisation operates: easy to be ethical since organisation is not selling anything, easy to be ethical since organisation operates in ethical field, easy because organisation works for the "big idea", problems mainly relate to the field of the organisation, no ethical problems because you don't have to "sell your story", easy because organisation is on the side of the small ones)
- WHOSE, ORG (comments about ethical dilemmas having to do with the organisation and not PR: ethical dilemmas are about organisation's value choices, company's ethics is more than personal ethics, no dilemmas because company behaves ethically, doing more than law demands, being good corporate citizen, organisation's image worse than reality, dilemmas mainly related to CSR, problems have to do with company's doings not PR)
- WHOSE, PERS (comments that refer to personal ethics: ethical dilemma if personal values don't fit together with the organisation's values, one mentions that reflecting personal integrity is part of all management functions)
- Basic categories: PR professional
- (functional competence, communication management competence, strategic competence, character, expert knowledge, expertise, professionalism)

Functional competence
FUNCCOMP

- CHAN (competence with communication channels)
- COM (communication skills, writing, visuality, influencing)
- GEN (general skills, accuracy, language skills, organising skills, speed and alertness)
- MED (media literacy and journalistic skills)
- MES (ability to formulate clear, understandable and interesting messages)
- REL (social skills)

Communication management competences

- MANCOM, CHAN (consultative expertise in communication channels)
- MANCOM, COACH (coaching members of the organisation to communicate better)
- MANCOM, EFF (cost-quality relation is unbeatable)
- MANCOM, GOAL (clear goals)
- MANCOM, IND (independence, ability to make judgments and decisions, doing proactively more than expected)
- MANCOM, LEAD and OUTS (ability to cooperate with other experts, outsourcing)
- MANCOM, MES (balancing messages considering different stakeholders, ability to influence the content of messages instead of just delivering, understanding and being up-to-date when and how to send the message)
- MANCOM, PLAN (proactiveness, strategic planning, finding ways to reach the goals)

- MANCOM, PROS (planned processes, supporting organisations communication)
- MANCOM, REACT (ability to quickly adjust to what is going on)
- MANCOM, REL (networking skills, good relationships to management and stakeholders, good media contacts, diplomacy, interactive and cooperative leadership)

Strategic competence

STRATCOMP

- ADV (consultative expertise, educating others about meaning of PR)
- APPL (ability to connect PR to the strategy of organisation, ability to apply PR methods, customising communicaiton knowledge to different situations, advocating the mission of the organisation, connecting communication knowledge and substance knowledge)
- INT (interpreting the expectations of stakeholders, understanding people's feelings)
- REFL (reflecting societal trends, detecting weak signals, keeping up with competition, take the role in issue arenas, understanding the field)
- VALUES (promoting values and sustainability, creating values)
- VIEW (seeing the big picture, bringing communication point of view to the decision making, being able to make judgments, understanding multiple point of views and different contexts)

Character (PR professionals desirable characteristics, type of personality)

- CHAR (being convincing, self-confidence, being strong, setting standards, courage, flexibility, goal-oriented passion for your job, initiativeness, openmindedness, curiosity, tolerance for pressure)

Expert knowledge

EXPKNOWL

- BUS (economics)
- COM (communication, , target groups, media and processes of public sphere
- MAN (management)
- MARK (marketing)
- PSYC, (psychology)
- GEN, (general knowledge)
- SUBST, substance knowledge

Expertise

- BASE (comments about what expertise is based on: education, practical knowledge, updating competences)

Professionalism

PROFESS

- CHAR (important that character of the PR professional fits to the character of the organisation)
- COMP (functional competences, knowing tools and rules, producing meaning from facts, understanding tones and nuances)
- DEV (developing from novice to an expert, keeping professional skills up-to-date)
- EDU (being educated, having university degree in PR, training)
- EXP (being experienced)
- FIELD (comments about PR field and professionalisation, PR is its own profession, profession is getting stronger, should not approve unprofessional practitioners, negative that anybody can enter the field, empty celebrity-focused media personas claiming being PR professionals)
- INT (professionalism relates to serving public interest)
- MOR (moral questions, basic values which create exemplary behavior, ethical issues, honesty, human understanding and caring, not accepting bad procedures,
- MOT (motivation, passion towards the job)
- NEUT (being analytical and rising above feelings, not taking things personally)
- PROF ID ((professional identity, understanding why is doing the job)
- QUAL (improving weaknesses, not accepting bad quality, listening to feedback)
- RESULT (good communication has influence, professionalism shows in quality of communication products and results)

Basic categories: PR and organisational settings
(position, publics)

Position in organisation's structure

- BOM (relation to top management, access to decision-making tables, reporting to CEO)
- UNIT (comments regarding how PR is organised, PR's position in the organisational structure)

EXPLAINED BY

- FIELD (current position is explained by external factors, CSR or PR or reputation is considered especially important in the field where PR operates)
- LUCK (luck has affected the results)
- ORG CULT (how well tasks and processes of PR are understood in the organisation, whether PR has tradition in the organisation, old-fashioned thinking)
- ORG MANAG (views of organisation's management regarding importance of PR)
- ORG RES (how good resources organisation has)
- ORG STRUCT (level of hierarchy in the organisation, strategic re-organisation)
- PR EFF (effectiveness of PR in the organisation's core processes, showing results)
- PR EXPERT (character, competence and cooperation skills of the PR manager, professional PR practitioners)

IMPROVING BY

- ORG CULT (position is or could be improving by making the organisation understand the importance and processes of PR)
- IMPROVING BY ORG MANAG (position is or could be improving by educating management)
- IMPROVING BY ORG RES (position is or could be improving by getting more resources)
- IMPROVING BY ORG STRUCT (position is or could be improving if top management would help to define the tasks of PR)
- IMPROVING BY PR EXPERT (position is or could be improving by being involved in decision making, being brave, empowering PR experts to take their

role in the organisation)

- IMPROVING BY PR EFF (position is or could be improving by showing effects of PR)

Position, relation to power

POWER

- INDEP (PR is independent, PR is too independent)
- INFL (chances to influence management, part of decision making)
- INFO (BoM place would mean access to information)
- NO (no real power, not involved in decision making)
- NOT IMP (formal power irrelevant)
- WOULD BEN (organisation would benefit more if PR had more influence or PR would be in top management team)

Publics (different groups that are mentioned as publics/stakeholders of PR/organisation)

- PUBLICS activists, authorities, business partners, citizens, general public, consumers, customers, donors, internal units, investors, management, media, social media, NPOs (non-profit organisations), opinion leaders, owner-members, personnel, policy-makers and decision makers, research in the field, stakeholder groups, suppliers)

Media

- PUBLICITY (how organisation perceives media publicity)
- RELATIONS (cooperative, negative, neutral, organisation is in favor of media, organisation is disgraced by media, organisation suspicious regarding media)

Social media

- BEHAVING (wonder how to behave, mixing personal and professional roles, privacy issues, copyright questions, ethical questions)
- BENEFIT (wants to benefit from social media, uses already or is planning on using, sees the benefit but wonders about resources needed)
- CONTROL (worried about not being able to control, negative influences, wants to influence on-line discussion)
- DIALOGUE (opportunity for dialogue, how to take part in discussion)
- POWER (possibility for activism, attention of people get divided, accessibility of information gives power to people, improves consumers possibilities to defend their rights, social media literacy would be needed)
- REACTING (following and participating, rumors may spread, correcting wrong information, how to react to hostility, no need to react because most discussions in social media are irrelevant)

Trends

- INF AGE, APPEAL (appeal of superficial communication, visuality)
- INF AGE, FLOW (24/7 demand, availability and amount of information, fragmented information, information overload, speed of information)
- INF AGE, INDIV (common people producing information, from passive receivers to active information seekers)
- INF AGE, KNOWL (knowledge intensive organisations, significance of science communication)
- INF AGE, SOME (growth of social media, official contra unofficial information)
- INF AGE, TECH (communication technology available for everybody)

- MEDIA, CHANGE (competition in media field, new media, media getting stories from social media, rise of commercial media)
- MEDIA, PROF (professionalism of journalists weakens, competition affects to quality, media seeks sensations, power of public conviction in media, young reporters have poor general knowledge
- PR, AUDIENCE (ever more fragmented audiences)
- PR, CHAN (channels develop, from print to web, "comeback" of printed media, importance of face-to-face communication, publicity through traditional media will diminish, social media removes borders between internal and external communication, desire to have social media spirit in internal communication, technology mediated communication innovations)
- PR, COMP (competence demands increase, multi-skills needed, combination of visual and verbal skills, originality is important to be able to separate from mass, PR professionals need also psychology, social networking skills, specialising, PR tasks are more demanding than they used to be)
- PR, DIAL (dialogue-orientation gets stronger, from informing to meeting people, creating partnerships, going where people are to meet them, social media increases open discussion)
- PR, FIELD (commercial PR gets stronger, marketing communication increases, merging of PR and marketing, outsourcing PR increases, professionalisation of PR develops)
- PR, MEAS (need for more measurement tools to prove concrete results)
- PR, ROLE (active statement making, coaching role gets stronger, lighter and deeper communication find their roles, need for PR expertise increases, organisations can't operate without communication, role of PR becomes stronger, understanding of the role of PR increases, PR used to be employees' voice but now it is management's voice, PR is needed to make sense and interpret information, web communication increases importance of PR, reputation managent increases PR's importance for management, PR adds soft values to business)
- SOC, ATT CLIM (appreciation of social values will increase, CSR becomes more important, customers are demanding, demand for ethical behavior and transparency, emotion-centeredness, high expectations towards work-life, people are critical towards attempts to influence them, recession affects willingness for charity, selfishness increases)
- SOC, CHANGE (changes going on everywhere, regionalising projects)
- SOC, ECON (recession, capitalism affects also governmental organisations, GNP decreases)
- SOC, EFFICACY (being busy increases, organisations want to unify processes, re-organisation of social service sector)
- SOC, GLOB (global company needs to adjust both to rapid changes and local conditions, internationalisation)

Challenges

- INFO FLOW (availability and amount of information, information overload, speed of information)
- MEDIA (in general dealing with media, changes in media field, sensation seeking, digital media)
- ORG RES (organisation's lack of resources, 24/7 demand)
- ORG ROLE (PR's role in the organisation, different expectations)
- PR CHANGE (helping organisation to change, change communication)
- PR COMP (growing demand of competences, lack of knowledge)
- PR CSR LTO (CSR and license to operate issues)
- PR FIELD (field where organisation operates sets challenges for PR by its complexity or lack of resources)
- PR INFL (challenges in influencing people, motivating people, appealing to emotions)
- PR MEANS (multiple channels, technical development)
- PR MEASURE (proving results)
- PR REFL (reflecting, detecting weak signals)
- PR REP (achieving good reputation or image, getting visibility, controlling ru-

mors, delivering bad news)

- PR STAKEH (fragmented stakeholder groups, identifying opinion leades, networking, competition)
- PR STRAT (integrating to the strategy of the organisation, balance between basic mission and other activities)
- SOC (recession, bureaucracy, trend of big companies being unpopular, inability to change, values change, turbulence, reaction speed)
- SOC GLOB (globalisation, internationalising)
- SOME (social media related challenges)

Field

- SECTOR (BtoB business to business, BtoCconsumer marketing, NPO, public sector)
- BASIC MISSION (public interest, self interest, ideology)
- CHAR (issues characteristic to the field where organisation operates, e.g. affected by regulations, monopoly in the field, high level of competition etc.)
- POWER (where organisation gets its mandate for authority, power over relations etc.)
- PR DEP (centralised PR department, first steps in organising PR department)

Advanced categories
(view on expertise, view on professionalism, combined approach)

View on expertise (how respondent perceives PR expertise)
VIEW, expertise

- expertise is about functional competence
- expertise is about functional competence and substance knowledge
- expertise is about strategic competence
- expertise is about strategic competence and expert knowledge
- expertise is about strategic competence, functional competence, expert knowledge and character

View on professionalism (how respondent perceives professionalism)

VIEW, professionalism

- professionalism is about competence
- professionalism is about competence and values
- professionalism is about professional identity and behavior
- professionalism is about quality
- professionalism is about values

Combined approach (view, position, goals and tasks)

COMB

- mixed view, strategic goals, functional tasks, position could be better
- mixed (critical) view (expertise without substance knowledge is only a tool), strategic position, goals and tasks
- narrow view, strategic goals, functional tasks, position could be better
- narrow view, strategic goals and position
- narrow view, strategic goals and position, functional tasks

- narrow view, strategic goals, position could be better, but insecure rhetoric
- strategic view, position and goals
- strategic view and position but goals and tasks technical or supportive
- strategic view and goals and tasks, position could be better
- strategic view, communication management goals, position could be better

Expressions

CONNECTEDNESS

- APPLY: how to communicate the mission or vision
- JOUR: know the needs of the other side (journalists)
- REFL: keep an eye what is going on and warn management
- ORG STRAT: everything starts from business strategy and the values of the organisation
- PUBLIC SPHERE: nobody else in org has public sphere knowledge
- PULSE: PR professional lives on trust and being finger on a pulse
- SOCIETY: be interested what is going on in society and how things are xonstituted in people's heads; knowledge about society and economy are important for media relations; PR must consider the challenges of the surrounding world
- SUBST: PR managers of different units are tightly connected to business; com expertise is not worth much without substance knowledge; develop communication through the substance; if you feel close to the substance you can have depth in your work; able to improve position by knowing substance and com; industry knowledge wich is different than business knowledge; lack of general knowledge and subst knowledge; understand the field and its logics; more perception and subst knowl needed; PR competence without the substance is like ability to use powerpoint; without subst knowl PR is left background and mainly technical; to put input and output in proportion; to talk same language as economists; be able to bring added value when understand business; talk same language as management; understanding subst brings courage to communicate things; know deeply the organisation or product one is talking about; without subst knowl PR remains editing tests
- UNITS: contact with practice vs. being isolated in tower
- VIEW: feel pain when I'm not told the whole picture; see the threats and possibilities of decisions; understanding the whole context; see how things affect to others; things are seen from channel perspective and not horizontally

INTEGRATE

- EVERYBODY everyone is doing PR/communications
- MANAGERS AND EXPERTS coordinate and lead communication of substance experts; support experts and management in communication
- MISSION communicative mission, importance of substance knowledge
- PROCESSES organisation does not function without communication
- UNITS cooperation with and support for other units, PR does not do all communications alone

INTERACT

- COM WITH: to communicate with the surrounding world; to truly be in interaction with management and experts etc.; with authorities the connection is interactive not only sending messages
- CREATE DIALOGUE: to make people think and share views
- CUST ENCOUNTER: building reputation begins from encountering the customer; interaction happens in customer contacts
- DEVELOPING: baby steps in using SoMe for interaction with stakeholders;

lanes are not as wide to both directions; to improve interaction; we have identified underdeveloped interaction; we know what people are discussing and try to be involved; we'd like to be interactive so that people g4et answers when they have questions; more and more dialogue-like communication and less informing; from top-down promoting business to dialogue with stakeholders

- DIAL: natural conversation partner within the organisation is appointed to all stakeholders; can conversation be managed?;changing strategic information; communicate in order to learn and teach; dialogue with NGOs about what is right and what is wrong; dialogue with NGOs may teach us to develop own actions;; genuine dialogue; it is not enoughto only profess, you need to participate in conversation; it means openness, bringing up also difficult issues to open discussion; open dialogue aims at trust which creates commitment
- FEEDBACK: customer survey is done according to business strategy to be in line with the whole organisation; customers don't bother to give feedback unless there is a mistake; emotional feedback; face to face com is better because of the immediate feedback; interaction by developing tools for feedback; interaction has mainly been feedback surveysimportant to get feedback and be easily approachable; interaction is collecting feedback, thoughts, wishes, opinions, and conversation; mainly feedback through internet; internal com, in big changes feedback channels for anonymous comments and questions; interaction is about feedback which means a way to know how the message went through
- GO OUT: in public; support when interaction with publicity is exercised; interaction is to plan communication situations
- MAINLY INFORMING: PR is often giving instructions or telling but active interaction may be challenging
- LISTEN: PR manager needs to listen and talk at the right time
- SOCIAL: strength is in meeting people, not only delivering information; we belive in keeping in touch; you need to socialize with people

INTERFACE

- CONNECT: establish relations between employees and reporters; keep interface open towards media; organising contacts for experts to talk to media, no spokesperson; help to connect people who feel like outsiders to the organisation; PR is important interface when it comes to organisation's mediarelations; seminars to create meeting for high level substance experts and reporters; PR experts coordinate and mediate when substance experts communicate; top management could be more involved in media relations; monitor and bring messages from surrounding world to org and vice versa; win-win partnerships, trust that the partner won't have hidden agenda
- INTERMEDIATE: balancing needed between authorities and emontional publics; I have intermediary role, reporters ask and I tell about the whole fiedld and not just our organisation; PR expert mediates between units
- INTERPRET: alliance between engineer and communicator is fruitful; engineer language vs. stakeholders' perspective; discuss and explain value choices; interpret how publics may understand the message; know what org and stakeholders need in order to things work well from our perspective; PR is interface between data and knowledge; to see things from outsider's perspective; represent the outsider, the citizen etc. in the organisation (yet serve interests of the organisation)

FACILITATE

- COM create channels; search for new ways to communicate (for substance experts to use
- INTERACTION managing and knowing the means and tools for interaction; build forums where interaction/dialogue can take place; functioning connection for communication

STRUGGLE

- ACCESS interrigate my supervisor after meetings; to get to the corner office is the top moment; top management breaks down and starts to understand PR is significant to business
- ACCESS, FORCING to get the foot between the manager's door
- ASSAULT both sides assaulting in media who interprets the law correctly; market leader is always a spittoon; you do your best but NPOs attack with false accusations
- ASSAULT, DEFEND diffcult to defend against negative attention when you don't have relations with media
- BATTLE arm wrestling with copywriters; as a ripost we got as a ripost an appropriate story of us through STT; as joint battlefront promote some issues with stakeholders; if small person and big monopoly organisation are against it is obvious who is criticised; if you want to get things your way; internal skirmish, could not get discussion on the rails; media is on the side of small and against big; NPOs attack the best, not the bad ones; our CEO got the floor (to tell our side); reaction speed, if you are not agile you will loose the battle; reputation as castle that protects from negative spiral; understand the drivers of groups; won't fight anymore because I have no influence on this; you can't tackle the wrong information in SoMe; criticised by media
- BRAVE sometimes you get snap on fingers; to sail close to the wind]
- CAPTURE have to be a hawk to catch and combine pieces of information; hook to get reporter to write; to get reporter or citizen hooked so that one reads the press release; daily bread vs. being a hawk
- COMPETTION competition is raw, image matters, communication has significant role:
- COMPETITION, BE HEARD, to get voice heard
- CONTROL vox populi, writes rubbish; difficult to control publicity; difficult to control the field, people do communication themselves and are not anymore depended on reporters and PR practitioners; nothing controls SoMe; organisations are targets of discussion all the time; people are panicing and don't trust authorities; sensations seeking media makes the field difficult to control; some issue may fall in your laps when the rumour starts to move; SoMe may have surprising power if something breaks loose; SoME tools make it possible to mislead people; stronger PR professionalism needed because partner in conversation may be weaker than before (reporters); the torrent comes so quickly, you need to have competence to keep things together; things that you can't control but you have to react; to attack is the best defence; cannot stop the ball when it is rolling; SoMe, landslide of social media;
- CONTROL, THREAT silent critical mass
- DEFEND we can not react properly to the negatve publicity; when media approaches they don't come to caress
- HUNTING chase of the whole field by media; who generates the chase in media
- LEGITIMACY org has to reclaim its place in its field
- LOUD in technical and male-dominated field difficult to get your voice heard; PR is a barkng dog that reminds of basic things; voice of a NPO is driven over by entertainment business] [expression
- ORDER damage prevention, big organisation is easily misunderstood; in this mess PR had significant role in convincing that the whole system is not rotten; is the change process constructive or harrowing; media makes a mountain out of a molehill; newspaper published wrong info; ngos tell also about problems that do not exist; professional reporters still come up with question of rising prices, for god's sake that has happened everywhere; relatively unprofessional individuals enter the profession and disturb the developlment of the field; reporters are the watchdogs of power; run from one fire to another; SoMe is also threat because it may be difficult to see what is the truth; trying to predict and be prepared how to deal wth media; unknown is always scary (SoMe); unprofessional

PR practitioners cause wrong image of the profession; when operating in areas where the world really is not simple PR can reclaim LTO; who says what is truth; world is full of bad communication; anyone can claim wth bright eyes to be a professional

- ORDER, BALANCE world of shocking];find shared interests and not dance to the tune of one player
- ORDER, INADEQUACY endless swamp, PR is never taken care of well enough] [expression,
- ORDER, LEGIT had to reclaim the position because not expert in substance but in communication; justify our existence; you have to reclaim the position
- ORDER, SIDES you can't play to any directions, give similar picture to evey direction
- ORDER, SOME, people vent emotions freely in SoMe
- ORDER, TERRITORY cannot protect own territory of expertise, autonomy vs. shared expertise
- POWER follow from the side, crisis com by Alma-media, all mistakes were done, PR was not much involved in the case; pioneers become always victims of bureoucracy or system; small NPOs who take unscrupulously advantage; SoMe has power, mobilising demonstrations and also place for demonstrations; using authorative power causes irritation
- POWER, ADAPT would not want to be involved but is forced to
- POWER, RESISTANCE clamor, resistance towards change is negative, "noice"; need to be tough to change things in slow and starchy org ; support needed from top management when units resist change
- PROTECT reputaton that survives the hits you get when have to do hard decisions; to secure reputation
- WEAPON short term image polishing would backfire; to arm the management

APPENDIX 2 Haastattelukysymysten runko suomeksi

Kiinnostuksen kohde (tutkimuskysymys)	Haastattelukysymys
Tausta	
1 Haastateltavan aseman (viestintäjohtaja tai muu vastuullinen asema)	Mikä on asemasi organisaatiossa? Millaisissa tehtävissä toimit?
2 Organisaatiotyyppi ja sen toimintaympäristö	- Millaisessa organisaatiossa työskentelet? (Sektori, koko, toimiala)
3 Muita tarvittavia taustatietoja (aloite haastateltavalta).	
Kysymysten 4–5 näkökulma: nykyinen organisaatio, jossa haastateltava työskentelee	
4 Viestinnän nykyinen asema organisaatiossa ja siihen vaikuttavat tekijät. (TK 7, TK 10)	- Miten viestintä(yksikkö) sijoittuu organisaatiossanne? Mikä on viestinnän rooli organisaatiossanne? - Miten viestintää arvostetaan organisaatiossanne? - Millaiset tekijät vaikuttavat viestinnän asemaan organisaatiossanne? - Miten viestinnän asemaa organisaatiossanne mielestänsi voisi parantaa/kehittää?
5 Viestinnän päämäärät haastateltavan nykyisessä organisaatiossa. (TK 8, TK 10)	- Mitkä mielestäsi ovat viestinnän tärkeimmät päämäärät organisaatiossanne? - Millaista lisäarvoa viestintä tuottaa organisaatiollenne?
Kysymysten 6–10 näkökulma: Viestinnän professio yleisellä tasolla	
6 Viestinnän asiantuntijuuden sisältö (TK 8, TK 9, TK 10)	- Mistä tekijöistä mielestäsi viestinnän asiantuntijuus muodostuu? - Mitä mielestäsi viestinnän asiantuntijuus on? - Millaista osaamista viestinnässä mielestäsi tarvitaan?
7 Näkemys professionalismista viestinnässä (TK 9, TK 10)	- Mitä mieleestäsi merkitsee professionalism viestinnässä ? - MIkä erottaa professionaalin epäprofessionaalista viestinnän ammattilaisesta? - Mikä erottaa hyvän huonosta viestinnästä? - Miten määrittelet laadun viestinnässä? - Mistä hyvä viestinnän laatu koostuu?
8 Eettiset kysymykset (TK 9, TK 10)	- Oletko kohdannut eettisiä kysymyksiä työssäsi? - Millaisia eettisiä kysymyksiä viestinnän ammattilainen kohtaa työssään?
9 Haasteet (TK 8, TK 10)	- Millaisia haasteita mielestäsi tämän päivän maailma asettaa viestinnälle?
10 Trendit (TK 8, TK 10)	- Miten näet, että viestintä(ala) tulee kehittymään tulevaisuudessa?
	- Onko jotain, mitä haluaisit lisätä tai kysyä?