Original Articles

Crisis, Culture, Community

Betty Lee Kaman

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Abstract

Crisis communication has emerged as a specialized study field for public relations

scholars and an empowerment opportunity for practitioners in the past 15 years (Grunig,

Gru-nig, & Dozier, 2002). Several loopholes in current crisis communication writings are noticeable: (a) Organizational crisis lacks a shared definition, (b) a conceptual framework has not yet developed, (c) audience-orientation to crisis communication has not been addressed, (d) current crisis studies lack contextualization, and (e) crisis communication studies are predominantly Western-based. In view of this, this chapter intends to shed some light on the topic of crisis communication and its future directions. The chapter has two parts: In the first, I revisit, refine, and reconceptualize the fundamental concepts related to crisis communication. In part two I discuss the negligence of culture in extant Western-dominated crisis communication. The chapter explains the importance of considering culture in crisis communication and points to a need for international crisis communication research and practice with an audience orientation to serve the international market foreseen in the near future. Below, I review an exemplary case contrasting Hong Kong culture and Western culture to show how the macrosystem of culture affects the microsystem of stakeholders. The contention is that the two-way symmetrical model necessitates the realization of stakeholders as interpretive communities. My suggestion of a co-constructing view to two-way symmetrical communication as a normative model for international crisis communication comes at the end of the chapter.