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Toward a publics-driven, emotion-based approach in crisis communication: Testing the Integrated Crisis Mapping (ICM) Model

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Extending current situation-based conceptualizations of crisis response, the authors have developed a more universal and systemic approach to understanding the role of emotions in crises. The authors' Integrated Crisis Mapping (ICM) model is based on a public-based, emotion-driven perspective where different crises are mapped on two continua, the organization's involvement with the crisis issue and primary public's coping strategy. The initial test suggested theoretical rigor in the model and found that publics involved in crises pertaining to reputational damage, technological breakdown, industrial matters, labor unrest, and regulation/legislation, are likely to feel anxious, angry, and sad. At the same time, they are likely to engage in conative coping and take active steps to restore some semblance of normalcy within their immediate environment. As counter-intuitive as this may appear, organizations embroiled in these crises need only to engage moderately, rather than intensely, in reaching out to the publics. This study is the first of a series of studies to generate what Yin (2003) termed "analytic generalization" (p. 33). The findings from this study, arguably, represent the imprints of an initial trail that may open up to a possibly new vista of research in crisis communication.

How to shape the appropriate strategies in response to a crisis is critical for any given organization and public relations practitioner working in the field of crisis communication. Given that the goals of crisis communication, defined as the "ongoing dialogue between the organization and its publics" prior to, during, and after the crisis (Fearn-Banks, 2002, p. 2) are to restore organizational normalcy, influence pubic perception, and regain and repair image and reputation, strategies used should be "designed to minimize damage to the image of the organization" (p. 2). Strategies, argued Massey (2001), are "message repertoires that are designed to repair the organization's image by influencing stakeholder perceptions" (p. 155). Ray (1999) argued that strategies establish and enact "control (at least in its appearance) in the face of high uncertainty" (p. 19). Lukaszweski (1997) argued that the strategic management of message response in crisis communication is a "fundamental communication principle" (p. 8). Designing sound strategic communications and tactics to communicate crisis so as to minimize damage to the image of the organization has been described as "management at its zenith" (Stocker, 1997, p. 203).

While most of these strategies are often characterized as direct responses to the crisis (Cowden & Sellnow, 2002; Fearn-Banks, 2002; Fink, 1986; Harrison, 1999; Massey, 2001; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Seegar & Ulmer, 2002; Ulmer, 2001), Ray (1999) argued that

strategies would either, (1) deny the crisis exists; (2) provide "partial, inaccurate, or delayed information"; or (3) maintain an open communication channels with constituents (p. 20).

Current Situation-Based Conceptualization of Crisis Response

Arguably, the two dominant theories on crisis strategies, Benoit's (e.g., 1994; 1995; 1997; 1999; 2004) image repair strategies, and Coombs' (e.g., 1995; 1998) crisis response strategies, are designed to understand what strategies are relevant to use under what circumstances. These often stem from a *situation-based* response to crisis. The image repair theory is appropriate to be used when the situation leads to a loss of face. When face is threatened, face works is used to repair image, argued Benoit & Brinson (1994). This usually occurs when the accused is believed to have committed an offensive act by its salient audience (Benoit, 2004). Face, image, and reputation are extremely important commodities, argued Benoit and Brinson (1994), because, as a society, we pride ourselves on, and value those who enact tolerance, and sensitivity, to the feelings and traditions of others (Brinson & Benoit, 1999). Coombs' (1998) strategies are positioned according to the situation based on the organization's locus of control. On one hand, when the organization is deemed to have strong personal control over the crisis, more accommodative strategies like full apology are recommended for use. On the other hand, when the organization has weak control over the crisis, more defensive strategies like attack and denial are recommended.

ICM Model: Conceptualizing Emotions in Crisis Responses

While these situation-based crisis responses serve as vital roadmaps to understand the crisis situation, it is argued that a more universal and systemic approach would be to shape crisis responses from an *emotion-based* perspective: To understand what are the emotional upheavals that the publics involved in the crisis are likely to experience so that strategies can be streamlined to address their specific needs. Studies argued that the perception of a crisis, particularly from a given public, is not strictly a function of an environmental stimulus itself, but involves an interpretation of the stimulus (Carver & Blaney, 1977). Emotion is argued to be a critical stimulus. Lazarus (1991) defined emotion as "organized cognitive-motivational-relational configurations whose status changes with changes in the person-environment relationship as this is perceived and evaluated (appraisal)" (p. 38). In a crisis, as the conflict between the publics and the organization develops, emotions are one of the anchors in the publics' interpretation of what is unfolding, changing, and shaping.

Jin, Pang, and Cameron (2007) have developed a new approach called the Integrated Crisis Mapping model (ICM) aimed at understanding the diverse and varied emotions likely to be experienced by the key stakeholders. Dominant emotions in the ICM model, developed from integrating works from psychology and crises literature, are extrapolated on two continua. On the X-axis is the publics' coping strategy (from cognitive to conative coping), which consists of the primary public's cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external or internal demands and on the Y-axis is the level of organizational involvement (from high to low). Different types of crises, drawn from the crisis literature, are mapped into each of the four quadrants, with the dominant and secondary emotions posited.

As an initial attempt to test the theoretical robustness and ecological validity of the ICM model, this study examines five crises posited in the first quadrant, crises we infer require the publics' conative coping and high organizational involvement, where the primary emotion identified is anger, followed by anxiety. These cases are studied for their instrumental value rather than intrinsic value. In instrumental case study methodology, Stake (1998) argued that the cases are examined to provide "insight into an issue or refinement of theory" (p. 88). The five

crises examined are the pretexting scandal involving Hewlett Packard, an example of reputational damage; Dell's battery recall, an example of technological breakdown; the Sago mining crisis, an example of industrial crisis; Ford Motors' job cuts, an example of labor unrest/protest; and Military Commissions Act of 2006, an example of regulatory/legislative minefield. Data to examine the five crises come from content analyses of the population of stories published in the largest circulating and widely influential national newspapers, *USA Today, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Los Angeles Times*, and *Washington Post* (Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2006; Viguerie & Franke, 2004). To ensure that media coverage reflects organizational perspectives, the respective organizations' websites were accessed to analyze their official announcements through press releases. However, as such information were not available in two of the five cases, namely the Ford Motors and Military Commissions Act 2006 cases, the authors decided to analyze only media coverage for all cases for more comparable analyses.

This study pushes boundaries on four fronts. First, we attempt to understand how an organization and its primary public appraise a crisis; second, how different organizational involvement levels and public coping strategies can lead to different positioning on the crisis map driven by the primary emotion conjured in the primary public; and third, how different crisis mapping can impact organizational response. Fourth, and more significantly, this represents our initial attempt to build a new theoretical framework. Saunders (2004) argued that applying theory to real life situations is "useful towards theory building" because such situations "provide observations grounded in actual organizational efforts aimed at solving actual organizational problems" (p. 140). Five cases of the same phenomenon were explored in order to construct a more robust study (Yin, 1993). This study represents the first of subsequent empirical tests to understand the theoretical and practical rigors of our ICM model. The authors are excited to understand how well the hypotheses posited in our model hold up, and what subsequent refinements need to be made to stand the scrutiny of scholarship as well as its relevance to the practitioners' world. Through the building of this model, it is the authors' goal to advance our current understanding in crisis communication and offers practical insights to scholars and practitioners on how they can understand, with greater preciseness, the emotional upheavals their primary publics are likely to experience so that they can shape the appropriate crisis response and tools to manage the crisis with optimal effectiveness.

Theoretical Framework

Primary Publics in Crises

Publics are a "group of people who face a common issue" (Gonzelez-Herrero & Pratt, 1996, p. 84). In a crisis, the publics have been defined differently, according to their importance to resolving situation, their functional roles, and their long-term influences. Lukaszweski (1997) argued that there are four key publics that the organization must communicate with, and priorities must be made to communicate with them as soon as possible. They are: (1) Those most directly affected, the victims; (2) The employees, who may bear the brunt of the wrath from the publics; (3) Those indirectly affected like families and relatives; and (4) The news media and other channels of external communication. Dougherty (1992) preferred to examine publics in terms of their functional roles. Enabling publics, which include shareholders, board of directors and regulatory agencies, have the power and authority to control the organization's resources. Functional publics mainly consist of the organization's consumers. Normative publics are formed because of shared values, like political or interest groups. Diffused publics are people who are not members of a formal organization, yet, nonetheless, powerful groups. Ulmer (2001)

categorized publics in terms of their long-term influences. He regarded the primary public as the community in which the organization works, and the employees. The customer and the media would be classified as a secondary public.

In crisis situations, we thus propose that the primary publics comprise the following characteristics: 1) They are most affected by the crisis; 2) They have shared common interests, and destiny, in seeing the crisis resolved; and 3) They have long-term interests, and influences, on the organization's reputation and operation.

Range of Emotions in Crises

Core Relational Themes. According to Lazarus (1991), core relational theme refers to person-environment relationships that come together with personal meaning and the appraisal process. In the processing of emotion in a crisis, the key lies in the central relational harm or benefit in the relational encounters that underlies each specific kind of emotion evoked by either party's expression and behavior. When the implications of well-being are appraised by the other party, each relationship may produce an appraisal and hence a response consistent with the theme and the emotion that flows from the expression or behavior of the other party.

Appraisal. Lazarus (1991) proposed that there are two types of appraisal: primary vs. secondary. Specifically, primary appraisal addresses whether and how an encounter or situation is relevant to one's own well-being. Its components include goal relevance, goal congruence or incongruence, and the involvement of the party. In the processing of emotion from the public's point of view, the central issue of the crisis is always goal relevance. Understandably, the goal relevance from the perspectives of both the public, and the organization, involved in the same crisis are likely to differ.

Secondary appraisal refers to an evaluation of one's options and resources for coping with the situation and future prospects (Lazarus, 1991), which means whether action is required, and if so, what kind of action ought to be taken. These comprise three components: Blame or credit, coping potential, and future expectancy. In a crisis situation, blaming takes precedence over credits. The coping potential, and future expectancy, specify any given action the public or the organization might take to prevent harm, and how it manages the demands of the crisis situation, and whether the strategy is feasible, and what result is expected.

Public Responses Based on Key Emotions

Based on the above appraisal model of emotion, Jin, Pang, and Cameron (2007) have proposed a theoretical framework to understand the primary publics' crisis responses, as evidenced by the predominant emotion elicited by different types of crises. In a crisis, Lazarus (1991) argued that there are predominantly six negative emotions (Anger, Fright, Anxiety, Guilt, Shame, and Sadness) based upon different appraisal, driven by different core relational themes. For the purposes of organizational understanding, we would argue that four of the six (anger, fright, anxiety, and sadness) are dominant emotions experienced by the publics, with guilt and shame secondary or subsumed emotions, particularly external publics, like victims, who are less subject to guilt or shame.

Insert Figure 1 about here*

Anger. The core relational theme underlying anger is a demanding offense against "me" and "mine" (Lazarus, 1991). In crisis situation, the primary publics tend to experience anger when facing a demanding offense from certain organization against them or their well being. In an organizational context, the primary public will want to find out what the organization has been doing is relevant on two levels. First, the ego-involvement of the public is engaged to preserve or enhance their identity or benefit in the situation. Second, there is usually an issue of

blaming. Specifically, this blame derives from the knowledge that the organization is accountable for the harmful actions and they could have been controlled or even prevented by the organization. The organization is invariably the object of blame.

As far as coping strategy development and action tendency assessment are concerned, the primary public might potentially favor attack as the strategy in facing the organization. More specifically, if future expectancy of the attack is positive, they are more likely to put the attack strategy into practice. However, anger can disappear when the defense against the organization is successful. It will continue to fester when their initial self-defense failed. At the stance and strategy level, though sometimes the public may appear cooperative, anger can be expressed indirectly in passively aggressive tactics, which the organization would well seek to detect if it wants to identify the appropriate strategies to deal with such emotional outrage.

Fright. The core relational theme underneath fright is facing uncertain and existential threat (Lazarus, 1991). In terms of the public's appraisal process, they find the situation of dealing with the organization as goal relevant yet incongruent. Organization-based identity issue or ego-involvement issue might or might not be relevant in the fright. Secondly, given the nature of the crisis, the public may either blame the organization or not.

As far as coping strategy is concerned, the public is not certain about how to cope with the loss as well as how the involved organization may handle this situation. Depending on their resource and power, they may choose avoidance or escape from the crisis as a viable recourse (action tendency).

Anxiety. By definition, anxiety stems from the core relational theme as facing an immediate, concrete, and overwhelming danger (Lazarus, 1991). The public may feel overwhelmed by the crisis situation and look for the immediate solutions. Accordingly, the public may go through the following appraisal process: They may assess the situation as relevant but not congruent with their goal of survival. Their ego-involvement is evidenced as the effort to protect their own ego-identity against the organization whom they perceive to be the direct source of existential threat. Secondly, they might blame or not blame the organization depending on their environment assessment. Given the uncertainty of how to cope with the situation and what the organization might react, they tend to avoid and escape. Noticeably, the action tendencies of publics under fright and anxiety overlap. This may give crisis managers in the organization sufficient consolidation of resources to effectively deal with the publics under these situations.

Sadness. Having experienced an irrevocable loss in the core relational theme of the emotion of sadness (Lazarus, 1991). In those cases, the public suffers from tangible or intangible loss or both. Their goal of survival is threatened and this loss of any type of ego-involvement (e.g., esteem, moral values, ideal, people and their well-being, etc.) caused by uncontrollable sources may lead them no one to blame and in desperate need for relief and comfort. If they perceive the loss can be restored or compensated for, their sadness may not occur or will be associated with hope. For successful crisis management, the organization might consider creating a favorable expectation by associating their efforts with hope while disassociating the situation with hopelessness and depression. The action tendency of the public might well depend on what measures the organization may take.

The primary level emotion is the one the public experiences at the first, or immediate, instance. The secondary level emotion is one the public experiences in subsequent instances, as time goes by, and contingent upon the organization's responses to the crisis. The secondary level emotion may be transferred from the dominant emotion or coexisting with the primary level. In

this study, we focus on the Quadrant with Anger as the primary emotion and Anxiety as the secondary emotion as conjured by crises in reputational damage, technological breakdown, industrial crisis, labor unrest/protest, and regulation/legislation.

Operationalization of the ICM Model

As Figure 1 illustrates, the ICM model is indicated by a crisis matrix based on two axes: The analysis of the organizational involvement level in the crisis that can be examined through a scale of high involvement and low involvement, and the primary public's coping strategy from conative coping to cognitive coping. It is argued that for effective crisis management, the organization, at varied involvement level in different issues, must understand the primary public's emotional demands so as to communicate accordingly and align with the coping strategy needed by the primary public (Jin, Pang, & Cameron, 2007).

On the **X-axis** is the public's coping strategy. Adapting the cognitive appraisal theory in emotion (Lazarus, 1991), there are two types of coping: 1) problem-focused coping – changing the actual relationship between the public and the organization via actual measures and steps, and 2) cognitive-focused coping – changing only the way in which the relationship is interpreted by the public. As the key components of appraisal process, this involves coping strategies and action tendency. During the coping process, the publics can alter or revise their interpretations based on the exigency of the situation. For instance, an accident, which demands high involvement from the organization and necessitates a cognitive coping strategy, may begin with sadness as the primary level dominant emotion. A secondary level response might be fright, when the results are not evident or satisfactory, as they normally are, given the extenuating circumstances of the crisis.

Coping strategy refers to the dominant choice of the publics in dealing with the crisis situation: Either 1) cognitive coping – the public try to sort out a way of thinking or interpreting the meaning of the crisis with regard to their well-being, or 2) conative coping – the public try to manage the situation so as to alter a troubled relationship or to sustain a desirable one by taking actions or at least show their tendency of action. Anchoring these two coping strategies to the axis, different primary publics in different crises may choose different coping strategy along this continuum. Therefore, this X-axis consists of cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external or internal demands (and conflicts between them) that are appraised as exceeding the resources of the public.

On the **Y-axis** is the level of organizational involvement, ranging from high to low. In each of the quadrants are categorizations of crisis types, conceptualized based on three criteria: 1) Internal-external; 2) Personal-public; and 3) Unnatural-natural. An external-public-natural crisis, like economic downturn, natural disaster, and accident, would likely call for higher level of involvement from the organization. For instance, the 2005 Tsunami disaster that swept across most parts of Asia is one no government could ever plan for. Coombs (1998) categorized these events as external locus of control and weak personal responsibility on the organization's part. At the same time, some variations of catastrophe, involving internal-public-natural or unnatural, like labor unrest, and loss of reputation as a result of mismanagement, require high organizational involvement as well. While serious, some internal-personal-unnatural (i.e., man-made) crises, like human resource problems involving employees, or psychopathic acts, necessitate relatively less intense organizational involvement, particularly when the organization did not cause these problems to arise. Jin, Pang and Cameron (2007) defined high organizational involvement as intense, consolidated, sustained, and high priority in allocation of resources to deal with the crisis; on the contrary, low organizational involvement does not mean cursory or no

involvement, but that the organization devotes comparatively less resources, effort, and energy to deal with the crisis, either because the organization recognizes there is little it can do, or when the organization did not cause the crisis, it is depending on external help, like a regulatory agency, to help it resolve the crisis.

Emotions and coping strategy. The two axes further form four quadrants in the crisis matrix. In each of the quadrants is the dominant emotion, based on the confluence, interactions, and inter-relations of the publics' coping strategy as well as organizational involvement.

Quadrant 1: High involvement/Conative coping: Anger is fueled, and abated, by the organization's high involvement. On the immediate level, the publics may feel angry because they held the organization responsible. On the secondary level, they may feel anxious when they feel the organization is not doing enough. The conative coping strategy is driven by action tendency, the feeling that the public can, and must, something about the situation.

Quadrant 2: High involvement/Cognitive coping: The primary level emotion is sadness; and the secondary level emotion is fright. These are crises which give rise to emotion which primary publics can only comprehend at the cognitive level. With further comprehension based on coping strategy, these may give rise to a suppressed emotion.

Quadrant 3: Low involvement/cognitive coping: Conversely, the primary level emotion is fright, especially when the primary public realizes that there is little the organization can do, or the organization is devoting relatively less resources to the crisis. Fright may give way to sadness, a further manifestation of the helplessness of the situation.

Quadrant 4: Low involvement/Conative coping: Anxiety is caused by the perception of the organization's low involvement and possible inertia. On the immediate level, the publics may feel anxious because they felt the organization is not doing enough. This may give rise to anger, and anger may lead them to take matters in their own hands.

In this study, we focus on testing Quadrant 1 (High Involvement/Conative Coping), the first of subsequent empirical tests to examine the theoretical and practical rigors of our model. Given the proposed attributes of crises in this quadrant, we seek to understand, through the five cases,

> *RQ1:* What are the primary emotions displayed by the primary publics, as evidenced in the news coverage?
>
> *RQ2:* What is the extent of the organizations' involvements in the crises, as evidenced in the news coverage?

According to Lazarus (1991), after the evaluation of one's options and resources for coping with the situation, decision on future prospects needs to be made such as whether action is required, and if so, what kind of action ought to be taken. In a crisis situation, blaming takes precedence over credits. The coping potential, and future expectancy, specify any given action the public or the organization might take to prevent harm, and how it manages the demands of the crisis situation, and whether the strategy is feasible, and what result is expected. Thus, we seek to examine,

> *RQ3:* What coping strategies were evident by primary publics, as evident in the news coverage?
>
> *RQ4:* What, if any, is the difference in perception of the degree in organizational involvement in each of the crises between the organization and the publics?
>
> *RQ5:* What, if any, is the difference in perception of the degree of the public's coping strategy in each of the crises between the organization and the publics?

Method

We attempt to understand the veracity and rigor of our model using content analyses of cases, as evidence in media coverage. Case studies allow the researcher to delve into and explain, the uniqueness and complexity of organizational processes, and as Gummesson (2000) argued, to capture the essential processes of decision-making, implementation and change. The purpose of case studies is to empirically investigate a "contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" and address a "situation in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 1993, p. 59). The five cases examined here would be what Stake (1994) described as the "epistemology" of the particulars and should thus not been regarded as a sample of two.

In this study, we adopt a multiple case study design within the same phenomenon, with the primary interest of understanding how our model works. The cases are thus studied for their instrumental value rather than intrinsic value (Stake, 1998). Though the cases are analyzed in detail, contexts examined, and activities explored, these play supporting roles to the researchers' objectives, which are to facilitate understanding of how relevant they are to the model. Consequently, by applying the method on five disparately managed cases, Yin (1993) argued, is an appropriate initial attempt at theory testing (p. 64), with the aim of building "analytic generalizations" (Yin, 2003, p. 33) from the conceptualization.

Based on this approach, the authors seek to understand: first, how an organization and its primary public appraise the crisis; second, how different organizational involvement levels and public coping strategies lead to different positioning on the crisis map driven by the primary emotion conjured in the primary public; and third, what organizations can learn from this model.

Sample

Five crises are selected based on the opinions and suggestions of a group of public relations practitioners and educators. Shin, Cheng, Jin, and Cameron (2005) found this to be a viable way of identifying the appropriate crises to analyze. The five cases are: Hewlett Packard case, an example of reputational damage; Dell's battery recall, an example of technological breakdown; the Sago mining crisis, an example of industrial crisis; Ford Motors' job cuts, an example of labor unrest/protest; and Military Commissions Act of 2006, an example of regulatory/legislative minefield. Data to examine Quadrant 1 of the ICM model comes from content analyses of the population of stories published in the largest circulating and widely influential national newspapers, *USA Today, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Los Angeles Times*, and *Washington Post* (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2006; Viguerie & Franke, 2004).

News stories in the five major newspapers (N=259) were uploaded from Lexis-Nexis by typing in the key words of the organization and the crisis. News stories were excluded if 1) there was no comment made by a spokesperson from the respective organization or official from the organization or no mention of any official communication from the organization; or 2) the stories were in the same publication or there was no mention of the crisis.

Hewlett Packard Case: HP's internal leak crisis became public September 6, 2006 when the company filed documents with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Media coverage on the leak investigation lasted for months, but the articles analyzed focused on coverage until September 22, 2006, the day that the chairwoman of the board Patricia Dunn resigned. The population of HP news stories were obtained from September 6 to 22, 2006. News stories were uploaded from Lexis-Nexis by typing in the key words (HP, H-P and Hewlett Packard) which yielded 135 stories. Stories that were relevant to the crisis were eventually filtered to 82.

Dell Case: The crisis surrounding Dell's battery recall began on August 14, 2006 with the organization's official announcement of the recall. The recall was voluntary and lasted until September 29, 2006 when the company announced an update on the situation. The majority of news coverage occurred during the first two weeks of the recall. The population of Dell news stories published on the five newspapers from August 14 to September 30, 2006, from the first official communication by Dell to one day after the last release on the topic by Dell. News stories were uploaded from Lexis-Nexis by typing in the key words (Dell and battery) which yielded 31 stories. Stories that were relevant to the crisis were eventually filtered to 20.

Sago Mine Case: Media coverage of the Sago Mine accident began on January 4, 2005 with the statement given by the mine's owner ICG Group Inc. The bulk of media coverage occurred from January 6 to13, 2006. The population of stories was accessed from January 4 to February 1, 2006, from the first official announcement from ICG to the last official statement by ICG on the crisis. News stories were uploaded from Lexis-Nexis by typing in the key words (Sago mine and ICG) which yielded 135 stories. Stories that were relevant to the crisis were eventually filtered to 27.

Ford Case: Media coverage of the Ford job cutback crisis began on May 11, 2006, as newspapers reported on the mounting struggle of American automobile producers to keep pace with foreign competitors. Coverage intensified in August and September, following Ford's announcements that it would implement massive production cuts and manufacturing plant closings, as well as the buyout or layoff of tens of thousands of workers, as part of a massive corporate restructuring plan. The population of Ford news stories published on the five newspapers from May 10 to September 20, 2006, were uploaded from Lexis-Nexis by typing in the key words (Ford and jobs) and stories that were relevant to the crisis were eventually filtered to 69.

Military Commissions Act 2006: The Central Intelligence Agency's crisis regarding the treatment of suspected terrorist conspirators imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, began on July 12, 2006. Responding to allegations of physical torture and unethical interrogation of detainees, American media questioned whether the constitutional rights of prisoners should be extended to alleged terrorists held abroad. President Bush and his administration acknowledged the existence of secret CIA prisons hosted by foreign governments, but declined to confirm the exact locations of these facilities. The population of CIA releases and news stories published on the five newspapers from July 12 to November 4, 2006. News stories were uploaded from Lexis-Nexis by typing in the key words (CIA and Guantanamo) and stories that were relevant to the crisis were eventually filtered to 61.

Coders and Training

Two coders, both graduate students and familiar with the content analysis method, conducted the coding. With the help of a codebook, the coders were given detailed instruction and description of the various categories used. Two practice sessions were held in December 2006 using samples of stories to familiarize with the coding instruments. The coders worked independently and were not allowed to consult with each other about the coding. The inter-coder reliability achieved .84 using Scott's Pi.

Coding Instrument

The unit of analysis is defined as a press release or a news story. This includes stories by the staff of the newspaper and wire stories from the editors. The content analysis instrument is designed to evaluate the appraisal of crisis involvement and coping strategies from

organizations' and their primary publics' perspectives. The 259 stories were coded for the following variables:

Organizational Involvement: First, organization's appraisal of the relevance between organizational goal and the crisis, measured on a 7 point Likert like scale, where 1 was "very low," and 7 was "very high". The scale was further operationalized from 1 = The crisis has nothing to do with the organization's goals, and is not likely at all to put the organization operation and reputation in danger; to 7 = The crisis hits the organization's goals and creates devastating damage. In cases where the issues are not addressed in the stories, we coded it as 99.

Second, organization's appraisal of its responsibility of the crisis (measured on a 7 point Likert like scale, where 1 was "very low," and 7 was "very high"). The scale was further operationalized from 1 = The organization has nothing to do with the crisis; to 7 = The organization takes full responsibility in the happening of the crisis; and 99 = Issue not addressed in the story.

The same set of involvement variables were also measured from the public's perspective as evidenced in the news stories.

Primary publics' Coping Strategy: First, primary public's willingness to change their opinion of the crisis (cognitive coping) (measured on a 7 point Likert like scale, where 1 was "not evident," and 7 was "very evident"). The scale was further operationalized from 1 = Public is willing to change its perception of the crisis, e.g. the crisis is what it is and there is no need to explain it further or change the angle of looking at it; to 7 = Public is extremely proactive in taking another look at the crisis and providing full explanation; and 99 = Issue not addressed in the stories.

Second, primary public's willingness to take actions to address the crisis (conative coping) (measured on a 7 point Likert like scale, where 1 was "not evident," and 7 was "very evident"). The scale was further operationalized from 1 = Public is not willing to take any action regarding the crisis; to 7 = Public is extremely proactive in taking actions with detailed plans against the crisis; and 99 = Issue not addressed in the stories. The same set of coping strategy variables were also measured from the organization's perspective as evidenced in the news stories.

Public's Emotion Expressed (from a list of sadness, fright, anger and sadness): First. primary emotion was measured on a 7 point Likert like scale, where 1 was "not evident," and 7 was "very evident", scoring the highest among other negative emotions. Second, secondary emotion was measured on a 7 point Likert like scale, where 1 was "not evident," and 7 was "very evident", scoring the second highest among other negative emotions. "Other Emotion" was required to be specified, if any, and coded in the same way. The scale was further operationalized from 1 = No trace of display of emotion; to 7 = Vivid and graphic description of facial expression of the public and direct quote on the emotion expressed; and 99 = Emotions not mentioned in the story.

Results

Primary Emotions

RQ1 examined the primary emotions displayed by the primary publics, as evidenced in the news coverage. For HP case, anger was displayed as the primary emotion (M = 2.22, SD = 1.40) while anxiety as secondary emotion (M = 2.09, SD = 1.30). Sadness (M = 1.12, SD = .53) and fright (M= 1.10, SD = .45) were also evident in the news coverage. There was no identifiable "other emotion". Anger and anxiety were highly correlated (r = .63, p < .001) but

there was no significant difference in terms of how evident they were in the news coverage (t = 1.02, n.s.).

For Dell case, anger was displayed as the primary emotion (M = 3.17, SD = 2.08) while anxiety as secondary emotion (M = 2.50, SD = 1.68). Sadness (M = 1.67, SD = 1.23) and fright (M= 1.00, SD = .00) were also evident in the news coverage. There was no identifiable "other emotion". Anger and anxiety were not significantly correlated (r = .26, n.s.), and there was no significant difference in terms of how evident they were in the news coverage (t = 1.08, n.s.).

For Sago Mine case, anxiety was displayed as the primary emotion (M = 4.48, SD = 2.06) while sadness as secondary emotion (M = 3.20, SD = 2.00). Anger (M = 2.96, SD = 2.01) and fright (M= 2.92, SD = 1.80) were also evident in the news coverage. There were two identifiable "other emotions" ("joy" and "hope", occurred three times and once, respectively). Anxiety and sadness were highly correlated (r = .60, p < .01), and there was significant difference in terms of how evident they were in the news coverage (t = 3.53, p < .01).

For Ford case, anxiety was displayed as the primary emotion (M = 4.17, SD = 1.49) while sadness as secondary emotion (M = 2.63, SD = 1.72). Anger (M = 1.69, SD = 1.08) and fright (M= 2.23, SD = 1.59) were also evident in the news coverage. There was no identifiable "other emotion". Anxiety and sadness were highly correlated (r = .75, p < .001), and there was significant difference in terms of how evident they were in the news coverage (t = 7.96, p < .001).

For the immigration case leading to the Military Commissions Act 2006, anxiety was displayed as the primary emotion (M = 2.38, SD = 1.42) while anger as secondary emotion (M = 2.02, SD = 1.47). Sadness (M = 1.04, SD = .29) and fright (M= 1.04, SD = .29) were also evident in the news coverage. There was no identifiable "other emotion". Anxiety and sadness were significantly correlated (r = .41, p < .01), but there was no significant difference in terms of how evident they were in the news coverage (t = 1.58, n.s.).

Organizational Involvement

RQ2 examined the extent of the organizations' involvement in the crises, as evidenced in the news coverage. For HP case, the organization tended to perceive that the crisis is related to the organization's goals but not closely related to the operation and/or reputation of the organization (M = 3.62, SD = .93); in terms of crisis responsibility, it took somewhat responsibility and tended to stay neutral or balanced (M = 3.75, SD = 1.09). For Dell case, the similar pattern occured: the organization tended to perceive that the crisis was related to the organization's goals but not closely related to the operation and/or reputation of the organization (M = 3.80, SD = 1.06); in terms of crisis responsibility, it took somewhat responsibility and tended to stay neutral or balanced (M = 4.10, SD = 1.83).

For Sago Mine case, the organization tended to perceive that the crisis was somewhat closely related to the organization's goals but not essentially relevant to the operation and/or reputation of the organization (M = 4.47, SD = .84); in terms of crisis responsibility, it took somewhat responsibility and tended to stay neutral or balanced (M = 3.64, SD = 1.09). For Ford case, similarly, the organization tended to perceive that the crisis is somewhat closely related to the organization's goals but not essentially relevant to the operation and/or reputation of the organization (M = 5.28, SD = .83); in terms of crisis responsibility, it took somewhat responsibility and tended to stay neutral or balanced (M = 4.30, SD = .73).

For the immigration case, the organization tended to perceive the crisis as related to the organization's goals but not closely related to the operation and/or reputation of the organization

(M = 4.28, SD = .70); in terms of crisis responsibility, it took somewhat responsibility and tended to stay neutral or balanced (M = 3.90, SD = .44).

Primary Publics' Coping Strategies

RQ3 examined the primary publics' coping strategies, as evident in the news coverage. For HP, the primary publics tended to use more conative coping (M = 5.14, SD = 1.09) than cognitive coping (M = 4.53, SD = 1.19) (t = 3.85, p < .001). For Dell case, there was no significant difference in its primary publics' coping strategy preference. For Sago Mine case, the primary publics tended to use more conative coping (M = 4.79, SD = .78) than cognitive coping (M = 3.96, SD = 1.33) (t = 2.78, p < .05). For Ford case, the primary publics tended to use more conative coping (M = 4.64, SD = .96) than cognitive coping (M = 4.27, SD = 1.21) (t = 2.43, p < .05). For CIA case, the primary publics tended to use more conative coping (M = 5.40, SD = .65) than cognitive coping (M = 4.74, SD = 1.13) (t = 4.70, p < .001). Except for the case involving Dell, the primary publics in all the other cases were more willing to take actions to address the crisis than to change their opinion of the crisis.

Difference in Organizational Involvement Perception

RQ4 examined the difference, if any, in perception of the degree in organizational involvement in each of the crises between the organization and the publics. For HP case, the primary publics perceived the organization's goals were more relevant to the crisis (M = 4.17, SD = 1.09) than the organization perceived themselves (M = 3.63, SD = .99) (t = 2.71, p < .05). The primary publics also perceived the organization had higher crisis responsibility for the crisis (M = 4.33, SD = .93) than the organization appraised themselves (M = 3.70, SD = 1.09) (t = 3.91, p < .001). For Sago Mine case, the primary publics perceived the organization's goals were more relevant to the crisis (M = 5.60, SD = .70) than the organization perceived themselves (M = 4.40, SD = .70) (t = 3.34, p < .01). The primary publics also perceived the organization had higher crisis responsibility for the crisis (M = 4.55, SD = 1.22) than the organization appraised themselves (M = 3.73, SD = .99) (t = 2.81, p < .05).

For Dell, Ford and the immigration cases, there was no significant difference in perception of the degree in organization's goal relevance and crisis responsibility in each of the crises between the organization and the primary publics.

Difference in Coping Strategy Perception

RQ5 examined the difference, if any, in the perception of the degree of the publics' coping strategy in each of the crises between the organization and the publics. For the HP case, the primary publics were more willing to take cognitive coping (M = 4.53, SD = 1.20) than the organization (M = 3.86, SD = 1.26) (t = 3.13, p < .01) perceived it to be. The primary publics were also more willing to take conative coping (M = 5.14, SD = 1.09) than the organization (M = 4.46, SD = 1.33) (t = 3.44, p < .01) perceived it to be. The same pattern occurs in the immigration case leading to the Military Commissions Act 2006, where the primary publics were more willing to take cognitive coping (M = 4.74, SD = 1.13) than the organization (M = 3.98, SD = .99) (t = 4.07, p < .001) perceived it to be. The primary publics were also more willing to take conative coping (M = 5.40, SD = .65) than the organization (M = 4.91, SD = 1.20) (t = 2.49, p < .05). It seemed that the primary publics in these two cases were more active than the organizations in taking efforts to change opinions and the crisis situations.

For Dell case, there was no significant difference in the cognitive coping strategy taken between the primary publics and the organization (t = 1.48, n.s.). Interestingly, the organization was more willing to take conative coping (M = 5.92, SD = .80) than the primary publics (M = 4.17, SD = 1.19) (t = 3.78, p < .01). For Ford case, there was no significant difference in the

cognitive coping strategy taking between the primary publics and the organization (t = 1.44, n.s.). Again, the organization was more willing to take conative coping (M = 5.44, SD = .91) than the primary publics (M = 4.63, SD = .98) (t = 3.66, p < .01). It seemed that the organizations in these two cases were more active than the primary publics demanded in taking efforts to change opinions and the crisis situations. For Sago Mine case, there was no significant difference in the cognitive and conative coping strategies taking between the primary publics and the organization (t = 1.48, n.s.; t = 1.00, n.s., respectively).

Discussion

The findings are distilled into two categories: What the evidence suggests as strong merit; and what the evidence suggests as some merit. Implications of the evidence are drawn, with suggestions to refine the ICM mode (see Figure 2).

Publics' Emotional Response: New Variations of Emotions

In crises which require high organizational involvement, and conative coping by the publics, the ICM model had posited the existence of two emotions: Anger as the primary level emotion which the publics experience in the immediate instance; and anxiety as the secondary level emotion which the publics experience in subsequent instances. The secondary level emotion may be transferred from the dominant emotion or coexist with the primary level. Our findings showed that anger and anxiety were evident in three of the five cases. Of the three, two showed that it was associated or co-existed with the other. Of the two emotions posited, anxiety was evident in all the cases studied, mostly as primary level emotion while anger was present in three of the five cases, either as primary or secondary level emotions. Another emotion, which we had posited in another quadrant, sadness, was evident in two of the five cases. Regardless of what the emotional combinations were, anger-anxiety, anxiety-anger, anger-sadness, anxiety-sadness, in four of the five cases, our findings found a high likelihood that one emotion co-existed with the other. Though anxiety is found to be evident in all five cases, it could not be said with certainty that anxiety was the more powerful or dominant of the two emotions. Evidence, thus, suggests strong merit in the existence of three variants of emotions, instead of two, in this quadrant. These are anger, anxiety, and sadness, with a high likelihood that one co-exists with the other. Evidence also suggests some merit that there may not be a distinction between primary and secondary level emotions, but that these emotions are often intertwined and interwoven with one another.

Publics' Coping Strategy: Evidence of Conative Coping

In this quadrant, our ICM model had posited that the publics engage more in conative than cognitive coping. In conative coping, we argue that the publics try to manage the situation so as to alter a troubled relationship or to sustain a desirable one by taking actions or at least show their tendency of action. On the contrary, in cognitive coping, we argue that the publics try to sort out a way of thinking or interpreting the meaning of the crisis with regard to their well being. Findings showed that as far as the publics were concerned, in four of the five cases, they engaged in conative coping and regarded their own abilities and willingness to take action to change their perception of the crisis situation. Consequently, findings also showed that because they were willing to take proactive steps to deal with the crises on their ends, these publics expected, in two of the five cases, the organizations to do likewise and similarly engage in conative coping strategies to deal with the crises. Evidence thus suggests strong merit in the conative coping strategies of the primary publics in crises relating to reputation, technological breakdown, labor unrest, industrial matters and regulation and legislation.

Organizational involvement: Evidence of Moderate Involvement

Though we had posited in our model that the organizations are likely to be highly involved, or rather, the organizations need to be highly involved, findings showed otherwise. In all of the five cases studied, the organizations maintained the crises did not relate to or affect their operations or reputations; they did not think their organization was fully responsible for the crises, and they engaged in a neutral stance with regards to dealing or resolving the crisis involving them. These appeared to dovetail with the publics' perception of organizational involvement: In three of the five cases studied, the publics shared similar perceptions with the organizations regarding the level of involvement of the organization. Only in two of the five cases did the publics want the organizations to do more. Evidence thus suggests strong merit that organizations embroiled in these crises need not be highly involved. A moderate level of involvement appeared to suffice, based on the evidence.

Implications for ICM model

Arguably, scant attention has been paid in the crisis literature to understand the emotions of the publics in crisis, be they crises involving reputation (for example, see Ihlen, 2002; Johnson and Peppas, 2003; Puchan, 2001); labor unrest (see Crandall & Menefee, 1996); or technological breakdown (see Benoit & Brinson, 1994; Benoit & Czerwinski, 1997), all have focused on organizational strategies and response. Thus far, studies on public perceptions have been limited to examining organizations' prior relationship to the crisis. Lyon and Cameron (2004), for instance, examined the organization's prior relationship with its publics and found the "halo effect" in organizations with firm reputations as "shining stars of social responsibility" (p. 231) to be usually afforded the benefit of the doubt in times of crises. Lee (2004), for example, sought to understand the publics' judgment, impression and sympathy of the organization during a crisis.

Yet, it is our thesis that studies analyzing audience reception in crises should increasingly dominate crisis scholarship for the simple argument that organizational strategies would be ineffectual if these do not appeal to the hearts and minds of the publics the organizations are trying to reach. Our emotion-based conceptualization is positioned as a nascent attempt to understand crisis from the perspectives of the publics so that organizational strategies and responses can be more appropriately targeted and honed. Both organizations and their publics respond not only intellectually, but emotionally, to the events around them that shape the reputation and future of their own lives to a greater or a lesser extent.

Given the evidence, what we can say with certainty at this juncture is that publics involved in crises pertaining to reputational damage, technological breakdown, industrial matters, labor unrest, and regulation/legislation, are likely to feel anxious, angry, and sad. At the same time, they are likely to engage in conative coping and take active steps to restore some semblance of normalcy within their immediate environment. As counter-intuitive as this may appear, organizations embroiled in these crises need only to engage moderately, rather than intensely, in reaching out to the publics. If this proves to be ultimately true, then it has tremendous implications on current emphasis on crisis strategies.

Conclusion: What Next?

This present study has investigated the viability of the ICM model by integrating crisis perspectives with psychological analyses. The ICM model is applied to an initial test of five types of crises that are posited to require high organizational involvement and high conative coping by the publics. Since this is the first empirical study exploring the model, it has provided

a fruitful exploratory area of research. Findings suggest theoretical rigor in the model, with room for further refinements. Admittedly, one limitation of this study is that the analyses are all based on media reports. Further research should include examination of messages disseminated through media releases as well as interviews with practitioners and focus groups with publics involved in the respective crises.

This study is the first of a series of studies before we can generate what Yin (2003) termed "analytic generalization" (p. 33). Analytic generalization is achieved by testing empirically a theoretical model to enhance its potency and rigor. Analytic generalization, or what Bennett (2004) called "theory confirming and infirming" (p. 22), is achieved when "two or more cases" support the theoretical assertions (Yin, 2003, p. 33). With the plethora of studies continuing to focus on the criticality of organizational response during crisis, researchers ought now to take a step back to examine what we argue to be a more universal and systemic approach based on publics' emotions. The findings from this study, arguably, represent the imprints of an initial trail that may open up to a possibly new vista of research, with the potential of transforming the landscape of studies of crisis communication. As poet Robert Frost wrote in Stopping By Woods On a Snowy Evening,

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But, I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep.
Our trek has just begun.

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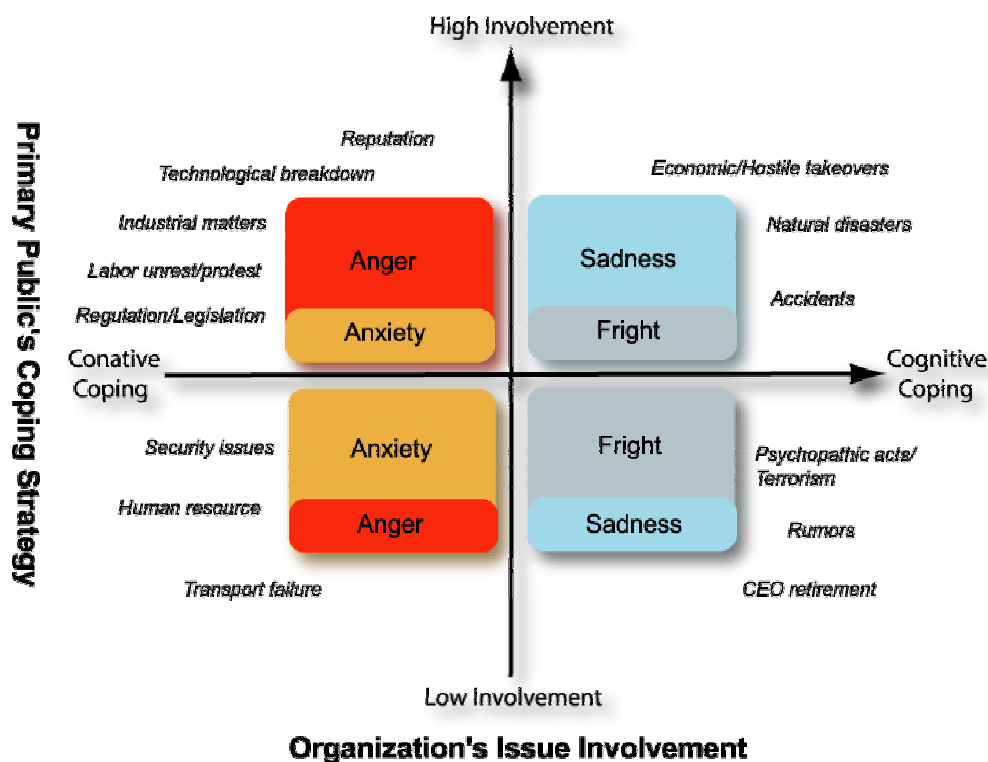
Figure 1: Integrated Crisis Mapping (ICM) Model (Jin, Pang, & Cameron, 2007)

Figure 2: New ICM Quadrant 1