

#KateGate: How the passionate energy of publics' social media posts affected the royal communications crisis[☆]

Ashleigh Logan-McFarlane

Edinburgh Napier University, 219 Colinton Road, Craiglockhart, Edinburgh, Scotland EH14 1DJ, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Crisis communication
Netnography
Publics
Participatory culture
Fandom
Social media
Passion

ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes how passionate publics creatively reshaped the crisis narrative during the British Royal Family's 2024 #KateGate controversy. When the Royal Communications team released vague and inconsistent messages about Princess Kate's absence from public life, a narrative void emerged—one rapidly filled by publics operating across social media platforms. Drawing from a decade of immersive netnographic research on royal fandom and influencer networks, this study reveals how publics responded with a surge of humor, visual creativity, digital remixing, and alternative storytelling. Rather than casting publics as passive consumers of PR, this paper positions them as participatory cultural actors who interpret, contest, and even co-author institutional messages. Passion, in this context, is not just an emotion but a structuring force which organizes attention, drives critique, and sustains the viral circulation of memes, remixes, and reframed messages. By tracing how collective intelligence materializes through digital play and satire, the study contributes to crisis communication theory by advancing a cultural model of PR engagement. It urges PR professionals to look beyond sentiment analysis and consider how passionate publics detect inconsistencies, challenge legitimacy, and propose alternative narratives. Publics are not a problem to be managed but are potential collaborators and opponents in PR professionals' active shaping of meaning.

1. Introduction

Between January and March 2024, the British Royal Communications team lost control of the narrative surrounding the Princess of Wales' planned surgery and extended absence from public view. A lack of transparency, coupled with inconsistencies in official communications and image releases, led to widespread speculation and conspiracy across social media. This speculation crystallized into the viral hashtag #KateGate, which seemingly marked a distinct shift in how a large number of online publics engaged with the monarchy. Instead of viewing them primarily as a sacred institution, they became more of a celebrity brand subject to scrutiny, play, and critique. The palace's narrative was eventually reasserted when Princess Kate revealed her cancer diagnosis in a BBC video released on March 22nd.

This paper investigates how publics used social media to critique, parody, and reframe official crisis communications during #KateGate. Drawing from crisis communication and fan studies literature, we focus on publics—social media users who identify problems in organizational messaging and collaborate to assign responsibility and propose

alternatives (Kim & Grunig, 2011; Chon & Park, 2020). Although emotions like anger or anxiety are often studied in public relations research as individual responses to crises, this paper foregrounds how collective *passion* can animate playful and participatory interventions into crisis narratives.

This paper shows how passion operates not only as an emotional driver but as a cultural force, one that mobilizes expertise, playfulness, creativity, and visibility in digital networks to reshape the crisis discourse around celebrity brands like the British monarchy. Although prior research has examined the emotional aftermath of crises (Coombs, 2007; Jin et al., 2012), less is known about how emotion—particularly passion—drives participation in shaping the crisis itself. In the context of celebrity PR crises, publics are not simply a one-sided force that reacts. This paper shows how they assess, build, and communicate co-created alternatives and counternarratives in real time. Passion, in this sense, is not simply affective intensity, but a shared and structured energy that propels publics into organized acts of collective meaning-making.

This paper draws on a ten-year netnographic engagement with online Princess Kate fandoms and blogger networks. By analyzing social

[☆] This work benefitted from Economic Social Research Council (ESRC) funding (Grant No. 1107458)

E-mail address: a.logan-mcfarlane@napier.ac.uk.

media activity during the #KateGate crisis, it identifies how passionate publics appropriated and reframed official PR narratives. The study contributes to crisis communication and public relations by theorizing how passion fuels networked publics' interventions, transforming passive audiences into active co-constructors of meaning. In doing so, it offers guidance for PR managers navigating visibility, control, and collaboration in high-profile celebrity crises.

2. Passion during a crisis

Public relations research has traditionally focused on how organizations respond to crises, emphasizing message strategies, attribution of responsibility, and audience reactions (Coombs, 2007; Jin et al., 2014; Austin & Jin, 2016). Studies have examined a range of contexts, from healthcare (Lee & Jin, 2019; Chon & Kim, 2022) and catastrophic events (Austin et al., 2023) to sports fandom (Harker & Coombs, 2022), and have drawn particular attention to the emotional responses crises elicit among different audiences.

Much of this work draws on attribution theory (Coombs, 1995, 2020), which explains how individuals assign responsibility by evaluating factors such as stability, control, and intentionality. When publics perceive a crisis to stem from internal failings, such as deception or negligence, negative emotions such as anger, disgust, and contempt are amplified (Coombs & Tachkova, 2023; Jin et al., 2014). These emotions shape expectations for organizational response and influence whether publics see an apology, transparency, or corrective action as appropriate. Relationship history and communication approach also matter: organizations that have cultivated manipulative or one-sided relationships may be seen as less trustworthy or credible in the wake of a crisis (Hung, 2005; Ni & Kim, 2009).

This body of research has advanced our understanding of how individuals interpret and emotionally react to crisis messages. Yet it tends to isolate emotion as an outcome of crisis communication, rather than as a driver of collective response. In particular, there is limited attention to how emotion—especially in its passionate, energized forms—mobilizes publics to create, remix, and circulate alternative narratives during a crisis. The individual members of publics are not experiencing emotions in private. They are actively collective, expressing and sharing them across networks, often in ways that influence the crisis itself. This is especially visible in contexts involving high-profile brands and celebrities, where public fascination, skepticism, and play intermix into high levels of participatory engagement.

Recent studies have begun to recognize the active role of social media users in identifying crisis causes, coordinating responses, and shaping reputational outcomes (Kim & Grunig, 2011; Chon & Kim, 2022). Some fans actively defend organizations under fire, while others critique or parody them, sometimes within the same community (Coombs & Brown, 2018; Harker & Coombs, 2022). These actions are often framed in terms of loyalty, identity, or community belonging. But what binds them more deeply is a shared passionate interest, a motivating energy that sustains attention, generates creativity, and fuels public visibility. This paper asserts that understanding the emotional and cultural force of passion is key to explaining how publics collectively engage in crisis interpretation, critique, and remediation.

Rather than focusing solely on how organizations manage audience emotion, this research will examine how publics mobilize passion to engage in crisis-related meaning-making. This perspective invites a shift from individual attribution and emotional management toward a more dynamic, participatory understanding of crisis publics as cultural co-creators.

2.1. The interplay of power, energy and passion in convergence culture

To understand how publics engage in collective problem-solving during a communications crisis, it is helpful to turn to Jenkins' (2006) notion of convergence culture. Jenkins highlights how traditional

boundaries between producers and consumers have become increasingly blurred as grassroots and corporate media intersect through shared platforms and participatory practices. In this context, collaboration between media producers and audiences becomes a site of power, one embedded in the broader dynamics of cultural circulation. Power is not located solely in institutions, but in the interaction between top-down and bottom-up forces that shapes how content is created, shared, and reinterpreted across cultures (Jenkins et al., 2013).

This shift is exemplified in Jenkins' (2006) account of "spoiling" within Survivor fan communities, where dedicated fans worked together to uncover plotlines before episodes aired. These coordinated efforts challenged the authority of the show's producers, demonstrating how publics can shape media narratives through collective interpretation and knowledge-sharing. Convergence culture thus emphasizes the capacity of networked publics to act collectively and creatively, particularly through digital platforms. In crisis contexts, this participatory power becomes especially significant, as publics remix and reframe organizational messaging using the various cultural tools and media literacies at their disposal.

Jenkins (2012) further expands this framework by introducing the concept of psychological energy, suggesting that we should pay attention to where cultural energy gathers and how it can be redirected. Fan activists, he argues, harness this energy through practices of play, ingenuity, and creativity to pursue civic or political goals. These forms of engagement are anchored in shared interests and sustained by relationships, rituals, and narratives drawn from popular culture. The ability of fan communities to build infrastructure and mobilize attention allows them to extend their influence beyond internal group boundaries and speak to broader publics, including those in positions of institutional power.

This idea of energy is taken up in Kozinets et al., (2017) work on networks of desire, which conceptualizes passion as an energetic force shaped through both technology and culture. They observe how consumer passion becomes channeled and disciplined into recognizable forms of online participation, such as curated food posts or stylized performances of taste. This directing of free-flowing desirous energy is further elaborated in McFarlane et al., (2022) account of passionate labor, which highlights how affect and attachment become entangled with marketplace structures. In these settings, passion is not only felt but managed, performed, and justified through cultural logics of productivity and value.

Together, these studies suggest that passion operates as both a cultural energy and a marketplace sentiment. The energy of human passion motivates participation and sustains attention, yet it is also shaped by the infrastructures and expectations of digital communication. Building on this work, the present study explores how passionate investment in a celebrity brand such as Princess Kate can lead publics to collaborate through social media, generating alternative interpretations and challenging official narratives during a public relations crisis.

3. Methodology

This study employed a netnographic approach to investigate how passionate publics engaged with and challenged royal public relations strategies during the #KateGate crisis. Netnography offers a structured, ethically grounded method for conducting qualitative research in digital cultural contexts. It is rooted in ethnographic principles, emphasizing immersion, participation, and interpretation, with the researcher acting as a reflexive instrument operating within the cultural field (Kozinets & Gretzel, 2022).

Although situational crisis communication research has typically emphasized quantitative or experimental methods (Niu & Ma, 2023), this study required a qualitative, interpretive approach capable of tracing the delicate flows of cultural meanings across online platforms. Netnography was selected for its capacity to document complex symbolic practices, mediated rituals, and social dynamics as they unfold in

real time. The analysis draws on over a decade of netnographic fieldwork focused on the Princess of Wales' public image, fashion fandoms, and social media discourse (McFarlane et al., 2022).

The current project builds on earlier immersion in the 'replike' fashion field, where fans identify, discuss, and replicate the clothing worn by Princess Kate. This long-term engagement included browsing fashion blogs, social media accounts, and discussion forums. The researcher maintained a detailed immersion journal capturing initial observations and reflections on language, symbolism, identity performance, hierarchy, and community rituals within this niche. These early insights helped identify key influencers whose content became central to later data collection and analysis.

Three main forms of data were collected: immersive observations and journaling, digital traces from social media platforms (primarily X and Instagram), and interactional data from public and private exchanges with fans and influencers. This study followed the six netnographic movements outlined by Kozinets (2020): initiation, immersion, investigation, interaction, integration, and incarnation. Relevant information about the netnographic research movements is detailed below.

3.1. Initiation

The research began with a focus on how publics interpreted and responded to the royal communications surrounding Princess Kate's surgery and temporary withdrawal from public view. The central question guiding this stage asked how social media users publicly challenged the Palace's narrative, and what forms of alternative meaning-making emerged. This included tracing public demands for transparency, critiques of the communications team, and the role of Kate's own video in recentering the narrative.

3.2. Immersion

The immersion stage involved following the online activity of prominent fashion bloggers and fans who routinely posted about Princess Kate's clothing, appearances, and public presence. Particular attention was given to content posted in response to the initial announcement of the surgery and the subsequent absence. The researcher drew on her own active, public X (formerly Twitter) account with over 500 followers. Established in 2011, this account is followed by journalists, bloggers, and royal fandom members. This account enabled real-time observation of public reaction to the crisis and tracking of discourse as it developed across key social media platforms.

3.3. Investigation

During the investigation phase, digital traces were systematically collected from X, Instagram, blogs, and online news articles. These included reactions to specific images, such as the heavily edited family photo, as well as commentary on inconsistencies and information gaps in official communications. The data was publicly available and collected in accordance with ethical guidelines for internet research (Kozinets, 2020). The researcher prioritized posts that demonstrated interpretive effort, emotional intensity, or collective problem-solving among users.

3.4. Interaction, integration and thematic data analysis

Interaction involved the researcher drawing on established relationships with Replike bloggers, using private messaging to ask questions that clarified specific vocabulary and metaphors appearing in fan social media posts. The analytic focus was on detecting and decoding the posts of users who were actively engaging with the crisis, primarily on X. Data was documented in an immersion journal maintained in Microsoft Word. Initial open coding centered on keywords tied to the crisis—AI image, memes, passion, play, power, privacy.

As the research progressed, thematic analysis traced how publics used passionate energy in their posts to assert narrative control. A three-step iterative approach (Spiggle, 1994) was employed, moving continuously between the data, emerging themes, and the theoretical framing of passion, energy, and collective intelligence. This process of sustained, back-and-forth immersion in the qualitative material led to the themes developed in the paper. All data is drawn from content publicly available online. Under GDPR, such data may be collected "for research purposes by legitimate research actors who are processing data for purposes that are in the public interest" (Kozinets, 2020, p. 198). The findings and analysis elaborate how passion energizes publics' social media collaborations and their collective efforts to resolve and reframe PR during a communications crisis.

4. Energizing the PR void: the collective intelligence of publics

The findings reveal how passionate engagement with the #KateGate crisis PR energized a collective problem-solving response across social media. Publics—including journalists, influencers, fans, and others seeking attention, visibility, or validation—assembled across blogs, Instagram, and X to challenge and reframe mainstream media narratives. Section 4.1 explores how passion animated these publics, guiding sentiment toward speculation and critique of Royal PR decisions. It considers how collective intelligence took shape as influencers identified flaws in official messaging and helped mobilize broader audiences, while publics debated the Royals' right to privacy. Section 4.2 turns to the creative tools publics used to propose alternative narratives, examining how humor, play, and memes carried passionate intensities that both entertained and disrupted the British Royal Family Brand (BRFB) storyline.

4.1. Passion as an energizing force guiding publics' sentiment toward crisis PR on social media

Passion functioned as the animating energy behind the public responses to Kensington Palace's announcement regarding Princess Kate's surgery, hospital stay, and subsequent absence. The decision to withhold specific medical details created an information vacuum that invited widespread speculation. Publics—including journalists, influencers, fans, and users seeking attention, likes, and shares—converged on social media to voice their interpretations and doubts:

There's a 95 % probability that #WhereisKate is down to Kate Middleton looking puffy and not wanting to appear on camera. But since the royals have screwed this up so terribly, and because their media is so laughably sycophantic, I'm down to speculate about the other 5 %. #KateGate [March 13, 2024, 842.4 K Views, Comments 328, Reposts 24, Quotes 7, 935 Likes 262, Bookmarks, X @K* * * * *]

This post, which garnered over 842,000 views and was quoted in a popular news outlet, illustrates how energy was redirected into collective speculation. The author links this impulse directly to frustration with the perceived sycophancy of the Royal Family's communications tone. As Greyser et al. (2006, p. 907) argue in their work on monarchies as corporate heritage brands, failure to manage institutional identity can lead to "reputational erosion and threats to the institution," with the Crown "defined externally, as critics and/or the media fill the vacuum." In this instance, the post exemplifies the public's sense that the official narrative had been lost, and with it, control of meaning.

Here, critics act as publics attempting to collectively interpret and resolve PR crisis issues through social media discourse. The following Sections (4.1.2 and 4.1.3) explore how these publics deploy collective intelligence both to expose weaknesses in the Royal PR narrative and to negotiate the contested boundary between transparency and privacy.

4.1.1. Influencers draw on collective intelligence to detect flaws in the crisis PR narrative

Influencers evaluate royal communications through their shared

knowledge and draw on collective intelligence to identify inconsistencies in the crisis PR narrative. A prominent fashion influencer scrutinized the altered photograph released on Mother's Day:

Sadly, what was supposed to be a pleasant photograph showing the Princess and home with her family has now backfired... Look closely and it's obvious the photo has been doctored. There are three obvious 'smoking guns'. Princess Charlotte's sleeve is the main giveaway. Look at her semi-transparent cuff! Oh dear. [Blog post, K* * * * *, 11th March, 2024]

This post exemplifies the obsessive tracking of fashion details that defines the Replikate community. Influencers used Kate's outfit as a timestamp, identifying the original date of the image based on garments worn and subtle alterations to their appearance—such as the edited sleeve. Readers of the blog extended this analysis in the comment section, building on one another's insights:

The photo was taken in Nov 2023. They are all wearing the same exact clothes from the Baby Bank in Maidenhead event. They changed the color of her sweater from white to blue, changed Charlottes skirt (really bad photoshop). Charlotte is even wearing the same bracelet in the photo that she did at Baby Bank. They changed George's plaid shirt from green plaid to blue plaid and lightened his sweater. Louie had the same shirt and pants on at the event as in this photo. They just changed his sweater via bad photo shop... How do their handlers not realize people compare photos? It's just dumb. Also-she WAS seen with her mother in a car last week with a massive bruise under her eye and a swollen face. They just need to stop releasing doctored photos pretending it's current. [Blog Comment, N * *, 11th March, 2024]

These posts express a tone of frustration and disbelief, holding the Royal Press Office ("their handlers") accountable for manipulating images and misrepresenting the timeline. Influencers express disdain when older images are repurposed and presented as recent, reading such actions as deliberate attempts to mislead audiences who might be unfamiliar with Kate's past wardrobe. Their comments form a digital discussion space where mutual concerns are voiced—most notably, that "public trust has been compromised" [Blog comment, K* * * * *, 17th March, 2024].

As fashion authorities within the British Royal Family Brand (McFarlane et al., 2022), these influencers interpret such PR missteps as not only careless but professionally undermining. Their authority is based on precision, memory, and aesthetic literacy. When the palace's communications contradict that precision, influencers use their collective expertise to immediately and decisively expose the flaws, alerting broader audiences to potential deception in the official narrative.

4.1.2. *Passion drives publics' debate on the Royals' right to privacy*

A passionate interest in the #KateGate crisis propelled publics to debate the Royals' right to privacy, particularly in relation to the Princess of Wales' surgery and health status. One blogger captured the dilemma clearly:

I certainly 100 % support the Princess of Wales right to privacy. However, not giving the cause will prompt all kinds of speculation and unwanted drama. [Blog post B* * * *, January 17th 2024].

This post articulates the tension between protecting personal boundaries and satisfying public expectations, highlighting how affective intensity emerges from the blurred line between private experience and public performance. Fans of the Royal Family, as Otnes and Maclaran (2015, p. 70) observe, are not passive consumers of royal media but active interpreters who use film, television, and social media content to engage emotionally and symbolically with the monarchy. Through this engagement, they gain new modes of access to and control over the royal narrative, particularly on social media platforms.

That tension was amplified in Princess Kate's own apology statement, released following the backlash over the altered Mother's Day photograph:

Like many amateur photographers, I do occasionally experiment with editing. I wanted to express my apologies for any confusion the

family photograph we shared yesterday caused. I hope everyone celebrating had a very happy Mother's Day. C [March 12, 2024, 38.8 M Views, 9 K Comments, 18 K Retweets, 54 K likes, 4.4 K Bookmarks, X @KensingtonRoyal]

One public response mocked the plausibility of this statement:

Of all the things I don't believe, I don't believe that the royals snap their own portraits, personally photoshop them, and upload them onto official palace accounts THE MOST [March 11th, 2024, 45.6 K Views, 8 Comments, 62 Retweets, 929 likes, 13 Bookmarks, X @N * * * * *]

These posts question the authenticity of the Palace's narrative and the image of Kate as a relatable figure. They challenge the Royal Family's carefully cultivated aura of "magic and mystery" (Otnes & Maclaran, 2015), suggesting that even the gesture of imperfection—an edited photo, a relatable apology—rings false. The passionate engagement here reveals how publics resist the flattening of celebrity into mere accessibility, instead holding the BRFB to account for its staged emotional performances.

Not all public responses were critical, however. Some high-profile voices, like actress Jamie Lee Curtis, defended the Princess's right to privacy:

Can we please just STOP with this bullshit conspiracy theory? This is a human being with young children, and clearly some sort of a health issue. That is a private matter. Do we not have better things to do and more important things to think about and be concerned about than this? It's a really low point in our society when there are SO MANY crucial issues that need our attention. @Jamielcurtis 358,513 likes March 22, 2024 Instagram

Posts like this, which garner hundreds of thousands of interactions, can momentarily shift the tone of the discourse. They recenter attention on broader social and political challenges, while also reinforcing the ongoing debate over whether royals should be treated as public symbols or private citizens. These interventions contribute to the contested discourse around whether the Royals remain "above the rest of us" (McFarlane et al., 2022).

That question resurfaces in another post shared after Kate revealed her cancer diagnosis:

Just remember: Kate won't see your tweets about how you feel bad about those jokes, but your friends who run typically conniving and occasionally disastrous PR operations on behalf of monarchies will. [Mar 22, 2024, 208.1 K Views, X @k * * * * *]

This post reframes the apology discourse by shifting blame away from Kate herself and toward the Royal PR operation. The critique does not focus on the celebrity, but on the strategic orchestration of crisis communications. It challenges the ethics of PR deception and holds the institution, rather than the individual, accountable.

Ultimately, publics assemble collective intelligence not only around the Royals' right to privacy, but also around the plausibility of the Royals being "like the rest of us." This tension becomes a key site of critique, enabling publics to question the legitimacy and credibility of the Royal PR team. Section 4.2 now turns to the alternative and creative PR responses publics developed in response to these perceived communication failures.

4.2. *Publics mobilize collective intelligence through play, humor, memes, and creative content to create alternative PR narratives*

Section 4.2 examines how publics mobilize collective intelligence to engage with the crisis PR vacuum surrounding #KateGate. It focuses on two interrelated responses: first, the use of humor, play, and creativity to fill that void (4.2.1), and second, the development of alternative crisis communication strategies proposed through social media discourse (4.2.2).

4.2.1. *Mobilizing play, humor, memes, and creative content to create new PR narratives*

This section explores how publics used humor, play, and creative

visual content to confront the Royal Family's guarded PR strategy. Posts fueled by passionate intensity circulated widely, poking fun at the Palace's silence and staging. Humor—both subtle and shocking—became a tool for publics to reframe the narrative and invite others to engage.

One major source of speculation and satire stemmed from the absence of official images and the ongoing rumors about Princess Kate's health. As William canceled a scheduled appearance in February 2024 (Staples, 2024), the silence amplified conspiratorial speculation. Publics used digital creativity to propose their own explanations for the Princess's disappearance. These ranged from cosmetic surgery to infidelity, even to death:

Y'all said Kate Middleton got a BBL and 2 days later her mother is driving around with a Madame Tussaud's wax figure in the passenger seat [March 4, 2024, 3.1 M Views, 178 Comments, 3.1 K Reposts, 39 K likes, 2.2 K Bookmarks, X @E* ** * ** *]

i too would do a gone girl if my bald ass husband cheated on me with someone who looked exactly like me but horsier [March 12, 2024, 17.6 M Views, 559 Comments, 12 K Reposts, 142 K likes, 6.6 K Bookmarks, X @Y* ** * ** *]

to everyone mocking Kate Middleton's photoshop skills, I'd like to see how well YOU edit family pictures when you're dead [March 12, 2024, 1.7 M Views, 76 Comments, 2.8 K Reposts, 47 K likes, 950 Bookmarks, X @P* ** * ** *]

These posts employ shock humor and absurdity to challenge the Palace's carefully curated image. They channel collective disbelief into speculative storytelling, drawing participation from others and generating massive interaction. The humorous reframing of secrecy and institutional control exemplifies how publics "catalyze the network" (Kozinets et al., 2017, p. 672), prompting further engagement across platforms. As Jenkins (2012) observes, play becomes a participatory tool that extends beyond fan communities to mobilize youth and non-fans alike. Posts spark ephemeral emotional connections (Bauman, 2000), allowing users to vent curiosity, concern, and critique in ways that feel liberating. As Redmond (2016, p. 147) notes, "passion lets intensities out and allows liberating emotions to escape." Fig. 1

A more subtle humor emerged in remixes that placed Kate into other

cultural flashpoints. In one viral post, she is Photoshopped into the infamous Willy Wonka immersive experience in Glasgow:

BREAKING: Kate Middleton has been spotted at the Willy Wonka experience in Glasgow [February 28th, 2024, 3.3 M Views, 209 Comments, 5.8 K Retweets, 102 K likes, 1.8 K Bookmarks, X @B* ** * **]

Another user connected her silence to the artist Banksy, joking that both had vanished mysteriously:

not a single banksy since kate middleton disappeared. Coincidence? [2.1 M Views, 128 Comments, 3.8 K Retweets, 48 K Likes, 744 Bookmarks, X @L* ** * **]

These interventions prolong what Jenkins (2006, p. 57) calls "pleasurable engagement." They invite audiences to remix, reframe, and co-author the crisis narrative, situating Kate within familiar structures of pop culture parody and viral absurdity. As Milner (2009) notes, this form of immaterial labor (Lazzarato, 1996) is often driven by fans' attachment to the subject, offering new layers of interpretation and community co-production.

One example reveals how digital editing and visual satire are used to escalate the rumors of Prince William's alleged affair with Rose Hanbury, the Marchioness of Cholmondeley. The image—captioned "Timothée of Chalamendeley" [March 14, 2024, 5.9 M Views]—depicts Hanbury's face replaced with that of Timothée Chalamet, who starred in *Wonka* (2023). The meme fuses several cultural discourses: the failed Willy Wonka event, the infidelity rumor, and viral meme aesthetics.

The infidelity narrative, amplified by celebrities like Stephen Colbert on *The Late Show* (March 13, 2024) (Murphy, 2024), gains traction not through official news but through digital remixing by publics. This form of passionate labor disciplines visuals into unpredictable, viral artifacts—designed to provoke, entertain, and destabilize (Kozinets et al., 2017). As such, publics question the PR message while also actively reengineering it, using humor and creativity to demonstrate their interpretive power.

These collective acts of circulation, satire, and reinterpretation fill the PR void left by institutional silence. Even those without advanced digital editing skills contribute by calling on others to visualize their theories and circulate content. The result is a sprawling, multi-voiced,

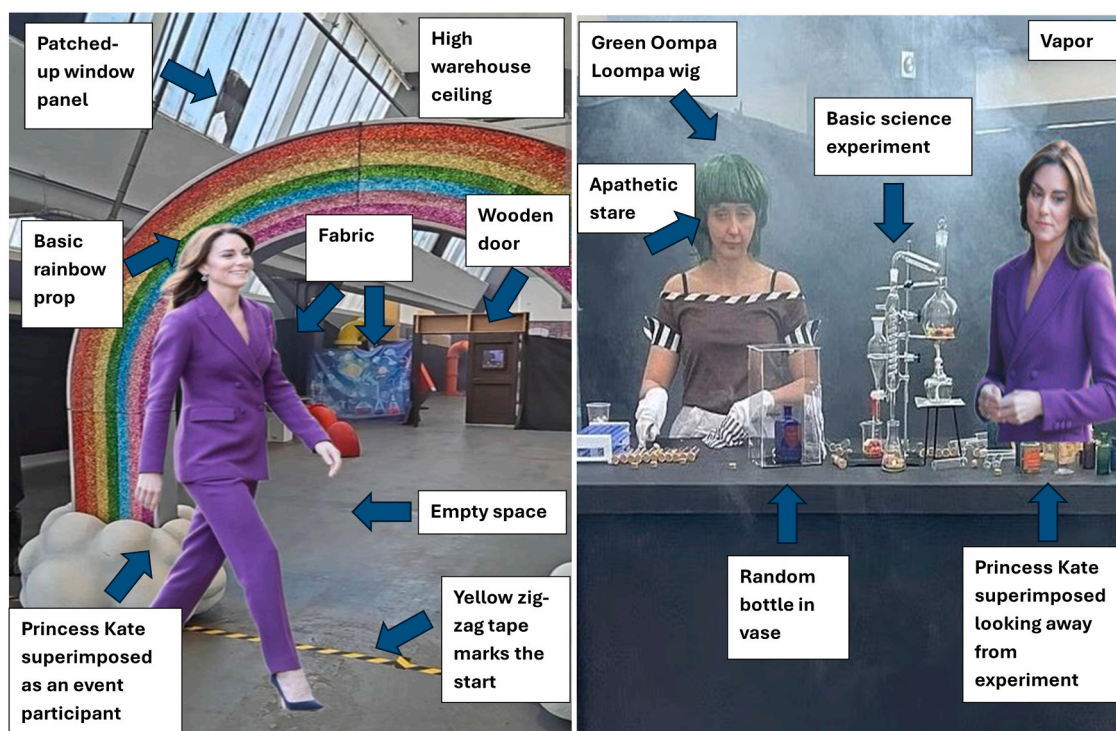


Fig. 1. Passion energizes editing skills that use humor to visually place Princess Kate in other prominent news stories in social media posts.

co-created media system where viral posts serve not only to entertain but also to challenge and reframe Royal crisis communications.

4.2.2. *Passion ignites publics' creative and playful suggestions for rectifying the Royal PR crisis*

This section considers publics' creative and humorous responses directed toward the Royal PR team, offering imagined strategies to rectify the communications crisis. These posts contain satire or ridicule, but they do not stop there. Behind them is a shared investment in improving the Palace's messaging—an impulse animated by care, passion, and channeled through imaginative, collaborative play.

Many of these posts propose radical transparency, even if playfully exaggerated. One tweet captures this tone while mocking the Palace's decision to blame the Princess for the Photoshop error:

I know there's nothing new/interesting to say about The Kate Issue now, but it is still wiiiiiiiiilld to me that they made the Photoshop Fail HER fault instead of being like, "We are so sorry, our intern, Cuthbert Bottingsly-Smythe, was overzealous and has thusly been beheaded. [Mar 14, 2024 1.1M Views 662.7 K 44 K 906, X @L* * * * *]

The post evokes a familiar aristocratic satire, reinforcing BRFB's narrative heritage while ironically advocating for transparency. Rather than issuing straightforward critiques, publics engage in historical parody, using titles, names, and mock executions to reference the legacy of British monarchy and its disciplinary past. These calls for accountability are thus stylized within the idioms of the BRFB itself, simultaneously mocking and participating in its mythos. This creative positioning reflects how publics reinterpret, rather than reject, the brand. They call upon its aesthetic and symbolic repertoire to propose meaningful—if outlandish—change.

One especially potent example involves an imagined solution that draws on the world of Jim Henson:

if I was managing Royal PR right now I would comission [sic] a bespoke Kate Middleton Muppet and record a completely serious video with it. just double down in the most insane way [Mar 12, 2024, 961.9 K Views, 72 Comments, 1.7 K Retweets, 23 K Likes, 406 Bookmarks, X, @S* * * * *]

This post sparked a cascade of responses. One user created a video in which a Muppet version of Kate is fed lines by her PR team, while others offered their support for this whimsical yet satirical rebranding strategy:

...A Kate Middleton Muppet could strike the perfect balance between modernity and tradition, winning hearts in a completely unexpected way. It's about time the Royal Family embraced a bit of the unexpected. [Mar 12, 2024 1.5 K Views @p * * * * *]

What a bold and creative idea! I can't wait to see how this unique approach will captivate audiences and showcase the lighter side of the Royal PR. [Mar 12, 2024 190 Views, X @D* * * * *]

I love this idea. Muppet Kate and Elmo checking in on her. The word 'managing' is doing some heavy lifting there though... [Mar 12, 2024 205 Views, X @F* * * * *]

These passionate exchanges do much more than entertain. They stage a type of collective intervention into the BRFB narrative, positioning fans and publics as better PR managers than the professionals because they are more attuned to audience sentiment than the Palace itself. The metaphor of the Muppet, the combined marionette and puppet that is at once humorous and politically loaded, encodes a critique of the Royals' lack of voice and agency. It implies that members of the Royal Family are puppeteered by unseen forces, a narrative that these publics flip by imagining themselves as the puppeteers instead.

This metaphor operates in Jenkins' (2012) sense of popular culture as a source of symbolic meaning and civic imagination. The Muppet proposal is not simply absurd; it offers a creative blueprint for "modernity and tradition" to coexist, while casting new light on the bureaucratic machinery behind royal crisis communications. It transforms the passive consumer into an active storyteller, replacing opacity with transparency, and institutional polish with self-aware satire.

This section therefore can be read as a powerful illustration of the

way publics channel their passion for the BRFB into creative crisis management proposals. These posts, while humorous, reflect a deeply engaged participatory culture that uses the tools of remix, parody, and symbolic inversion to challenge PR orthodoxy and assert new narrative possibilities. Directed at the Royal PR team, they express frustration, fandom, and a desire for reform—all refracted through the prism of play.

4.3. *Passion, play, and public power: a royal crisis synthesis*

The findings illustrate how passion operates as a dynamic force in shaping publics' responses to crisis communications, particularly in the context of the British Royal Family. Across platforms and personas—journalists, influencers, fans, and everyday users—publics animate their critiques through emotional intensity, cultural memory, humor, and creative collaboration. What emerges is a portrait of collective intelligence in action: diffuse, improvisational, often irreverent, but always deeply engaged.

First, publics act as critical interpreters of the Palace's official messaging. Influencers and other social media posters mobilize their expertise and community knowledge to detect inconsistencies in visual imagery, dates, and messaging, thereby alerting broader audiences to flaws in the crisis narrative. Others debate the limits of privacy and authenticity, interrogating the logic of a monarchy that demands reverence yet asks to be seen as relatable. These acts of scrutiny collectively reposition power, holding the Royal PR apparatus accountable and asserting public voice in a tightly managed communications landscape.

Second, publics channel passion into play. Humor, memes, parody, and speculative storytelling become repurposed as potent tools of resistance and reimagination. Shock humor coexists with subtle satire, each form extending the life of the discourse and expanding its reach. From Photoshop speculation to Muppet metaphors, publics remix the BRFB's iconography in order to propose alternate realities as well as alternate PR strategies. The playful tone is not actually frivolous, it turns out, so much as it is tactical. Reimagined as humorous and entertaining, these reinterpretations allow publics the opportunity to offer genuine suggestions for brand repair, offering solution that often seems to be more in tune with cultural sentiment than the efforts of the PR team itself.

This creative labor is not random. It is disciplined to go viral, designed to maximize attention and reshape narrative flow. Whether through advanced editing skills or strategic posting, our findings depict the #KateGate publics working collectively to expose, critique, and revise institutional messaging. In doing so, they assert themselves as powerful contemporary co-authors of public relations meaning.

5. Theoretical contributions: passion, publics, and play in crisis communication

This research advances theory in public relations, crisis communication, and fandom studies by illustrating how passionate publics collectively participate in, reinterpret, and even reimagine crisis narratives. It shows how a high-profile communication failure surrounding the Princess of Wales' disappearance from public view triggered a broad and complex participatory response that went beyond the established boundaries of crisis engagement. The publics of #KateGate did not simply react to the information that the PR managers provided for them about the royals in whose lives they were so very invested. They investigated, debated, critiqued, joked, and ultimately sought to rewrite the public-facing narrative. Their actions reveal the deep imbrication and intimate involvement of these publics in PR crisis narratives, particularly those involving celebrity institutions. This study of imbrication and involvement makes several important conceptual contributions to public relations research.

First, the research introduces a reframing of passion as a structuring force in public relations. In dominant crisis communication literature,

publics are typically theorized as fragmented audience segments whose emotional responses are tracked, managed, or measured through models such as attribution theory (Coombs, 1995, 2020) or situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) (Kim & Grunig, 2011; Chon & Kim, 2022; Coombs & Tachkova, 2023). This paper offers a shift from measuring discrete emotional states (e.g., anger, sympathy, fear) toward understanding passion as a culturally and socially structured intensity (Redmond, 2016; Bauman, 2000). Here, passion becomes not an individual response, but a collective resource—something publics work with, manage, and organize around to make sense of institutional failure. Passion is not simply a *reaction to PR* but is, instead, *what animates publics to participate in PR*—to contribute to it, critique it, and at times, completely reauthor it.

Second, the study contributes to understandings of publics as participatory cultural actors rather than targetable audience segments. Rather than imagining publics as passive recipients of organizational messaging or as reactive critics, this study emphasizes their role as active, imaginative contributors to public discourse. Drawing from Jenkins' (2006) and Pierre Lévy's (1997) notion of collective intelligence, the study shows how publics use shared knowledge, media fluency, and digital literacy to detect flaws in the official crisis narrative. They not only assemble evidence and disseminate alternative interpretations, but they also create affectively resonant artifacts such as memes, remixes, jokes, satirical captions that act as cultural diagnostics of institutional mismanagement. The findings show these publics as central agents in the meaning-making process, quoted in the press, inspiring late night comedians, inciting A-list celebrities and responding to them, operating across media and cultural boundaries to transform the nature of the PR conversation.

This insight challenges long-standing binaries in crisis communication between organizations and audiences, or between PR professionals and emotional publics. It suggests instead that publics—particularly passionate ones—can be deeply involved in message production, not merely message reception. Influencers and fans who engaged with #KateGate, for example, used their expertise in royal fashion, digital media, and cultural timing to expose inconsistencies in visual content, challenge institutional credibility, and mobilize broader audiences. Their actions cannot and should not be understood simply as a form of brand sabotage, hijack, or protest. Instead, they represent an alternative form of public relations work, one that is not grounded in institutional authority or economic professionalism, but in deep caring and personal investment, a sense of community, and a profound cultural literacy.

Third, the study develops the role of play as a conceptual bridge between passion and critique. In contrast to much crisis communication literature that privileges strategic messaging, information management, or emotional suppression, this study reveals publics engaging in what might be classified as a form of serious play: remixing brand elements, proposing bizarre PR solutions, creating absurdist memes, or imagining Muppet avatars for a modern monarchy. While often dismissed as frivolous, these actions are embedded in deep cultural critique. They leverage humor to negotiate the contradictory demands placed on the Royal Family to be both magical and modern, sacred and accessible, stoic and relatable. In doing so, these publics reveal the structural tensions within the BRFB narrative itself (Otnes & Maclaran, 2015). Their ludic efforts become a method of analysis, a mode of participation, and a noteworthy source of power.

This insight builds on Jenkins' (2012) work on fan activism and civic imagination but extends it into the domain of crisis communication. Publics, in this case, are not mobilizing around a political cause in the traditional sense but are enacting a form of cultural accountability, where remix and satire serve as tools for highlighting deception, inconsistency, or tone-deafness in official messaging. These playful interventions invite participation, deepen engagement, and generate responses that challenge the monopoly of institutional storytelling. They also demonstrate that publics can act as stewards of narrative integrity—not only critiquing the monarchy's PR failures, but offering

plausible, if parodic, alternatives.

Fourth, the study expands the understanding of fandom's relationship to institutional authority. While prior research has documented the defensive role of fans in protecting beloved brands or celebrities during crisis events (e.g., Coombs & Brown, 2018; Harker & Coombs, 2022), this study shows how fandom can be turned inward and used to critique, challenge, and even correct the brand. Princess Kate's most knowledgeable fans were often her most rigorous critics. They used their expertise not to shield her, but to critique the institution that claimed to speak on her behalf. In doing so, they enacted a form of public-facing fandom, oriented less toward devotion and more toward cultural accountability. This builds on recent work in fan studies and consumer culture theory (Kozinets & Jenkins, 2021; McFarlane et al., 2022) by showing how passion is disciplined into practices of visibility, legitimacy, and cultural stewardship.

Finally, this study proposes a reconceptualization of crisis engagement as cultural participation. In place of the rationalist, message-control framework of classical PR, it foregrounds a messier, more emotionally driven form of engagement—one that emerges from the bottom up, travels rapidly, and is powered by visibility, humor, and shared intensity. In this model, publics are performing PR, shaping narrative arcs, and experimenting with possible resolutions. Their actions show that crisis is not merely a failure of control, but a thrillingly generative moment in which new voices, new formats, and new truths can emerge.

Taken together, these contributions push crisis communication theory to more fully recognize the cultural and participatory dimensions of PR in the digital age. They invite a shift from monitoring publics' reactions to learning from publics' interventions—from managing passion to understanding how passion can become a mode of public relations in its own right.

6. Managerial implications: learning from passionate publics in crisis

This study offers several implications for public relations professionals managing high-profile brands, celebrity identities, or institutions with strong symbolic resonance. These implications apply across three temporal modes of crisis management: anticipation, navigation, and reflection. In each, the research encourages a shift away from individual-level audience models toward more dynamic, culturally attuned understandings of publics as passionate, networked, and participatory.

6.1. Anticipating crisis: identifying passionate collectives and monitoring playful disruption

For brands seeking to pre-empt or avoid a social media crisis, the first task is to recognize that publics do not operate as isolated individuals, but as affectively mobilized collectives. These publics coalesce around shared passions, and when those passions are disrupted by contradiction, silence, or perceived deception they can activate swiftly and with creative force. Rather than waiting for public sentiment to be translated through traditional media, this study underscores the urgent need for PR professionals to be involved in real-time conversations, hashtags, and cross-platform activity. This is not mere social media monitoring, not simply responding to dashboard style reports. It means that public relations practice increasingly must involve actually being out there, online, as a type of netnographic researcher who is not only tracing how narratives develop from the ground up but who understands the inner workings of the influencers, communities, and cultures that shape their meanings.

#KateGate exemplifies this shift. Influencers with domain-specific expertise—such as fashion knowledge—quickly identified inconsistencies in Palace communications, while fan activists with editing and meme-making skills visualized alternative narratives that rapidly

circulated. These publics did not wait for official confirmation; they collaborated, speculated, and remixed the story into new forms. Managers must build systems of netnographic detection and understanding attuned to passion and play, capable of detecting early signals of narrative divergence long before they are formalized in the press.

6.2. Navigating crisis: responding to passion as a strategic resource

When a crisis is already underway, PR teams should not only track sentiment but should seek to understand the cultural energy behind it. Publics like those active in #KateGate are not simply expressing outrage or suspicion. Rather, they are playing with crisis, using remix, satire, and speculation to challenge and reconstruct institutional narratives. It makes little sense to resist this activity, or to ignore it, as most contemporary PR operators would do. Instead, this study suggests another option: consider collaborative or adaptive responses that engage the cultural logics of play.

For instance, some posts, like the widely discussed “Muppet Kate” suggestion, combined humor, heritage, and critique in ways that resonated with the BRFB’s own symbolic repertoire. Such interventions might appear frivolous or silly, but they actually contain meaningful opportunities to channel passion into connection, recenter institutional identity, and rebuild trust. Imagine if the British Royal Communications team had actually played with the puppet idea in some fashion. What sorts of positive emotion and shows of affection might such a small gesture of listening such as this have engendered? Strategic flexibility in such responses will likely be key in the future, as passionate publics become increasingly recognized and, perhaps, prevalent throughout society. Recognizing which creative energies are irreverent but aligned, and which are corrosive or hostile, will require PR practitioners with both cultural fluency and humility.

6.3. Reflecting post-crisis: learning from collective intelligence

In the aftermath of crisis, many publics perceive institutional PR as reactive, out-of-touch, or dismissive of the very publics it serves. As this study shows, much of the damage occurs not because of the original incident, but because the collective intelligence of publics, their emerging insights, creativity, and suggestions, is ignored or undervalued.

To avoid this, post-crisis reflection must include analysis of how publics interpreted, rewrote, and shared the narrative. This means looking beyond media coverage or sentiment analysis and instead studying the social media artifacts, comment threads, memes, and humorous posts that shaped perception. Again, netnographic research expertise would be an important element of the passionate PR toolkit. Planning for future crisis communications should draw from netnographies of this ecosystem of reinterpretation—not to mimic or exploit it, but to respect the participatory conditions of contemporary PR. In doing so, PR teams may begin to earn back what matters most: credibility, connection, and cultural resonance.

7. Conclusion and future research

This study has shown how passionate publics do much more than simply respond to public relations crises, they actively and creatively reshape them. In the case of #KateGate, the absence of coherent crisis messaging from the Royal Family generated an open narrative space that was rapidly filled by publics animated by curiosity, affection, expertise, and play. These publics became the collective authors of alternative narratives, producing humorous content, remixing official materials, and offering imaginative PR strategies that often resonated more strongly than institutional efforts.

Building on and extending existing work in crisis communication (Coombs, 1995; 2020; Kim & Grunig, 2011) and fandom (Jenkins, 2006), this study foregrounded the role of collective intelligence and the

cultural force of passion. We can see from the study how the #KateGate publics moved well beyond simply disseminating crisis information or attributing blame. They investigated, speculated, and created, using their knowledge, editing skills, cultural fluency, and shared sensibilities to make sense of a chaotic situation. In doing so, they performed public relations work from the outside in. This important finding challenges conventional boundaries between institutions and audiences, and invites a more porous, participatory understanding of crisis communication in the digital age.

Future research should deepen this perspective. Although this study focused on a celebrity brand within the symbolic context of the British Royal Family, the insights here are not confined to monarchy or entertainment. Collective intelligence, passionate intensity, and playful intervention may emerge in diverse domains, such as healthcare, political communication, environmental campaigns, or nonprofit advocacy. It can show up anywhere publics feel personally invested and culturally equipped to intervene. In future research, scholars might explore how passionate publics from these different domains inflect these findings. Are they serious rather than playful? Do they defer rather than distract?

It is also essential to investigate the motivations behind these interventions. To what extent are publics engaging for personal enjoyment, for visibility, or for civic contribution? How do meme-makers, digital influencers, and amateur sleuths understand their role in shaping public discourse? We could see in this investigation that the not-so-invisible hand of the Royal Communications was constantly being scrutinized by Kate’s fan base. How do publics such as this one think about the public relations surrounding the topics and brands they care about? How do they think they will influence public relationship practice?

This paper has proposed a cultural model of crisis engagement, one that sees publics not as problems to be managed, but as sources of insight, energy, and innovation. To understand these publics, researchers must move beyond sentiment analysis and media monitoring. They must adopt methods like netnography that are attuned to cultural context, platform dynamics, and emotional nuance. For, ultimately, the future of public relations lies not in controlling narratives, but in collaborating with publics to fashion better narratives. In a world of passionate publics and participatory culture, the most resilient organizations will not only be those that listen, but those which playfully play along.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests: Ashleigh McFarlane reports financial support was provided by Economic Social Research Council (ESRC) Grant No. 1107458. If there are other authors, they declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

References

- Austin, L., & Jin, Y. (2016). Social media and crisis communication: Explicating the social-mediated crisis communication model. In *Strategic Communication* (pp. 163–186). Routledge.
- Austin, L., Kim, S., & Saffer, A. J. (2023). Emotion as a predictor of crisis communicative behaviors: Examining information seeking and sharing during Hurricane Florence. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 51(5), 559–578.
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Polity Press.
- Chon, M. G., & Kim, S. (2022). Dealing with the COVID-19 crisis: Theoretical application of social media analytics in government crisis management. *Public Relations Review*, 48(3), Article 102201.
- Chon, M. G., & Park, H. (2020). Social media activism in the digital age: Testing an integrative model of activism on contentious issues. *Journalism Mass Communication Quarterly*, 97(1), 72–97.

- Coombs, W. T. (1995). Choosing the right words: The development of guidelines for the selection of the “appropriate” crisis-response strategies. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 8(4), 447–476.
- Coombs, W. T. (2007). Protecting organization reputations during a crisis: The development and application of situational crisis communication theory. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10(3), 163–176.
- Coombs, W. T. (2018). Athlete reputational crises: One point for linking. In A. Billings, W. T. Coombs, & K. Brown (Eds.), *Reputational Challenges in Sport: Theory and Application* (pp. 13–24). Routledge.
- Coombs, W. T. (2020). Conceptualizing crisis communication. In *Handbook of risk and crisis communication* (pp. 99–118). Routledge.
- Coombs, W. T., & Tachkova, E. R. (2023). Integrating moral outrage in situational crisis communication theory: A triadic appraisal model for crises. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 37(4), 798–820.
- Greyser, S. A., Balmer, J. M. T., & Urde, M. (2006). The crown as a corporate brand: Insights from monarchies. *Journal of Brand Management*, 14(1–2), 137–161.
- Harker, J. L., & Coombs, W. T. (2022). Rallying the fans: Fanship-driven sport crisis communication on social media. In In. L. Austin, & Y. Jin (Eds.), *Social Media and Crisis Communication* (2nd ed., pp. 329–341). Routledge.
- Hung, C. J. F. (2005). Exploring types of organization-public relationships and their implications for relationship management in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(4), 393–425.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. NYU Press.
- Jenkins, H. (2012). Cultural acupuncture”: Fan activism and the Harry Potter Alliance. *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2012.0305>
- Jenkins, H., Ford, S., & Green, J. (2013). *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*. NYU Press.
- Jin, Y., Liu, B. F., & Austin, L. L. (2014). Examining the role of social media in effective crisis management: The effects of crisis origin, information form, and source on publics’ crisis responses. *Communication research*, 41(1), 74–94.
- Jin, Y., Pang, A., & Cameron, G. T. (2012). Toward a Publics-Driven, Emotion-Based Conceptualization in Crisis Communication: Unearthing Dominant Emotions in Multi-Staged Testing of the Integrated Crisis Mapping (ICM) Model. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 24(3), 266–298.
- Kim, J. N., & Grunig, J. E. (2011). Problem solving and communicative action: A situational theory of problem solving. *Journal of Communication*, 61(1), 120–149.
- Kozinets, R. V. (2020). *Netnography: The Essential Guide to Qualitative Social Media Research* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Kozinets, R. V., Ashman, R., & Patterson, A. (2017). Networks of desire: How technology increases our passion to consume. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43(5), 659–682.
- Kozinets, R. V., & Gretzel, U. (2022). Netnography. In In. D. Buhalis (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Tourism Marketing and Management*. Edward Elgar. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800377486.netnography>.
- Kozinets, R. V., & Jenkins, H. (2021). Consumer movements, brand activism, and the participatory politics of media: A conversation. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 22(1), 264–282.
- Lazzarato, M. (1996). Immaterial labor. In In. S. Makdisi, C. Casarino, & R. E. Karl (Eds.), *Marxism Beyond Marxism* (pp. 133–147). Routledge.
- Lee, Y. I., & Jin, Y. (2019). Crisis information seeking and sharing (CISS): scale development for measuring publics’ communicative behavior in social-mediated public health crises. *Journal of International Crisis and Risk Communication Research*, 2(1), 13–38.
- Lévy, P. (1997). *Collective intelligence: Mankind’s emerging world in cyberspace*. Perseus books.
- McFarlane, A., Hamilton, K., & Hewer, P. (2022). Putting passion to work: Passionate labour in the fashion blogosphere. *European Journal of Marketing*, 56(4), 1210–1231.
- Milner, R. M. (2009). Working for the text: Fan labor and the new organization. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 12(5), 491–508.
- Murphy, C. (2024). Vanity Fair. Stephen Colbert expresses remorse over Kate Middleton Late Show jokes. (<https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/stephen-colbert-apologizes-for-kate-middleton-late-show-jokes>).
- Ni, L., & Kim, J. N. (2009). Classifying publics: Communication behaviors and problem-solving characteristics in controversial issues. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 3(4), 1–25.
- Niu, R., & Ma, X. (2023). Warranted inferences of mediation and possibility of a threshold effect: Verifying the mediating effects of anger in situational crisis communication theory. *Public Relations Review*, 49(5), 102372..
- Otnes, C., & Maclaran, P. (2015). *Royal Fever: The British Monarchy in Consumer Culture*. University of California Press.
- Redmond, S. (2016). The passion plays of celebrity culture. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 19(3), 234–249.
- Spiggle, S. (1994). Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(3), 491–503.
- Staples, L. (2024). Rolling Stone. The Royals have totally lost Control of the narrative. (<https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-commentary/kate-middleton-absence-conspiracies-royals-have-lost-control-narrative-1234985979/>).